

Safeguarding for work with ex-offenders

SVP SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

Actively promote the well-being of those in prison, former prisoners, regardless of their offending behaviour and their families.

Recognise that everyone, including prisoners and ex-prisoners, has the right to live their life free from violence, fear, exploitation and abuse.



OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES



Christ Centred

The St Vincent de Paul Society acknowledges the presence of Christ everywhere.



Compassionate

We aim to show a compassion that is non-judgmental towards those with whom we work.



Respectful

We respect the dignity of all in the knowledge that we are all equal.

TOP TIPS TO SELF-PROTECT



- Always put **YOUR OWN SAFETY** first.
- Always **WORK IN PAIRS**.
- Always meet in a **PUBLIC PLACE AND IN DAY LIGHT**.
- Always let **ANOTHER KNOW** (family, friend, another SVP member) where you are going and how long you expect to be.
- Always **AVOID GIVING ANYTHING WITH A MONETARY VALUE**, avoiding creating any expectation, dependency, manipulation and blurring the befriending role.
- Always seek to be a **POSITIVE ROLE MODEL** for a former prisoner and family by demonstrating responsibility, reliability, respect and hope.
- Always recall that a **VINCENTIAN'S "GIFT"** to a prisoner and family is **time, support and consistency** during the relationship.
- Always **AVOID MAKING CONTACT** with a prisoner's family or friends unless that contact is expressly wanted. There might be restraining orders in place.
- Always **CHALLENGE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR** and antisocial or discriminatory behaviour or language displayed.
- Always **TERMINATE** a meeting if you feel intimidated or uncomfortable in any way or if the ex-prisoner is possibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Always try to **DIFFUSE** difficult circumstances and keep each other calm.
- Always **KEEP ALL PERSONAL DETAILS PRIVATE** (address, phone number, photos, relationship status, children, finance...)
- Always, be clear about **BOUNDARIES**, able to be empathetic and caring without any ambiguity and act with care.
- Always **DRESS APPROPRIATELY**, (formal attire may intimidate)
- Use **INFORMAL CLEAR WORDS** when conversing.
- With the exception of shaking hands-on meeting/leaving, there should be **NO PHYSICAL CONTACT**.

REQUEST FOR PRACTICAL HELP AT CONFERENCE LEVEL



- Please contact the Request for Help team (request@svp.org.uk) or the SVP Working with Prisons group (prisonwork@svp.org.uk) for advice and guidance.
- Try to get information from the ex-offenders to assess the potential risk and complete an SVP risk assessment form. Ask the ex-offender for written permission to contact chaplain or probation services for more information regarding the need and background circumstances.
- Assess an individual's needs and only meet or visit that individual in pairs and in a public place (e.g. a coffee shop). It is essential to fully inform the Conference of the request. No names or contacts about other conference members or other people should be disclosed. It is preferable to use the conference shared mobile only, if available.

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION



Probation services usually provides accommodation for ex-offenders. If a B&B is needed, Conferences or the SVP Working With Prisons group can pay for emergency accommodation directly. Do not give money to an ex-offender, always pay for the accommodation directly, by phone or online. Email prisonwork@svp.org.uk if funding is needed.

WHAT IF AN EX-OFFENDER WANTS TO JOIN THE SVP CONFERENCE, HELP FOR AN EVENT OR VOLUNTEER IN A SHOP?



They must complete the SVP application form including disclosure of unspent convictions, provide references and complete the volunteer risk assessment procedure. A satisfactory DBS must be provided for certain roles (please ask the SVP Safeguarding manager)

REPORTING CONCERNS:

- IF THE MEMBERS KNOW THAT A FORMER PRISONER MIGHT **SELF-HARM, COMMIT SUICIDE, HARM ANOTHER OR BE HARMED BY SOMEONE ELSE** CALL 999.
- WHERE THERE IS **A SERIOUS OR IMMINENT RISK TO THE HEALTH OR WELLBEING OF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON UNDER 18 YEARS**, CALL 999.
- IF A PRISONER WRITES OR SAYS **ANYTHING INAPPROPRIATE** OR ACTS IN A WAY THAT **MAKES THEM FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE**, VOLUNTEERS MUST ADVISE THE SVP SAFEGUARDING MANAGER.

MEMBERS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH A PRISONER IF THEY FEEL IN ANY WAY UNCOMFORTABLE.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO DISCONTINUE A VISIT IF THEY FEEL THAT THEY ARE BEING "GROOMED".

Our Society is privileged to work with many vulnerable people, including those who are or have been in prison, and their families who are most vulnerable. This privilege carries with it the burden of responsibility to safeguard those Vincentians who seek to help.

Therefore, safeguarding of all people remains at the core of our Vincentian work.