



Church on the Weald Safeguarding Policy

Church on the Weald ("the church") is a registered charity.

The church insurance is held with Ansvar Insurance Company. The cover includes, but is not limited to, Public Liability.

The activities the church undertakes with children and young people include crèche, children's and youth work on Sundays, youth meetings, youth socials, and youth residentials and mission trips. The activities the church undertakes with adults with care and support needs include pastoral care, home visits, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and Christian teaching courses. These activities could be extended to other areas in the future or may change, and these lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

MISSION STATEMENT

The church eldership recognises the importance of its ministry to children, young people and adults with care and support needs and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs within the church's care.

As part of its mission, the church eldership is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children, young people and adults with care and support needs as well as promoting their welfare and protection
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the children and youth workers within the church
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers
- Supporting those affected by abuse in the church
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other appropriate organisations

CHURCH POLICY

The church eldership recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. It also acknowledges that children, young people and adults with care and support needs can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant of Human Rights

The church eldership has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter called "the policy") and commits to provide organisation and procedures necessary to support. It also recognises the need to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary safeguarding agencies.

The policy and the attached document "Church on the Weald Children, Youth and Adults with Care and Support Needs Workers' Handbook" are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight. The church eldership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations without permission.

The church eldership is committed to safeguarding training for all children and youth workers and those working with adults with care and support needs and will regularly review the related practice guidelines.

The church eldership also undertakes to follow the principles found within the "Abuse of Trust" guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour that might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

PREVENTION

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against adults with care and support needs is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse Article 19, which states:

- 1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also, for adults, the "UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights", with particular reference to Article 5, which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in the appendices of our Children, Youth and Adults with Care and Support Needs Handbook.

Safer Recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the government guidance on safer recruitment.

This includes:

- Written job description
- Completed application and self-declaration form
- Applicants shortlisted and interviewed
- Safeguarding discussed at interview
- Written references checked
- Qualifications checked
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check completed where necessary
- Training programme provided
- Probationary period completed
- Applicant given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns

Safeguarding Training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

The church leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment, thirtyone:eight guidance and the church workers' manual. The church eldership will provide details of the supervision for each specific activity in the church handbook for Children and Adults with Care and Support Needs.

The same principles will be applied to those appointed to work with adults with care and support needs. All workers have been issued with the church workers' manual, with its code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs. The church eldership undertakes to follow the principles found within the "Abuse of Trust" guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation / place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers, we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in, and these are in the appendices.

Working in Partnership

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

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This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed	_____	Date	_____
Print Name	_____	Role	_____
Signed	_____	Date	_____
Print Name	_____	Role	_____
Signed	_____	Date	_____
Print Name	_____	Role	_____
Signed	_____	Date	_____
Print Name	_____	Role	_____

Church on the Weald

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Church on the Weald Safeguarding Policy was first agreed by the church eldership in June 2012.

The church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and to report any abuse we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Provide ongoing safeguarding training for all its workers.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- As far as is reasonably practicable, ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by the church.
- Supporting parents and families.
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Ensure the premises meet the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Act 2010 and other legislation that is welcoming and inclusive.
- As far as is reasonably practicable, ensuring that all who work with children and vulnerable adults will treat everybody with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.

- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by thirtyone:eight.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a adults with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this policy annually. The full policy is available at the church's registered address and a copy can be requested at any time. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult or in relation to any safeguarding matter, then speak to one of the following, who have been approved as Safeguarding Co-ordinators for this church:

Marcia Mitchell
Safeguarding Co-ordinator
marcia.mitchell@churchontheweald.com

Annette Stone
Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator
annette.stone@churchontheweald.com

Signed (by Trustees)

Date _____

Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse:

Under no circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or in their absence, the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who is nominated by the church to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may also be required by conditions of the church's insurance policy to immediately inform the insurance company. They will also be required as part of church policy to inform Carl Maidment (or in his absence another elder or a trustee). If the allegation or concern involves Carl Maidment or a member of his family, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator shall instead inform another elder.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Thirtyone:eight
PO Box 133
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7UQ
Telephone: 0303 003 11 11

- Alternatively, contact Social Services or the police.
- The local Children's Social Services office telephone number between 9.00am and 5.00pm is 03000 41 11 11 or 08458 247100. The Adult Social Services telephone number is 03000 41 61 61. The out of hours emergency number is, for both children and adults, 03000 41 91 91 or 0845 762 6777. To contact the Police Child Protection team, phone 01233 619195 or 01622 690690 (or 101) and ask to speak to someone in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.

The church eldership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator in their roles and accepts that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the church eldership hopes that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with either both of these officers as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the church eldership demonstrates the commitment of the church to effective child protection.

The roles of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator are to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services' task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact Social Services and thirtyone:eight for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Will not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting), encourage the parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them.
- In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact the Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Service direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Contact Carl Maidment as a requirement as soon as possible.

- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if, for any reason, they are unsure whether or not to contact Social Services or the police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including: physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If a adult with care and support needs has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult with care and support needs is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will need to:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker. al
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether paid or in a voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of a person being placed on a barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

Support to those affected by abuse

The church eldership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to those attending or connected with the church who have been affected by abuse.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the church eldership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

Contact Details

Point of Contact for Elders:

Carl Maidment

Telephone: 01580 292656 or 07898 633790

Safeguarding Co-ordinator:

Marcia Mitchell

Telephone: 07599 594426

Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator:

Annette Stone

Telephone: 07775 526763

Thirtyone:eight

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ

Telephone: 0303 003 11 11

Social Services:

Office hours (9am-5pm): Children's Team: 03000 41 11 11 or 08458 247100

Adults' Team: 03000 416161

The out of hours emergency number (for both teams) is 03000 419191 or 0845 762 6777.

Police Child Protection:

Telephone: 01233 619195/01622 690690 or 101 (ask to speak to someone in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit)



Church on the Weald

Children, Youth and Adults with Care and Support Needs Workers Handbook

First Approved: September 2014

Last Reviewed: September 2022

Contents

Introduction and Acknowledgements

1 Working Safely - General

- 1.1 Duty of Care and Positions of Trust
- 1.2 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism
- 1.3 Risk Assessments
- 1.4 Safeguarding Principles for Group or Activity
- 1.5 Safety of Buildings and Equipment
- 1.6 Food and Drink Safety and Hygiene
- 1.7 First Aid
- 1.8 Adult to Child Ratios
- 1.9 Data Protection, Human Rights and Safeguarding
- 1.10 Registration
- 1.11 Keeping Records
- 1.12 Unexpected Attendance at Activities
- 1.13 Accidents
- 1.14 Peer-Group Activities
- 1.15 Parents / Carers Staying with Groups
- 1.16 Suggestions and Complaints by Parents/Carers
- 1.17 Working with Disruptive Children and Young People
- 1.18 Anti-Bullying Policy and Practice
- 1.19 Tobacco and Alcohol
- 1.20 Solvents and Illegal Substances
- 1.21 Gangs and Gang Crime
- 1.22 Special Needs and Disabilities
- 1.23 Intimate Care
- 1.24 Taking Care of Touch

2 Working Safely - Extra Events or Activities

- 2.1 Home Visits
- 2.2 Outings
- 2.3 Transportation
- 2.4 Swimming Trips
- 2.5 Sleepovers
- 2.6 Residential Holidays
- 2.7 Babysitting

3 Working Safely - Digital Media

- 3.1 Filming and Taking Photographs
- 3.2 Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- 3.3 Internet Safety Code for Young People and Their Parents/Carers
- 3.4 Website for Organisations

4 Communicating Effectively

- 4.1 Developing Listening Skills

- 4.2 Communicating using ICT
- 4.3 Communicating with Those with Special Needs and Disabilities
- 4.4 Communicating and Involving Children, Young People and Adults with Care and Support Needs in the Development and Delivery of Services
- 4.5 Communicating With Other Agencies
- 4.6 Feedback Procedures

5 Responding to Concerns

- 5.1 Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse
- 5.2 Initial Response
- 5.3 Involving Children's Social Services or the Police
- 5.4 Physical Injury or Symptom of Neglect
- 5.5 Concerns or Allegations of Sexual Abuse
- 5.6 Contacting Children's Social Services
- 5.7 Action by Children's Social Services
- 5.8 Involving Adult Social Services/Social Care or the Police (for Vulnerable Adults)
- 5.9 Responding in an Emergency to a Adult with care and support needs
- 5.10 Action by Adult Social Services
- 5.11 Referrals and Third Party Allegations
- 5.12 Reasons for NOT Contacting Parent/Carer or Alleged Abuser
- 5.13 Allegations Against Workers
- 5.14 False Allegations
- 5.15 Allegations Against Children / Young People
- 5.16 Bullying
- 5.17 Domestic Violence
- 5.18 Violence Against Women and Girls
- 5.19 Mental Illness
- 5.20 Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

6 Pastoral Care

- 6.1 Listening Skills
- 6.2 Counselling
- 6.3 Confidentiality and Accountability
- 6.4 Parental Carers Consent to Counselling
- 6.5 Issues of Touch
- 6.6 Physical Effects
- 6.7 Emotional and Spiritual Effects
- 6.8 Future Relationships and Sexual Issues
- 6.9 Forgiveness
- 6.10 Guidelines and Boundaries for Pastoral Carers
- 6.11 Safeguarding the Integrity of the Worker
- 6.12 Practical Support

7 Developing Safeguarding Awareness Training

- 7.1 The Eldership
- 7.2 The Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- 7.3 Safeguarding Training for Workers

7.4 Equality and Inclusion

8 Safer Recruitment

8.1 Recruitment Process

8.1.1 Initial Approach

8.1.2 Formal Application

8.1.3 Interviewing

8.1.4 DBS Checks

8.1.5 Confidentiality

8.2 Appointment and Supervision

8.3 Training

9 Management of Workers

9.1 Team Meetings

9.2 Allegations Against Workers

9.3 Responding to Allegations

9.4 Informing the LADO and Other Organisations

9.5 Suspension of a Worker

9.6 Support for the Worker

9.7 Whistleblowing

9.8 Disciplinary Procedures

10 Managing Those who Pose a Risk

10.1 Managing Risks within an Organisation

10.2 Written Contract

10.3 Children and Young People Displaying Sexually Harmful Behaviour

11 Working in Partnership

11.1 Children and Young People Placed With Host Families

Appendices

Definitions of a Child and adult with care and support needs

Statutory Definitions of Abuse

First Aid Kit and Contacts Sheet

Skin Maps

Risk Assessment Guidelines

Handling of Disclosure Information

Abusive Practices Among New and Emerging Communities

About Thirtyone:eight

INTRODUCTION

The church is the largest voluntary organisation working with children and young people across the British Isles. Churches and groups working with children, young people or adults with care and support needs to take special care in the work they undertake, including ensuring a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy is operating. It is worth noting that The Charity Commission requires a written safeguarding policy to be in place before it will grant charitable status to any organisation working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Historically, the church has opened its doors to all. It follows therefore that people with a whole range of life experiences are coming into its buildings week by week, including those who abuse children or adults with care and support needs. Sadly, it is the experience of the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service that a high proportion of those who abuse children within the church have been members for many years.

Leaders and workers have a major role to play in protecting and safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs with whom they come into contact. It is also important everyone understands their role in receiving information and passing it on to the appropriate person without delay. As an essential part of its mission, Church on the Weald has sought to produce procedures that take guidance from government and most importantly reflect God's heart for children.

Church on the Weald is registered with thirtyone:eight and uses its advisory service regarding matters of safeguarding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Church on the Weald's Child Protection Policy was initially drawn up by Marcia Mitchell with support from Gateway Church Ashford's Child Care Co-ordinator and children's work leaders. It has since been revised and updated by Marcia Mitchell and Victoria Windus in conjunction with the eldership team and children's and youth workers and volunteers of Church on the Weald.

The material in Church on the Weald's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures uses material provided by thirtyone:eight "Guidance to Churches" Manual (10th Edition). Its legal framework is based on the Children Act 1989 (England and Wales), Human Rights Act 1998, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UK 1991) and also government guidelines 'Safe from Harm' 1993, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 1999, and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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1 Working Safely - General

1.1 Duty of Care and Positions of Trust

The Children's Act 2004 (England) places a duty on organisations involved in providing services for children and young people to safeguard and promote their well-being. This means all workers should treat those they are caring for with respect and dignity as well as demonstrate competence and integrity.

The duty of care is in part exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships but also by workers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those they have responsibility for, particularly in relation to sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Before individuals start working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent to their role.

In addition, under Health and Safety at Work legislation, organisations have a duty of care towards the well-being of all workers and ensure they are treated fairly. They are required to provide a safe working environment and guidance on safe working practice.

All adults working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs are in positions of trust. It is therefore vital that workers ensure they do not, even unwittingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately.

Workers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult worker and a child is never acceptable and if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

The trusting relationship between worker and child, young person or adults with care and support needs means the worker should never:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage.
- Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual.

1.2. Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to children, young people and adults with care and support needs can be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or young person will be part of an agreed plan with the knowledge of a manager and the parent or carer. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware, however, that the giving of gifts can be seen as a gesture to bribe or groom a young person. Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to workers, for example, on special occasions or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

1.3 Risk Assessments

Taking care of children, young people and adults with care and support needs involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for unforeseen eventualities, anticipating situations where they could be harmed and taking steps to minimise the risks.

The church has a responsibility to assess the risk involved in the activities that are provided. This can include an informal check before the start of an activity that the building is safe and that the planned activities have been assessed for any risks (see “Risk Assessment” in the Appendices).

1.4 Safeguarding Principles for Group or Activity

Some general principles for running a club, activity or service include:

- Ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.
- Consideration for the number of workers needed to run the group and whether they should be male, female or both.
- A clear strategy for summoning additional help (if needed) in situations where a worker is working alone with a child, young person or adults with care and support needs
- The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) required appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- Clear guidelines on personal privacy, e.g. when working with children avoiding questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments.
- Not allowing anyone under 16 years of age to be left in charge of children of any age or those attending the group being left unsupervised.
- Only workers assigned to the group being allowed to participate in the activity. Other adults should not be allowed free access.
- Making a note of other people in the building during the activity and any other events taking place at the same time.

1.5 Safety of Buildings and Equipment

The church has a comprehensive health and safety policy outlining all procedures relating to the safety of both buildings and equipment used.

1.6 Food and Drink Safety and Hygiene

When food and drink are provided during an activity, workers or volunteers will:

- Follow good personal hygiene.
- Adhere to basic health and hygiene regulations.

- Ensure hot drinks are not left within reach of young children and are not carried through an activity area without a lid as a minimum requirement.
- Ensure that any children with allergies or intolerances are not given foods containing any ingredient to which they are allergic or intolerant.

It is recommended that at least one worker or volunteer holds a valid basic food hygiene certificate.

1.7 First Aid

Provision should be made for an appropriately qualified first aider at all activities together with an adequate first aid kit (see first aid kit and contacts in the Appendices).

1.8 Adult to Child Ratios

In order to supervise children's activities safely, it is necessary to have sufficient adult leaders and helpers. The following ratios should be applied as a minimum:

	Adult : Children
0 to 2 years	1 : 3
2 to 3 years	1 : 4
4 to 8 years	1 : 8

For children 8 and over there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio is 2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children.

A risk assessment should also be carried out, especially where the activity is outdoors, high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with special needs or disabilities. The results of the risk assessment may mean the ratios need to be increased.

1.9 Data Protection, Human Rights and Safeguarding

The Data Protection Act 2018 is designed to provide privacy protection for individuals about whom certain personal information is kept. It lays down 'best practice' principles for those who keep the data, and it applies to paper records as well as computerised information.

Where disclosing information might place a child, young person or adults with care and support needs at risk, then safeguarding considerations take precedence over data protection. In certain circumstances the Data Protection Act 2018 allows for disclosure of information without the consent of the person involved, including for the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

1.10 Registration

Ensure that a general consent form is signed and submitted, giving details of parents/carers as well as medical details such as allergies or special dietary requirements. These will be kept in a secure lockable file.

Visitors on an ad-hoc basis who want their children to take part in the activities on a Sunday should sign a visitor consent form and remain on site and accessible for the duration of the meeting.

A register of those attending a club or activity should also be maintained, together with a register of workers. This should include a record of arrival and departure times, particularly if the participant does not attend the whole session. It is also good practice to keep parents/carers informed of the nature of activities.

1.11 Keeping Records

Incident forms are available at all activities so workers can write down any unusual events or conversations witnessed. This should be filled out as soon as reasonably possible after the incident took place. Where recording any conversations these should be recorded as accurately as possible and as close to verbatim as is reasonably practicable. Once filled out, these are kept with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and stored securely. The incident should not be discussed with anyone else, including other children or youth workers not directly involved.

Information about the prevention and detection of crime is exempt from data protection requirements. It may, therefore, be inappropriate to release information to a parent that has been disclosed by a young person without first consulting the statutory agencies.

1.12 Unexpected Attendance at Activities

Sometimes children, young people or adults with care and support needs will want to join in with an organisation's activities without the knowledge of parents or carers (e.g. children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision). In these circumstances it is important to:

- Welcome them, but try to establish their name, age (for children), address and telephone number.
- Record their visit in a register.
- Ask if a parent/carer is aware where they are, and what time they are expected home. If this is before the session ends, they should be encouraged to return home, unless the parent/carer can be contacted and they are happy with the arrangement.
- In the case of children in particular, suggest the child seeks the parent/carer's permission to return the following week.
- Link the visiting person with a regular attendee who can introduce them to the group and explain about the activity.
- On leaving (where possible), give the person a leaflet about the group with contact telephone numbers etc., and perhaps a standard letter to the parent/carer inviting them to make contact.
- Without an interrogation, you will need to find out as soon as possible whether they have any special needs (e.g. medication) so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.

1.13 Accidents

All accidents, however minor, should be recorded on an accident form. In the event of an accident, the parent/carer of a child or young person should be asked to read and sign the accident form. Whether an adult with care and support needs can sign the form will depend on the nature and extent of their disability. The form will also be signed by the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy and kept securely.

If the child, young person or adult with care and support needs is not collected at the end of a session, a letter should be sent to the parent or carer explaining what has happened in much the same way a school would respond.

1.14 Peer-Group Activities

All peer-group activities should be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with agreed recruitment procedures and have the backing of the church eldership.

Before setting up a peer-led activity the following should be taken into consideration:

- The appropriateness of the venue for the activity.
- Any medical issues, dietary needs and allergies will be appropriately managed.
- Emergency contact numbers are to hand for all members under the age of 18 years.
- If the provision of food is part of the activity, leaders must ensure that food is prepared in accordance with basic food hygiene standards.
- If a peer-led activity involves under-8s and lasts for two or more hours a week for more than five days a year, it will need to be registered with OFSTED. If in doubt, contact them for advice.

Whilst there may be a valid argument for groups of age 16+ being led and run by their peers, adult leaders should always be in the vicinity and should contribute to any programme reviews and planning. Peer-group leaders must be trained and supported by at least one adult worker.

The following should also be followed:

- If there are children/young people under 16 years old at an activity, adults workers should be present or within earshot.
- No person under the age of 16 should be left with the sole responsibility of caring for or supervising other children or adults with care and support needs.
- Young people (over 16) who assist with caring for other children/young people should be subjected to the same recruitment process as adults and have undertaken safeguarding training.
- Peer-group leaders should be aware of safeguarding procedures, including reporting concerns (e.g. abuse or bullying) to their supervising adult, and that sensitive information should not be shared openly in the group.
- Parents/carers must always be kept informed about what peer-group activities are for, who the leaders are, how they are run, where they meet, and what parents can do to support them.

1.15 Parents/Carers staying with Groups

There may be occasions where parents ask if they can stay to watch the children's group's activity. It is important not to appear guarded but there may be concerns, particularly where the expectation is that all adults who work with children in any capacity should undertake DBS and other checks.

The church could therefore consider the following:

- Parents may be permitted to observe groups on occasion when the need arises. They should not take part. A distinction should be made.
- It can help certain children settle into a group, if the child knows that a parent/carer is there. After the settling-in period, parents/carers should be discouraged from staying out on a regular basis.
- Whilst a person watching may be a parent/carer for one or more of the children, to the rest of the children they are strangers.
- Organise an open evening from time to time as part of the on-going children's programme to build relationships and encourage parents to take an active role in supporting the group.
- Be aware that for some children with special needs, it may be appropriate for their parent/carer to stay with them for an extended period. This should be considered on an individual basis to help the child become fully integrated into the group/activity.

1.16 Suggestions and Complaints by Parents/Carers

Where a parent or carer wishes to make a complaint or make a suggestion about any activity or group the church is providing, it should be taken seriously. Where the complaint is general and is not a safeguarding issue, they should in the first instance speak to the group leader, who should endeavour to resolve the matter.

This should be followed up by a written response to the issue that has been raised and should be recorded and stored appropriately. The group leader should also be kept informed.

If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent or carer then the matter should be passed on to the church eldership team.

Any complaints or concerns related to safeguarding matters should be dealt with as outlined in the safeguarding policy.

1.17 Working with Disruptive Children and Young People

This behaviour policy outlines the procedures to be taken should a child or young person become disruptive.

If they are harming themselves, another person or property, or others in the group, they should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, they should be requested to stop.

If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling the police. As a last resort, in the event of them harming themselves, other people or property, physical restraint may be needed until the police arrive.

1.18 Anti-Bullying Policy and Practice

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of harming another person. Children can bully each other, be bullied by adults, and can sometimes bully adults. Any form of bullying results in pain and distress to the victim and is unacceptable behaviour.

The church has an anti-bullying policy in place to deal with any bullying behaviours.

1.19 Tobacco and Alcohol

There is now a smoking ban in all enclosed public spaces throughout the UK and a no-smoking policy is in place in all the buildings used by the church.

It is now illegal for anyone under the age of 18 in England and Wales to be sold cigarettes (or other products like roll-up tobacco and cigars) over the counter or at a vending machine.

The church has a no-smoking policy, so it is important all those attending the activity are aware of and agree to abide by it. There are also strict regulations on the sale and consumption of alcohol where children and young people are concerned. Workers do not have the right to confiscate alcohol found in a young person's possession, but they can enforce a no-alcohol policy.

There may be occasions where it is felt necessary to inform parents/carers that a child or young person has been drinking, particularly if they are under the influence of alcohol at the group or there are concerns for their health or safety. Obviously this may affect working relationships and there is a moral question that will need to be considered before any action is taken.

1.20 Solvents and Illegal Substances

Workers should be alert to possession and use of illegal substances. If a worker becomes aware a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be abusing solvents, they should be encouraged to seek professional help from their doctor or a counsellor specialising in this area.

Having said this, it is a criminal offence to allow anyone attending an activity run by an organisation to supply illegal drugs or use them on the premises. It is important to adopt zero tolerance on all illegal substances and draw up a protocol with the local police for dealing with such situations should they arise. All those attending the activity should be made aware of this protocol.

For the individual involved:

- Ask them to stop, warning them of the consequences if they do not (e.g. suspension or ban from the group).
- Inform parents/carers if the young person is under 16 years.
- Inform the parents/carers if the young person is over 16 years (with their permission).
- Discuss with the young person the proposed course of action, particularly if they reoffend (e.g. informing the police).
- Write down the content of any discussion with the young person, including the action taken and give this to the safeguarding officer who will keep it in a secure place
- Liaise with the police to devise a strategy for dealing with the use of illegal substances.

1.21 Gangs and Gang Crime

It is not uncommon for groups of children to gather in a public place. This is quite normal, and though some might become disorderly or anti-social, this does not mean they are part of a gang. However, there is a strong association between gang membership and violence and crime, and sometimes a young person may not realise they are in a gang – they just think they are socialising with a group of friends.

Belonging to a gang isn't illegal, only criminal offences that are committed by gang members. Having said this, there are laws aimed at curtailing criminal activity. For example, if an offender is part of a gang they may be given a harsher sentence if they are found guilty of:

- Possessing drugs like cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy.
- Carrying a knife if there is intent to use it as a weapon (even if it belongs to someone else).
- Carrying or keeping a gun without a licence, including fake or replica guns.

The police can (and will) search anyone they think may be carrying a gun or a knife. If there is reason to believe children and young people are involved in criminal gang activity, they need to be told if they carry a gun or a knife they could be arrested; also that a court appearance and a criminal record could jeopardise their chances of employment, going to university or college, or even travelling abroad.

The best way workers can help prevent children getting involved in a gang is to talk openly about it, finding out what they think about gangs and warning them of the dangers of becoming involved.

1.22 Special Needs and Disabilities

Workers should be aware that any child, young person or an adult with care and support needs attending an activity who has a special need or disability may need extra help in areas such as communication and mobility (e.g. use of sign language and assistance in going to the toilet). They may behave in a non-age-appropriate way. For example, a young person of 17 might behave more like a 2–3-year-old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker's lap. Therefore it is important to set appropriate boundaries that take their needs into account, but also protect workers from false accusation.

The church should:

- Ask the child, young person or adult with care and support needs attending the activity, and parents or carers how their needs can be met, ensuring all workers involved with them are aware of their expectations. This includes the number of workers needed to assist for a specific activity to prevent injury. Some of these needs may be more easily met than others, so be realistic. A family may ask for changes to enable easier access to the building (ensure you meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act). Listen, and give feedback to the person, family or carer as to what can or can't be achieved and the reasons why.
- Ideally, ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if they need help with toileting, but again discuss with the person, their family or carer to discuss their preference and your ability to provide this. For example, you may have a Sunday

School with only female workers, so is a male child happy for a female to provide personal care and are the parents comfortable with this? Generally these issues once discussed can be agreed upon.

- Where possible, make buildings accessible (e.g. ramps, toilets for the disabled and hearing loop system) and encourage integration within the group.
- Develop appropriate disability awareness including the use of different forms of communication (e.g. sign language) and language etiquette.

1.23 Intimate Care

On occasion intimate care may be provided for small children, such as those attending crèche, and for children and adults with disabilities. Workers should therefore be operating clear guidelines in this area. Where possible parents/carers should be called to do this.

Workers involved with intimate care need to be sensitive to the individual needs of each person and that some care tasks could be open to misinterpretation. False allegations of sexual abuse are extremely rare, but guidelines will safeguard both the children and adults. People feel safer if expectations are clear and methods of working are, as far as possible, consistent.

1.24 Taking Care of Touch

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc.), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

2 Working Safely - Extra Events or Activities

2.1 Home Visits

Workers and leaders may need to make home visits from time to time.

The following guidelines for visiting should be considered:

- Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit.
- In the case of children and young people never go into a home if a parent or carer is absent unless the child would be at risk of significant harm if you do not do so.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
 - Purpose
 - Time you arrived and left
 - Who was present
 - What was discussed
- If the parent/carers is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them.
- An invitation to a worker's home should only be extended with the knowledge of the team/church eldership and the permission of the parent/carers.

2.2 Outings

At times the church organises day trips or visits for children and/or young people. When this occurs parents/carers will be asked to complete and sign a consent form for the activity. A risk assessment will be carried out and all workers involved in the trip will be aware of the risk assessment and will know what to do in the event of an accident or emergency.

On the day the group leader will ensure that at least one mobile phone is brought along as well as all essential records and equipment. Children should also be allocated to specific adults.

2.3 Transportation

The church has a transporting policy in place, which outlines the necessary procedures to follow when transporting children, young people or adults with care and support needs. This should be adhered to whenever the church arranges transportation for children, young people or adults with care and support needs.

2.4 Swimming Trips

There should be an increased adult:child ratio for all swimming trips, and prior to the trip the swimming ability of all those attending should be established. A swimming consent for each child should be taken by the group leader on each trip.

Before any visit to a swimming pool, check there will be a qualified lifeguard present at all times. If appropriate, check that the pool caters for children with disabilities.

Children and children's workers should follow the rules of the pool. It is important children and young people know how to behave and take their lead from workers' own behaviour. Group leaders should supervise behaviour at all times and there should be a minimum of two leaders present while the children are in the pool.

Whilst the pool's lifeguard will be on duty to supervise swimmers this does not reduce the duty of care of leaders and workers, including being able to account for the whereabouts of all those participating in the event.

It is worth bearing in mind that because water activities often involve partial nudity, potential abusers are more inclined to make advances. This may include the person lingering around changing rooms or toilets. One way to supervise visits to the toilet is to use the responsible buddy system, i.e. two or three go to the toilet together. One uses the toilet whilst the others stand outside the door.

Swimming or paddling in the sea, rivers, lakes or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities and a risk assessment must be completed before organising such an activity. Prior to organising a visit to open waters group leaders can look on local websites or contact the local tourist information to make sure the area is safe.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters should be allowed only as a supervised activity, preferably in a recognised bathing area with a qualified lifeguard present. Obviously weather conditions should be taken into account. Even with lifeguard cover children should always be in the sight of the group leader and team. One of the team should stay out of the water for better surveillance and preferably hold a relevant life-saving certificate. Leaders must ascertain the level of the children's swimming ability and ensure adequate, increased supervision ratios for the particular group.

The limits of the swimming area need to be explained to the children before they enter the water along with other matters specific to the location. In addition, signals of distress and recall need to be adopted and clearly explained.

It is important to establish a base to which members of the group may return if separated.

2.5 Sleepovers

Sleepovers should be discussed and arranged in advance by the workers so that agreements can be made on the best way of caring for the children given the venue, number of children, age and gender mix, etc. Children are best protected in an environment where the adults caring for them are aware of the possibility of abuse by adult and child alike and accept the need to be watchful.

The following issues need to be considered when organising a sleepover:

- There must be adequate insurance cover on the building to cover this activity, including any limits on numbers.
- Prior to the sleepover the building should be checked for suitable fire exits and workers should know where the water, electricity and gas can be turned off and the location of fire extinguishers.
- A fire drill should be carried out as soon as possible after entering the premises for the night.
- Parents/carers must complete a medical consent form and an activity consent form in respect of their children's medical care, travel and collection arrangements, sleeping conditions, food, other specific activities (e.g. games).

- Parents/carers should be given written details of the arrangements for the night with the contact number of an identified children's worker, not simply the phone number of the premises.
- Specific responsibilities should be designated to workers to ensure clarity of roles.
- Make sure there is a qualified first aider in attendance.
- Males and females should sleep separately. If it is a mixed sex group, female and male leaders will be needed.
- Adults should not sleep in the same room as the children unless it is considered the group needs to be supervised at all times. It may be more appropriate to appoint an adult to conduct random night patrols.
- Changing and showering facilities should be single-sex and separate for children and adults. If these are limited facilities, timetables need to be drawn up.
- All medical information and emergency contact numbers must be easily accessible, and workers should have access to a telephone or mobile phone.

2.6 Residential Holidays

If using an established residential centre, checks should be made that it operates a safeguarding policy and carries out DBS checks on workers. Organisations providing residential holidays should also carry out full risk and health and safety assessments. On a campsite or in the open countryside the hazards may be guy ropes and other fastenings, fires, gas and other flammable substances, access to fields where animals graze. It is easy to assume that workers automatically know how to organise and run activities and that children, young people and adults with care and support needs have been taught personal safety. This is not necessarily the case, so it is doubly important the church's expectations are clear and are communicated effectively.

2.7 Babysitting

The church does not currently operate a babysitting service. Any arrangements made between members are private arrangements with the individuals involved.

3 Working Safely - Digital Media

3.1 Filming and Taking Photographs

The church will obtain written permission from parents to take and store photographs and film footage of children and youth. Separate permission can be sought for specific images that will be used. Visitors will be informed when any photography or filming is taking place and asked to inform the photographer if they do not wish their photo to be taken. This will include regular notices on Sunday mornings and on other occasions when Zoom (or other video conferencing software) recordings are taking place to stream the meeting for those unable to attend.

3.2 Information Communication Technology (ICT)

E-safety stands for electronic safety. It is not just about keeping safe on the internet but also keeping safe on all electronic devices such as mobile phones, games consoles, use of e-mails, social networking and other information communications technologies (ICT).

ICT offer excellent resources and effective communication tools but there are unscrupulous individuals who use the technologies to gain access to exploit and even harm children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Workers, parents and carers, children, young people and adults with care and support needs all need to gain an understanding of e-safety

The church has an e-safety policy which will be complied with at all times. In addition it can refer parents to sources of further information.

3.3 Internet Safety Code for Young People and Their Parents/Carers

The internet opens up a world of entertainment, opportunity and knowledge. To help children enjoy it all safely, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has developed the Click Clever, Click Safe Child Internet Safety Strategy.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) brings together organisations from industry, charities and the public sector to work with the government to deliver the recommendations from Dr Tanya Byron's report – Safer Children in a Digital World.

By following the digital code 'Zip it, Block it, Flag it', parents and children can adopt a few simple strategies to help them stay safe online, while continuing to enjoy the internet. The code highlights three things that parents can encourage their children to do:

- Zip It: Get your children to keep their passwords private.
- Block It: Make sure your children know how to block people that upset them.
- Flag It: Ask your kids regularly if they have seen or done anything online that has upset them.

3.4 Websites

Parental/carers permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child or young person, and from an adult with care and support needs themselves and/or their carer.

- DO NOT USE PHOTOS if children, young people or adults with care and support needs can be identified by their name or location and never reveal these in website information. This could inadvertently help a sex offender to identify or gain access to a child.
- Personal email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers must not be divulged.
- If web access is being provided e.g. for a youth project providing a cyber café, then consider using filtering software to prevent access to inappropriate web sites such as, Surfwatch or similar. Your Internet Service Provider may also have filtering software.
- If you are providing web access, e.g. at a cyber café, ensure that all users complete an internet permission form that includes, where appropriate, parental/carer's permission.

4 Communicating Effectively

4.1 Developing Listening Skills

All adults, including those working with children, young people or adults with care and support needs should understand the importance of listening and responding appropriately. If a child, young person or an adult with care and support needs wants to talk:

- Bear in mind they may not be wanting to talk about abuse.
- Suggest where you might meet.
- Offer privacy but do this applying good working practice (e.g. letting another worker know where you are and what you are doing).
- Reassure them you will respect confidentiality as far as you can but if you do need to pass on what they have shared to someone else (for their own or others' safety or well-being) you will discuss this with them and keep them informed.
- Issues of touch may arise, particularly if they are upset, so it is important to respect personal boundaries and apply good sense to any physical contact.
- Know how to respond should anyone disclose abuse.
- Adults retain their right to confidentiality, except where others are at risk, particularly a child.

4.2 Communicating using ICT

Children, young people and adults with care and support needs can find it easier to communicate via technologies such as email, messenger services and phone texts. This facility should therefore be available but operate within certain boundaries so that children, young people and adults with care and support needs are safeguarded, and workers protected from false allegations. See the e-safety policy for more information on this.

4.3 Communicating with Those with Special Needs and Disabilities

Children, young people and adults with care and support needs who have a disability may find communication difficult due to a wide variety of physical and mental impairments. They may have difficulty understanding what is said to them or they may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be easily understood.

These factors mean they are more vulnerable to abuse and make it harder to recognise when it is happening.

Attitudes can play a part when, for example, there is a belief that someone with a disability can't be sexually abused because they are seen as asexual.

Where appropriate and possible, the church will work to empower those with special needs or disabilities by:

- Ensuring there are workers who possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. specialised spoken and non-verbal communication such as Makaton signs and symbols or British Sign Language).
- Teaching personal safety skills to those with disabilities, such as handling feelings; that some parts of our body are private and to differentiate between good and bad touches.

4.4 Communicating and Involving Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults in the Development and Delivery of Services

Good communication builds positive working relationships. An important way of developing this further is to encourage those using the facilities to be involved in decision making and improving the services provided. This can be done by:

- Setting up processes for children, young people and adults with care and support needs' views to be heard and, where appropriate, acted upon.
- Encouraging the involvement of parents/carers/children/ adults with care and support needs in all relevant aspects of the work of the church, e.g. through attendance at church family meetings and any other strategic groups and meetings as appropriate.
- Ensuring parents / carers are kept informed of any of the above, consent being obtained where necessary.

4.5 Communicating With Other Agencies

Making contact with other agencies such as Children's and Adult Social Services, the Local Safeguarding Children Board or other statutory agencies will help establish relationships of trust and create an environment where advice can be sought and, perhaps most importantly, build confidence for reporting concerns.

Where possible the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will seek to build up good relations with these agencies.

4.6 Feedback Procedures

On occasions people may have comments, suggestions and/or complaints about an activity the church provides. Making provision for this demonstrates an openness and commitment to safeguarding in wanting to improve services where possible. Any concerns, etc. will be passed onto the children and youth work leaders.

5 Responding to Concerns

5.1 Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse

When someone discloses they have been or are in fear of being abused, the first step is to actively listen and then be prepared to take the appropriate action.

In addition to this, it is important:

- To emphasise they have done the right thing in telling you.
- To tell them you are treating what they have said to you seriously.
- To reassure them that what has happened was not their fault.
- Not to push for information because they may have been threatened or bribed not to speak.
- Not to promise to keep the information a secret. Explain clearly and gently that you may have to share what they tell you with others, including the person responsible for safeguarding, but this will only be done on a need-to-know basis.
- To ensure the immediate safety of the person and contact the Safeguarding Officer or an agency such as thirtyone:eight for advice. Alternatively go directly to Children's or Adult Social Services or the police.
- As soon as possible, to write down what has been shared.

5.2 Initial Response

If there is a concern that a child, young person or adult with care and support needs may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse has been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body (see skin maps in the Appendices).
- Write down exactly what has been said, when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed up.

These notes should be passed on to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Adult or Children's Social Services or the police. Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours, and you should expect an acknowledgement of your written referral within one working day of receiving it.

All documents should be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. Consideration should be given to any procedures that have already been adopted by the church and it is important that the conditions laid down by church's insurers are followed to ensure there is appropriate cover against any claims. There is also a requirement for some allegations to be reported to both the Charity Commission and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. As far as allegations of abuse are concerned Charity Commission guidance states:

'You should report this if any one or more of the following occur:

- There has been an incident where the beneficiaries of your charity have been or are being abused or mistreated whilst under the care of your charity or by someone connected with your charity such as a trustee, member of staff or volunteer.
- There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the charity.
- Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place.
- You have grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred.'

Thirtyone:eight can also offer independent advice that will be followed by written confirmation of the advice given.

If the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or Deputy, is not contactable or they are subject of the concerns, the statutory agencies should be contacted as outlined below.

5.3 Involving Children's Social Services or the Police

It is known that families who find themselves caught up in the child protection system often experience many other disadvantages. Intervention at an early stage will help families tackle their problems before parenting difficulties escalate into abuse. Local authorities are being urged by the government to promote a more positive image of the safeguarding system to encourage and enable people to gain access to the help and advice they need.

The guidelines also suggest that, where appropriate, a referral for further support should follow Children's Social Services' initial assessment of the needs of the child and the family. It may be clear from this assessment that it should not be treated as a child protection issue, but that the local authority should consider the support that can be provided for the family. Some cases, however, will need to continue as a formal child protection investigation. Crucial to any assessment is a knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious aspects. Differences exist not only between ethnic groups but also within the same ethnic group and between neighbourhoods and social classes. Whilst different practices must be taken into account, it is also important to remember that all children have basic human rights. Differences in child-rearing do not justify child abuse.

5.4 Physical Injury or Symptom of Neglect

Where there is a physical injury or symptoms of neglect the Safeguarding Officer should do the following:

- Contact Children's Social Services if there are concerns that a child may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of 'significant harm' or is afraid to return home. Do not tell the parents/carers in such circumstances.
- All relevant telephone numbers are in the Appendices of the Safeguarding Policy.
- If a child needs urgent medical attention an ambulance should be called or they should be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken. The hospital staff should be informed of any child protection concerns. They have a responsibility to pass these concerns on to the statutory authorities.

- If the concerns for the child centre round poor parenting it may be appropriate to speak to the parent/carer, offer practical domestic help and suggest, for example, a chat with the health visitor, doctor or Children's Social Services.
- If a parent/carer is unwilling or frightened to seek help, then offer to accompany them. If they still fail to acknowledge the need for action it is possible to informally discuss the situation with Children's Social Services without divulging their personal details (such as names and addresses) unless, of course, Children's Social Services consider the situation to be serious enough to do so. In these circumstances it is important to realise there may be a bigger picture. Information may have come to light that might be a vital missing piece in the jigsaw. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service is available to give advice in these situations.
- It is important to take older children's wishes into account when deciding whether to talk to parents/carers unless other children are potentially at risk.

5.5 Concerns or Allegations of Sexual Abuse

Where the concern or allegation of abuse is sexual the safeguarding officer should do the following:

- Contact Children's Social Services. DO NOT try to investigate the matter. The important thing is to relay the information to Children's Social Services and/or the police so they can carry out any investigation and take appropriate action under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. (Telephone numbers are in the Appendices of the Safeguarding Policy).
- In the case of very severe sexual assault (such as rape), which may have occurred over the last few days, contact the police. Remember to make a note of what the child alleges and the circumstances surrounding the allegation because of the possibility of being called to give evidence at court. Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as clothing, and dissuade the child from cleansing themselves.
- DO NOT tell the parents/carers, as they could be involved. It is also important no one else who might be involved is inadvertently alerted to the situation because this might lead to the child being 'silenced'.
- Allegations of sexual abuse are usually denied and often difficult to prove. Remember, the child's welfare must be the first consideration at all times.
- Keep information confidential and share on a need-to-know basis only so that any alleged perpetrator is not warned or 'tipped off'. The child or young person also has a right for their privacy to be respected as much as is possible.
- Should the Safeguarding Co-ordinator not feel it necessary to refer the matter to Children's Social Services, but the worker (or anyone else) has serious concerns for the child's safety, then they should contact the relevant authorities themselves. The safety of the child over-rides all other considerations and it is important to remember that sexual abuse of children is a serious crime.
- If the allegation is made against someone who has responsibility for implementing the safeguarding policy, the referral should be made direct to Children's Social Services or appropriate professional advice sought, e.g. from thirtyone:eight.

5.6 Contacting Children's Social Services

When contacting Children's Social Services regarding a concern or allegation of abuse, unless it is a situation described above where immediate intervention is necessary, we would suggest the following:

- Ask for an appointment to discuss a safeguarding issue.
- Explain the situation to the social worker without feeling obliged at this stage to give names and addresses.
- Act in accordance with their advice - they may already have concerns of which you are not aware. We recommend that you confirm the referral in writing to the Children's Services Department within 48 hours. Government guidance 'What to do if you're worried about a child being abused' states that if you have not heard from Children's Services within 3 working days of a written referral, then contact them again. They have a duty to respond to your written referral.

5.7 Action by Children's Social Services

Children's Social Services will normally make enquiries of local agencies (e.g. health, school etc.). As mentioned above, guidance to local authorities encourages them to provide help and support to a family as "a child in need" rather than mounting a formal safeguarding investigation wherever this is appropriate. Government guidelines expect there to be an early strategy discussion between statutory agencies to plan the safeguarding investigation, particularly where there is to be a joint investigation between the Police and the Children's Services Department.

The church and/or person(s) involved in the referral should act on the advice of Children's Social Services concerning their role during any investigations e.g. support to the individual or family. Following enquiries, there will be a further discussion and, if appropriate, a child protection conference will be convened. The leader/worker may be invited to attend this meeting, either to contribute to the meeting or as a support to the parent or child.

5.8 Involving Adult Social Services/Social Care or the Police (for Adults with Care and Support Needs)

Where possible, concerns should be passed to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or Deputy) but difficulty in contacting these individual(s) should not delay action being taken. If the Safeguarding Officer is concerned that adults with care and support needs may have been or is in danger of being abused they should contact Adult Social Services.

If they are not sure whether an official referral is warranted but they nevertheless have legitimate concerns, they should still contact Adult Social Services to discuss their concerns. Alternatively they can contact thirtyone:eight for advice.

The primary responsibility for managing any investigation process rests with managers of the Adult Social Care Social Services teams. When the concern is about someone in residential care, the Care Quality Commission will be involved. Where a crime may have been committed, the police will investigate.

The church has a duty to act on any concern of abuse of an adult with care and support needs to ensure that the situation is assessed and investigated. The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of the person concerned.

5.9 Responding in an Emergency to an Adult with care and support needs

Adult Social Care Teams operate Emergency Duty Teams (EDT), outside regular office hours, at weekends and over statutory holidays. They are available to offer advice and will also take action to protect adults with care and support needs including arranging emergency medical treatment and, where appropriate, involving the police. Contact numbers for the out of hours service are in the Appendices to the Safeguarding Policy.

A member of the EDT would not be responsible for a criminal investigation but if the allegations are serious, a co-ordinated approach between the police and the EDT may result in producing the best possible outcome for the vulnerable adult.

5.10 Action by Adult Social Services

Once a referral is made to Adult Social Care they will check to see if the adult with care and support needs or alleged abuser is known to them. If the adult with care and support needs is known, details of the referral will be passed on to the worker involved. The worker and a team manager will then decide if an Adult Protection Inquiry should proceed. If the individual isn't known to Adult Social Care, it is likely a duty worker and manager will make that decision.

5.11 Referrals and Third-Party Allegations

Where a third party makes an allegation of abuse against someone, the role of the worker is to gather as much information as possible about this person, e.g. name, address and employer, that will enable the authorities to identify them. The third party must be advised that the information they have provided and their contact details will be shared with the safeguarding officer and may result in a referral to Adult or Children's Social Services. This is so the statutory authorities can contact them if required.

5.12 Reasons for NOT Contacting Parent/Carer or Alleged Abuser

A child, young person or adult with care and support needs might make a direct allegation of abuse naming the person who did it. Because of fear, confusion or other reasons the allegation might not be wholly accurate. Informing a parent/carers of the allegation could damage any subsequent investigation by the statutory authorities if their reaction inadvertently alerts the person under suspicion, e.g. the parent/carers going to see them to sort the matter out. It is vital no one from the organisation informs the parent/carers of the allegations at this stage. This decision should be left to the statutory authorities.

Another very important reason the alleged abuser is not contacted is that they could try to silence their victim with bribery or threats. Also, they could dispose of any incriminating material such as books, videos, DVDs, photos, computer files or text or social media messages.

5.13 Allegations Against Workers

If the alleged perpetrator comes into contact with, or has a role within the church amongst children, young people or adults with care and support needs (paid or voluntary), it is important to seek the advice of the statutory authorities before taking any action such as

suspension of employment. During the initial steps of an enquiry where a worker is unaware of the allegation, it will be necessary to supervise them as closely as possible without raising suspicion. The suspension of a worker following an allegation is by definition a neutral act but may be necessary because the priority is to protect children, young people and adults with care and support needs from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

5.14 False Allegations

False allegations rarely happen as it is unlikely someone would invent a story and go through the process of making statements if there is no basis of truth, because pursuing an allegation is likely to be both emotionally and physically demanding. A retraction of an allegation does not mean that it is untrue. Younger children rarely make allegations unless they have been exposed to inappropriate behaviour.

A minority of disturbed/damaged young people will make malicious allegations. It can be particularly distressing if false allegations are made against workers or carers. A careful log should therefore be maintained if a young person makes frequent comments about workers, and concerns should be discussed as a staff group to ensure safe working practice in relation to this young person.

It is important to stress that all allegations should be properly investigated in an endeavour to establish the truth.

5.15 Allegations Against Children/Young People

Children and young people have always been curious about the opposite sex and/or experimented sexually.

However, where a child is in a position of power and has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through engaging in sexual activity, this is likely to be regarded as abusive. The same applies where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child. This is not mutual exploration. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great. Approximately one third of sexual offences are committed by children and young people.

Instances such as these would be investigated by the child protection agencies in the same way as if an adult were involved, though it is likely that the perpetrator would also be regarded as a victim in their own right. The possibility is that they have also been abused. Since sexual abuse can be addictive and other children could be victims now or in the future, it is important to take the matter seriously and the church will need to deal with this as they would any other allegation. It cannot be assumed that young people will grow out of it. Most adult sex offenders started abusing in their teens (or even younger).

5.16 Bullying

Bullying is another way in which children or adults abuse other children or adults with care and support needs. It can be verbal or physical and can include teasing, making unkind comments, demanding money, ganging up on another person or physical assault. One might

see evidence of torn clothes, bruising, burns, or scratches. A child, for instance, might be afraid to attend school or other activities if they think the bully will be present. Bullying may also include threats through email, texts, 'happy slapping' (filming assaults on mobile phones), and abusive remarks on internet chat or community sites (cyber bullying).

The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically. The church has an anti-bullying policy in place.

5.17 Domestic Violence

The importance of mentioning domestic violence is because there is often an overlap between such violence and child abuse and neglect. Children may be at risk if they try to intervene to protect a parent. They may also be hurt by an abusive parent. Unborn children may be damaged by violent assaults on a pregnant woman. Domestic abuse may escalate during pregnancy and has been associated with miscarriages, premature birth, low birth weight, foetal injury and death.

Children can be traumatised by witnessing or hearing domestic violence making them fearful, withdrawn, anxious and suffer sleep disturbance. It can affect their schoolwork and create problems in making relationships with peers.

Longer-term effects include lack of self-confidence and social skills, violent behaviour and depression. This is emotional abuse.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident, and should instead be seen as a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim. Domestic violence includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, such as so called 'honour-based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Forced marriage can cause victims to suffer many forms of physical and emotional damage including being held unlawfully captive, assaulted and repeatedly raped. Government work on domestic violence is brought together in the cross-government National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan. This Plan includes:

- the development of the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)
- the establishment of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs)
- Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)
- the development of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

5.18 Violence Against Women and Girls

In 2011 the Home Office published plans to tackle violence against women and girls. Key actions include a youth prevention campaign to tackle teenage relationship violence and a 12-month pilot of Domestic Violence protection notices. The Home Office has also published the government's response to Baroness Stern's review into the handling of rape complaints.

To mark the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day in 2011, an action plan to end violence against women and girls has been published. Key actions from the plan include:

- Making data on regional levels of violence against women more accessible to ensure resources are targeted to where they are most needed.
- New research aimed at countering the myth that false allegations of rape are common and an independent consultation on the measurement of rape conviction rates.
- A new national stalking group to support the work of ACPO and the CPS in improving the police response to stalking and ensuring robust prosecutions.
- Campaigns to raise awareness of the law around sexual offences and challenge attitudes within teenage relationships.
- More training for key frontline professionals - including doctors, nurses, health visitors - on identifying and dealing with violence against women.
- Sustainable central funding for frontline services, including rape crisis centres and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, and four years of funding for the National Domestic Violence Helpline.

5.19 Mental Illness

Mental health problems affect at least one in six people in the UK. Most parents care well for their children despite being ill, but sometimes children's lives are severely affected and may be considered to be at risk of significant harm due to, for example, neglect or violence. It can also be emotional abuse. There are services that parents can access through their GP for treatment. Many parents are frightened to seek help in case their children are removed, so raising the issue may be a challenge

5.20 Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

Alcohol and drugs misuse by a parent/carer might not mean that a child's development or well-being will be impaired, but it could still impact on a child or adults with care and support needs in a number of different ways including emotional abuse. An unborn child's development could be damaged. Alcohol or drug misuse might place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of injury, neglect or stress. Children and adults with care and support needs may be harmed by coming into contact with alcohol, drugs or needles.

6 Pastoral Care

6.1 Listening Skills

The church provides support for those seeking pastoral care, often through its extended leadership team and Life Group leaders.

Pastoral care for adults may also be taken on by other volunteers; for example, through programmes run outside of Sunday services or in Life Groups. Pastoral Care for youth can be arranged by the youth worker or by parents of the youth in question. Those involved in pastoral care of youth should always be DBS checked.

Those involved providing this support should not be afraid to acknowledge their limitations and refer people on to those with the requisite skills. Sometimes it is difficult to know when that moment arrives but, if in doubt, it is always better to take advice from a supervisor, being careful not to breach any areas of confidentiality between the listener and the person they have been helping. Having said this, it is important not to underestimate the contribution those with pastoral responsibilities can make in providing a listening, non-judgemental and caring environment. This may be all the person needs. However, if someone, for example, admits to regularly self-harming or is suicidal, additional support such as counselling would be needed. This support may be provided, for example, through another organisation, or the person's GP.

6.2 Counselling

There are differences between counselling, listening, pastoral care and ministering. All are of value and may work alongside each other, but it is important that counselling is left to those who are appropriately qualified. For the purposes of this document, counselling is understood to be the formal process for specific issue(s) and provided by a counsellor or therapist either professionally qualified and accredited to do so or working towards this under supervision. At the time of writing (February 2017), Church on the Weald does not provide a counselling service, but if this changes then this document will be updated.

Problems can arise when boundaries are not respected and well-meaning but inexperienced individuals assume a counselling role. Counselling for sexual abuse in particular is complex and often requires a great deal of training. The government intends to pass legislation that requires any person or organisation offering a "counselling" service to be appropriately qualified. In addition, it is intended that there will be an official regulatory body governing standards of practice.

If sexual abuse comes up in a context of ministry, the ministry can take place as planned, but this must be by experienced people. There must also be clear boundaries to ensure that counselling is not provided in this setting, but, where necessary, the person can be signposted on to where additional counselling support is provided. Assuming a counselling role without appropriate qualifications can cause more harm than good and leave the individual in a worse state.

6.3 Confidentiality and Accountability

Confidentiality is crucial within pastoral care relationships, and this includes written records. Information should only be divulged to a third party with the permission of the person under pastoral care or because they:

- Are considered a danger to themselves or others.
- Give information relating to significant harm of another child, young person or adult with care and support needs.

It is unethical and can be extremely destructive for a person to find the content of conversations with their pastoral carer to be open to discussion. Having said this, no promise of confidentiality is given with pastoral care, and on occasion some details may be discussed with Carl Maidment. This must be made clear prior to any pastoral care work taking place.

If a pastoral carer is given information about a risk of significant harm to a child or young person, it should be explained to them that the statutory agencies may need to be advised. How this is done will depend on whether the person is an adult or a child, whether they are disclosing information about someone else or they are admitting to being responsible for abuse. Whatever the circumstances, any proposed action should be explained carefully and sensitively with the offer of continued support to the client. In these circumstances the guidance in the section "Responding to Concerns" should be followed.

6.4 Parental Carers' Consent to Counselling

On the issues of a parent's rights to know, this may not be a problem if the child or young person is willing for a parent or carer to be made aware of the situation.

Young people between 16 and 18 years of age are generally regarded as competent and able to consent to their own medical treatment. Parental or carer consent to counselling for a child under 16 years is regarded as good practice. Their participation in the decision to seek counselling may well be very beneficial even though a young person might not initially want to involve them.

If a young person under 16 seeks counselling and is adamant that they do not want their parents to be informed, the counsellor can only provide such a service if they are satisfied that the child is "Gillick competent". The term originated from a court case in 1986 (Gillick v. West Norfolk Health Authority, in which Mrs Victoria Gillick tried to show that it was illegal for her daughters to be offered contraceptive treatment without her consent). The House of Lords decided that a child could consent to medical treatment providing he or she could demonstrate "sufficient understanding to make informed choices". The ability to consent to medical treatment is still linked to the child's chronological age, but it is recognised that competence in children varies.

Lord Fraser added a requirement that before advice or counselling is given, a counsellor should be "confident that it is in the best interests of the child".

The Department of Health issued fresh guidance to health professionals in August 2004 to clarify the issue in regard to contraceptive services for the under 16s. It states that the professional should build a rapport with the young person, giving them time and support so

they can make an informed choice. They should discuss the benefit of informing a GP and talking with a parent or carer, or, failing that, another adult to provide support, e.g. another family member or specialist youth worker.

It is reiterated that the duty of confidentiality is not absolute. Where the professional believes that "there is a risk to the health, safety or welfare of a young person or others which is so serious as to outweigh the young person's right to privacy, they should follow agreed child protection protocols. In these circumstances, the over-riding objective must be to safeguard the young person". These principles are equally applicable in the counselling situation.

There may be concerns that there are risks of significant harm; in other words that the young person will suffer if parental involvement is insisted upon. If counselling or other help cannot be provided because the young person is not considered "competent", or there are serious concerns or perceived risks about consulting parents / carers, then it would be wise to consider involving Children's Social Services.

6.5 Issues of Touch

It is important to take the issue of touch seriously. Due to the effects abuse may have had on a person, they may be extremely uncomfortable with expressions of physical affection such as a hug or even a handshake. It is therefore vital to be sensitive and if the pastoral carer thinks the person would, for example, appreciate a hug or an arm around them, they should check this out with them first and only proceed if appropriate safeguards are in place for both pastoral carer and the person. This will usually include ensuring any touch takes place by people of the same gender only.

One reason for this is if sexual abuse has been an issue they may not have a clear idea of appropriate boundaries of touch. They may be flirtatious or overtly sexual. In these circumstances the pastoral carer would need to explain gently why such contact is not appropriate in this relationship.

Although wanting to physically comfort someone who is upset is a natural response, it is worth bearing in mind that unless used appropriately it may actually interrupt or detract from the person expressing what they are thinking or feeling.

6.6 Physical Effects

Children who have been physically hurt may need medical attention. Physical injuries coupled with sexual and emotional abuse and neglect may not leave visible scars but the psychological effects can continue into adulthood.

People with low self-esteem and unresolved issues such as childhood abuse may begin self-harming as a way of expressing their pain or deep-seated anger. They often find short-term relief by cutting, burning, vomiting or purging (eating disorders), drinking heavily, misusing drugs, or solvent abuse.

6.7 Emotional and Spiritual Effects

For someone who has been abused, there can be issues of poor self-image and guilt for what has happened. The person, particularly children, may feel 'dirty' or unlovable. It is important to stress to them that they are not to blame for the abuse and responsibility for the abuse rests with the person who has done it.

6.8 Future Relationships and Sexual Issues

Sexual abuse may make a victim feel they could never have a healthy relationship, and that any relationship of this nature would bring back memories of the abuse and the abuser. They may have been so hurt by their experiences that they consider they are not good enough to be loved.

Sexual abuse may have awakened sexual feelings in a child that they find hard to deal with and feel guilty about. They might have enjoyed certain touches. They might even have approached the abuser further for contact because it felt pleasant or because it was expected of them. They may also feel the need to masturbate excessively in inappropriate settings. This can happen when children have had their sexual feelings aroused for the purpose of gratifying their abuser. For an abuser to behave in this way and deliberately arouse sexual feelings in a child is not only age-inappropriate but also a crime. The child again may well need reassurance that they are not to blame for the abuse and that sexual feelings demonstrate that their bodies are working normally.

It is also true that people who were sexually abused in childhood can experience difficulties as adults forming meaningful relationships with other adults.

6.9 Forgiveness

Forgiveness is complex, and often laced with emotions that can span decades of a person's life and are as broad as they are deep. It is vital therefore that the issue is not pressed unhelpfully upon someone who has been abused. Though few would deny that forgiveness can be an important element in recovering the effects of abuse, it must be handled sensitively. When dealing with children the pastoral carer should consider carefully whether or not they are the best person to handle this, due to the emotional and psychological complexities that the person may be experiencing. In all cases it is not appropriate to expect a child to forgive an abuser as they will not be able to appreciate the effects the abuse has had on them until they are older.

In counselling, survivors are helped to understand that forgiveness is usually a process and often linked to them being to acknowledge the full effects the abuse has had on them. It starts with a conscious decision to forgive. It is not for anyone to pass judgement on how, when or even whether a person who has been abused chooses to forgive. This doesn't mean the therapeutic benefits or theological principles cannot be gently explained but it is very important not to be prescriptive and to respect the person's decision. This is an area which may need revisiting at various stages throughout a person's life before it becomes reality.

Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. It may not be safe for the person who has been abused to renew contact because the abuser may continue to abuse. If there are children around, they could inadvertently be put at risk. The abuser may also use any

opportunity to refute the allegations or minimise the seriousness of what they have done. This could be very damaging emotionally for the abused person. Reconciliation would need to be thought through very carefully and discussed with someone who understands safeguarding issues.

6.10 Guidelines and Boundaries for Pastoral Carers

When pastoral care is being offered to those who have been abused there are a number of issues to bear in mind. It is important that all pastoral carers know what abuse is, recognise possible signs and symptoms and know how to respond to concerns.

Those seeking pastoral care within the church are entitled to know what they can expect in terms of good conduct, that those caring for them are accountable and that the boundaries set are respected. Any code of conduct is equally applicable to volunteers and paid employees.

The pastoral carer can face a conflict of interest where pastoral relationships and friendships overlap. This can cause conflict of roles, particularly in the area of confidentiality. For this reason the following points should be adhered to:

- Those providing pastoral care should avoid any behaviour that may give the impression of favouritism or a 'special' relationship.
- Pastoral workers should be aware of the pitfalls of over-dependency in pastoral relationships.
- This dependency can apply both ways and adequate supervision should be provided.
- Workers should be aware of the limits of their ability or competence and seek further help when faced with situations outside their expertise.
- Where workers are providing mentoring for youth this role should be clearly defined.

All pastoral care relationships are ones in which the worker is in a position of influence. Due to this the church eldership will always seek to appoint pastoral workers who are the same gender as the person seeking pastoral care. In some cases there may be two pastoral carers, at least one of whom is the same gender as the person seeking pastoral care. It is important however to be alert to any inappropriate behaviour and aware of the possibilities of attraction when providing pastoral care for someone of the same gender. On occasions, the person seeking pastoral care may request to see someone of the opposite sex or request two people present. As power and control is often present in abusive situations, it is important to take such requests into consideration, whilst ensuring the pastoral carer is able to work safely.

6.11 Safeguarding the Integrity of the Worker

People who contact vulnerable adults particularly can become involved in aspects of their personal finance. For example, they may be asked to collect pensions, do shopping or carry out banking transactions on the person's behalf. When conducting a home visit, money may be lying about. It is therefore important to consider how to protect both the adult with care and support needs and the worker from accusations of financial mismanagement or dishonesty. Any arrangements of this kind for adults with care and support needs should be made ensuring either two workers are present or, where the adults with care and support needs is cared for by someone, the carer is present for the duration of such interactions.

Occasionally workers may be offered presents or monetary gifts by those they are caring for. When providing on-going pastoral support, and when working with adults with care and support needs, these gifts should be declined if at all possible, but if this will cause offence, all gifts and offers of gifts should be reported to the church eldership and recorded.

6.12 Practical Support

Consideration should also be given to the long-term implications if a parent is asked to leave the family home whilst a child protection investigation is underway, or who is serving a prison sentence. There may also be financial pressures on the family if they lose a wage earner. Particular difficulties can arise if the person alleging abuse and the person against whom the allegation is being made belong to the same church. In these circumstances it is imperative that the church eldership clearly identify different people to support both of the parties and not to make a judgement or pre-empt whatever inquiry has been initiated by the statutory authorities.

7 Developing Safeguarding Awareness Training

7.1 The Eldership

The church elders understand and accept the principles of safeguarding in order to support the Safeguarding Officer, Deputy, and workers. They ensure the safeguarding agenda is promoted throughout the organisation amongst those attending meetings and functions and those using the services provided. Carl Maidment is the point of contact for the church eldership team and for reporting or escalating concerns as laid out in this document.

7.2 The Safeguarding Co-ordinator

As well as dealing with concerns and allegations of abuse, one of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator's main tasks is to develop awareness of safeguarding amongst workers and everyone who is part of the church. This can be done through:

- Ensuring everyone working with children and adults with care and support needs (whether paid or voluntary) receives safeguarding training.
- Involving workers and the church eldership in the formation of policies and practice that affect children, young people and vulnerable adults – in particular the safeguarding policy and ensuring a regular review of the policy by the church eldership, preferably on an annual basis.
- Where possible, displaying information about safeguarding in a public place where it can be viewed easily. This includes the safeguarding policy statement, explaining where the safeguarding policy can be viewed, who the safeguarding officers are, where they can be contacted and what they do, and stressing that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Displaying relevant resources and literature for children, young people and adults with care and support needs, parents/carers and other adults, and promoting awareness - raising events (e.g. inviting a health visitor to speak on child health and behavioural issues). This demonstrates a positive and responsible attitude towards safeguarding.

7.3 Safeguarding Training for Workers

All workers should participate in the following training where possible:

- Recognised safeguarding training. This may be run by the church or run by other organisations such as a place of work.
- Role-specific training - to enable workers to carry out their duties in relation to First Aid, food hygiene, other areas of health and safety, driving vehicles, etc.
- Equality and Inclusion training.
- A staff training development programme, reviewed regularly to include opportunities for workers to refresh and update their skills and knowledge.

7.4 Equality and Inclusion

Abuse happens to males and females, to children and to adults with care and support needs, irrespective of their social background, culture, their abilities, religious belief or any other factor. We recognise that some with disabilities are particularly vulnerable due to communication difficulties and dependency on others for personal care. Prejudice can prevent some people getting the help they need. To prevent injustice and discrimination, the church eldership should take clear and active steps to include everyone; children and

those adults in need of protection in all safeguarding measures. It is important that equality and inclusion are upheld in every area of the church. The following will help with this process, for developing a culture of safeguarding awareness:

- Ensuring that the safeguarding policy includes statements that all workers will treat everybody with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.
- That there is a process for dealing with complaints which are fair and open to challenge.

8 Safer Recruitment

8.1 Recruitment Process

Government guidelines stress the need to treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children. Great care therefore should be exercised in the selection and appointment process related to children's work. This will be an outward expression of Church on the Weald's commitment to protecting children and young people.

Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children and young people to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children. The Act specifically includes trustees of charities working with children. In practice this means that a person banned from working with children should not serve as a trustee of a church. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer or continue to allow work with children, to an individual who is disqualified.

Church on the Weald uses thirtyone:eight's guidance on recruitment procedures and uses its recruitment forms. In addition, Church on the Weald has chosen thirtyone:eight as its Registering Body when dealing with DBS disclosure applications.

8.1.1 Initial Approach

An applicant may be approached by children's work leaders, or they may themselves approach the leaders. In either circumstance, initial approval must be sought from the eldership team for their application to proceed. All prospective workers must have been through the church's "Vision and Values" course. This can be arranged with the elders if they have not. Exceptions can be made for crèche workers if the prospective workers have children in crèche and have been attending the church for a significant period of time.

8.1.2 Formal Application

When a person is approved by the church eldership, the leader for children and youth ministry along with the church's registered recruiter are informed and issue an Application Form (complete with formal request for references which are taken up) and a Self-Disclosure form related to criminal records. The children's worker's handbook is also given out at this stage. It is expected that all prospective workers read this thoroughly.

The forms are completed and returned to the recruiter, who then seeks references, which are checked by the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy.

8.1.3 Interviewing

Due to a stringent application process, including meeting with at least one of the elders for approval, interviews will only take place if there are exceptional circumstances, or a cause for concern has arisen as a result of the application process or whistleblowing.

8.1.4 DBS Checks

On completion of satisfactory application form and references the applicant is asked to complete an online DBS Disclosure Application. The recruiter checks the online form and verifies the applicant's identity. The application is then checked by thirtyone:eight and forwarded the DBS who will check the forensic history of the applicant and informs thirtyone:eight. The recruiter can view an online copy of the Disclosure Record. The applicant also receives a copy.

8.1.5 Confidentiality

The recruiter MUST keep all disclosure information securely, in accordance with the DBS's Code of Practice, for a period of SIX MONTHS only and ensure that it is permanently destroyed after this date. No details may be kept in relation to a disclosure except a reference to the Unique Reference Number (see "Handling of Disclosure Information" in the Appendices).

All information related to the application forms and the DBS disclosure is confidential and the recruiter can only indicate the applicant either fulfils the criteria to work with children or not.

8.2 Appointment and Supervision

Any appointee should have a clear job description and lines of accountability to the church eldership. There will be regular opportunities for planned team meetings so that work can be discussed, issues aired, and areas of concern dealt with.

It is important to arrange regular workers' meetings to review procedures to ensure a common approach, sharing of concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance.

No one should be working in isolation but as part of a team showing mutual responsibility for each team member.

It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way that could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the supervisor about the concern. Emphasis should be placed on following the group's guidelines and in circumstances where it is necessary to depart from agreed procedures, in an emergency, or to protect a child, permission should either be obtained in advance from a leader or reported immediately afterwards where this is not possible. Also feedback sessions can be organised to report incidents where guidelines have not been adhered to. This provides protection to the individual and draws the elders' attention to shortcomings and problem areas.

A written record should be kept of issues and decisions discussed at meetings.

8.3 Training

Church on the Weald is committed to training in line with good practice.

All workers will be expected to read the church's Safeguarding Policy and be familiar with this Children, Youth and Adults with Care and Support Needs' Workers Handbook in relation

to working practice, safeguarding and pastoral care. This forms the foundation to their training. Church on the Weald will provide ongoing safeguarding, health and safety and pastoral care training for all its workers in order to promote children's workers' confidence and competence.

9 Management of Workers

9.1 Team Meetings

Team meetings are held on a regular basis. These are usually arranged by each age group leader, but meetings may also be arranged for the whole team. This will promote a mutually supportive working environment where ideas and issues can be aired, concerns expressed, and feedback given.

9.2 Allegations Against Workers

If the worker against whom the allegation is made has any contact with children, the person dealing with the allegation should seek the advice of Children's Social Services and/or the police before taking any action such as suspension of employment or volunteering. Similarly, Adult Social Services or the police should be contacted where there are concerns about a worker's behaviour with adults. It is important to be aware that suspension is not always the best and most appropriate course of action, but serious consideration should be given to this where there is evidence to suggest that further harm may come to vulnerable people if they were not removed from duties (albeit temporarily). During such situations, it will be necessary to supervise the worker as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to your attention, the authorities being informed, and the appropriate action being taken.

9.3 Responding to Allegations

The nature of the allegation may well dictate the response, particularly if it is of a serious nature that requires the involvement of Children's Social Services, Adult Services or the police. Even if the person against whom an allegation is made resigns to avoid action being taken, this does not remove the responsibility of the church eldership to report the matter appropriately and to take further action as necessary.

Appendix 5 of the statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (DCSF, 2010) states the process that must be used when dealing with allegations of a safeguarding nature where the person against whom the allegation has been made resigns their position.

Every Local Safeguarding Children's Board in England is supported by a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose purpose is to ensure all allegations of abuse against people working with children are dealt with fairly and efficiently. They receive and investigate allegations against workers in voluntary organisations (including churches) as well as settings in other areas of the children's workforce.

9.4 Informing the LADO and Other Organisations

It will be important to ensure that you have involved the LADO and the police where necessary in dealing with allegations against workers. Not only is there a formal process for managing such concerns, there are also some legal duties upon employers (of both paid and volunteer staff) to inform key agencies, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Charities Commission, where allegations have been substantiated or there is sufficient cause for ongoing concern regarding a worker's conduct with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF, 2010) states:

The framework for managing cases set out in this guidance applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. It also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate that s/he is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- *behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;*
- *possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or*
- *behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.*

The guidance continues by detailing the primary considerations of any employer in responding to such allegations or concerns; namely that the involvement of the local authority and police should be considered if it appears that harm may have come to a child and where a criminal offence may have been committed, and that consideration to a disciplinary process being undertaken regarding the conduct of the worker in question is necessary to determine the appropriateness of ongoing employment.

In consultation with the LADO, it will be necessary at the conclusion of any investigations and enquiries to consider whether the threshold is met for a referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) for them to undertake an assessment regarding the worker's suitability to work with vulnerable people. Employers have a 'Legal Duty' under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to make such a referral. If the DBS determines that there is sufficient evidence, they have the power to place the worker on the list of those barred from working with children.

Similarly, where there is concern about the conduct of someone who has worked with vulnerable adults, it will be appropriate that the worker is referred to the DBS for consideration to be added to the barred list for adults with care and support needs.

Where harm has been caused to a beneficiary of a charity by a worker (e.g. a young person attending a youth project operated by a church), there is also the requirement to inform the Charities Commission that a 'Serious Incident' has occurred.

9.5 Suspension of a Worker

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a worker, depending on the nature of the allegation and any advice from the local authority and/or the police, consideration should be given to suspending the worker 'without prejudice', in other words, without passing judgement on the validity of the allegation.

This action protects the worker from further allegations of abuse, the organisation from allegations of not dealing with the situation appropriately and, perhaps most importantly, the child, young person or vulnerable adult from further abuse or intimidation. This must only be carried out in consultation with the statutory agencies

9.6 Support of the Worker

The worker should have someone to support them and represent their interests throughout any investigation process.

If it turns out the allegation is a conduct or relational issue rather than abuse, the church will ensure good personnel practices are observed to support the worker as well as the person(s) making the allegation.

9.7 Whistleblowing

In addition to the above there needs to be a mechanism in place for workers to be able to raise legitimate concerns (e.g. improper actions or omissions) about other workers, with impunity. Commonly known as 'whistleblowing', the reporting principles are contained in the Public Disclosure Act 1998. Further information and advice can be obtained from Public Concern at Work.

9.8 Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary and grievance procedures are in place for all workers, paid and voluntary and can be found in the staff handbook.

10 Managing Those who Pose a Risk

10.1 Managing Risks within an Organisation

If someone who poses a risk to children, young people or adults with care and support needs wants to join in with activities or become part of the church, it is important the church eldership manage the risk appropriately by creating clear policies and a code of behaviour the individual must follow. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

The church eldership will seek direct contact with the person's supervising probation officer, and also expect the probation officer to make contact with the church on any issue relating to the safety of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. If the person is no longer being supervised, the church eldership will contact the police child protection team to ascertain how much of a risk the individual is considered to be.

Not all the elders need to be informed of the details about the individual. It may well be sufficient to know there is a concern but that it is being managed appropriately by certain members of the church eldership and the safeguarding officers. Those who know some detail about the individual and their potential risk may experience a range of reactions; some will accept the need to help whilst others will oppose them being involved ever mindful of the risk, perhaps to their own children.

10.2 Written Contract

A written contract setting out behavioural boundaries must be in place for anyone attending the church who poses a risk. This will be signed by the person in question to show they agree to abide by it. Appropriate supervision and support may also be provided. These safeguards are in the interests of everyone - those at risk, the offender who may be making strenuous efforts to change, and the church.

However, at all times the safety of a child, young person or adult with care and support needs is paramount when assessing the risk an individual may pose. No one has an automatic right to work with or have access to children or young people. Similarly no one has a right to work with adults who may be at risk.

Although this sounds very formal, sex offenders in particular are often manipulative. They may not have developed an understanding of the importance of personal boundaries or even accepted that what they have done is wrong. This contract should involve the person's partner and other members of the family who may also be involved with the church and need to be kept informed.

The contract could begin by setting out the pastoral support and care that is being offered but it will need to be personalised to the individual concerned, local circumstances and the risk they may pose to others.

In looking at the appropriate supervision of an individual considered a risk, the church should:

- Arrange a frank discussion between the elders (more than one) and the person concerned. This may include the probation officer or other agencies involved.
- Make efforts to sustain open communication with the statutory and voluntary agencies involved with the offender.
- Establish clear boundaries of behaviour in relationships. These boundaries may vary depending upon the nature of the offence(s) they have committed.
- Draw up a contract between the church eldership and the offender based upon an open discussion. Such a contract may well form part of MAPPA that is agreed for an individual in advance of their release from prison.
- Ensure the contract is signed and dated by the offender and by the elders of the church.
- Understand that a contract may be associated with, but not solely follow a criminal prosecution. Similarly the ending of a period when an offender's name has been on the sex offenders' register should not indicate the ending of the contract drawn up between the offender and the elders.
- If the person does not keep to the boundaries set, the police should be contacted for advice. If the person leaves the church, the statutory agencies, such as probation, police child protection team, or Children's and Adult Social Services, should be informed.

10.3 Children and Young People Displaying Sexually Harmful Behaviour

Research shows that approximately one third of sexual offences are committed by young people under the age of 18. It is therefore likely that places of worship may find that they have a young person attending their church, or children's or youth group who has such an offence. Children and young people will need support and help in managing boundaries.

11 Working in Partnership

11.1 Children and Young People Placed with Host Families

On occasions the church may develop contacts and run projects and activities that involve children and young people staying with host families. Some may be well-known to the church, but others and members of their household might not. It is therefore important to ensure safe working practice.

Prior to the child or young person's visit, the host family must have been interviewed for suitability and ideally a home visit made. It may seem obvious, but the church should obtain:

- Names and ages of all members of the household.
- Home address and contact details (phone numbers and email).
- A Disclosure check on all occupants in the household who are 18 years of age or over.
- Details of any current criminal investigation, or any charge or conviction for a criminal offence by a member of the household.
- Details of sleeping arrangements, meal times, etc.

It is important the child or young person is protected from false allegations made against members of the host family. Every host family should therefore be given:

- A copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy.
- Name of the child or young person together with any other relevant information (e.g. medical details).
- Name, address and telephone numbers of the parents or carers.
- An itinerary/programme of activities.

Every parent/carers should be provided with:

- Details of the host family.
- A statement that all host families have been assessed by the church prior to the visit.
- A statement that the place of worship or activity has a safeguarding policy.
- The phone number of a contact person if there are any concerns.
- A programme of activities.

Appendices

Definition of a Child

The legal definition of a child is someone under the age of 18. Some legislation in the UK allows young people from age 16 to make certain decisions for themselves (e.g. getting married), but safeguarding legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 because this is the legal definition of a child. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in Scotland and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in Northern Ireland similarly define a child as someone under 18.

Throughout this handbook, when we refer to a child our meaning (unless otherwise stated) is a person under the age of 18.

Definition of an Adult with Care and Support Needs or an Adult in Need of Protection

An adult is someone over 18 (unless specific legislation states otherwise). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) all state that adults should be free from abuse.

It follows that some adults because of circumstance or particular vulnerability or risk may be in need of protection. Adults with care and support needs are also known as 'adults at risk'.

"No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse?" from the Department of Health and Home Office (March 2000) states a vulnerable person is someone "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)".

What are Abuse and Neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults with Care and Support Needs)

The following definition of abuse is laid down in "No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse" (Department of Health 2000):

"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors: Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it."

Physical Abuse

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

Sexual Abuse

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

Financial or Material Abuse

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.

Neglect or Act of Omission

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the adults with care and support needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general wellbeing or development is impaired.

Discriminatory Abuse

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability, etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

Institutional Abuse

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a adults with care and support needs.by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

First Aid and Contact Sheet

All premises used by children should have a properly equipped first aid kit. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container and the designated worker should regularly check the contents. Workers should be encouraged to attend training run by the St. John Ambulance Brigade or the Red Cross, etc.

A suggested minimum for a first aid kit includes:

- 2 x small wound dressing
- 1 x large wound dressing
- 1 x eye pad
- 4 x triangular bandages
- 2 x non-stick dressing 5cm x 5 cm
- 2 x non-stick dressing 10cm x 10cm
- 1 reel of low allergy adhesive tape
- 1 pair of scissors (rounded ends)
- 4 x safety pins
- 5 x pairs of disposable latex gloves
- 2 x conforming bandages 6cm
- 1 x resuscitation shield
- 20 x wrapped adhesive dressings (plasters)
- 2 x crepe bandages 5cm
- 1 x disposable apron
- 1 x sealed eye wash
- 1 x emergency aid card
- 4 x individually wrapped cleaning wipes (non-alcoholic)
- An accident report book with forms

HIV /AIDS

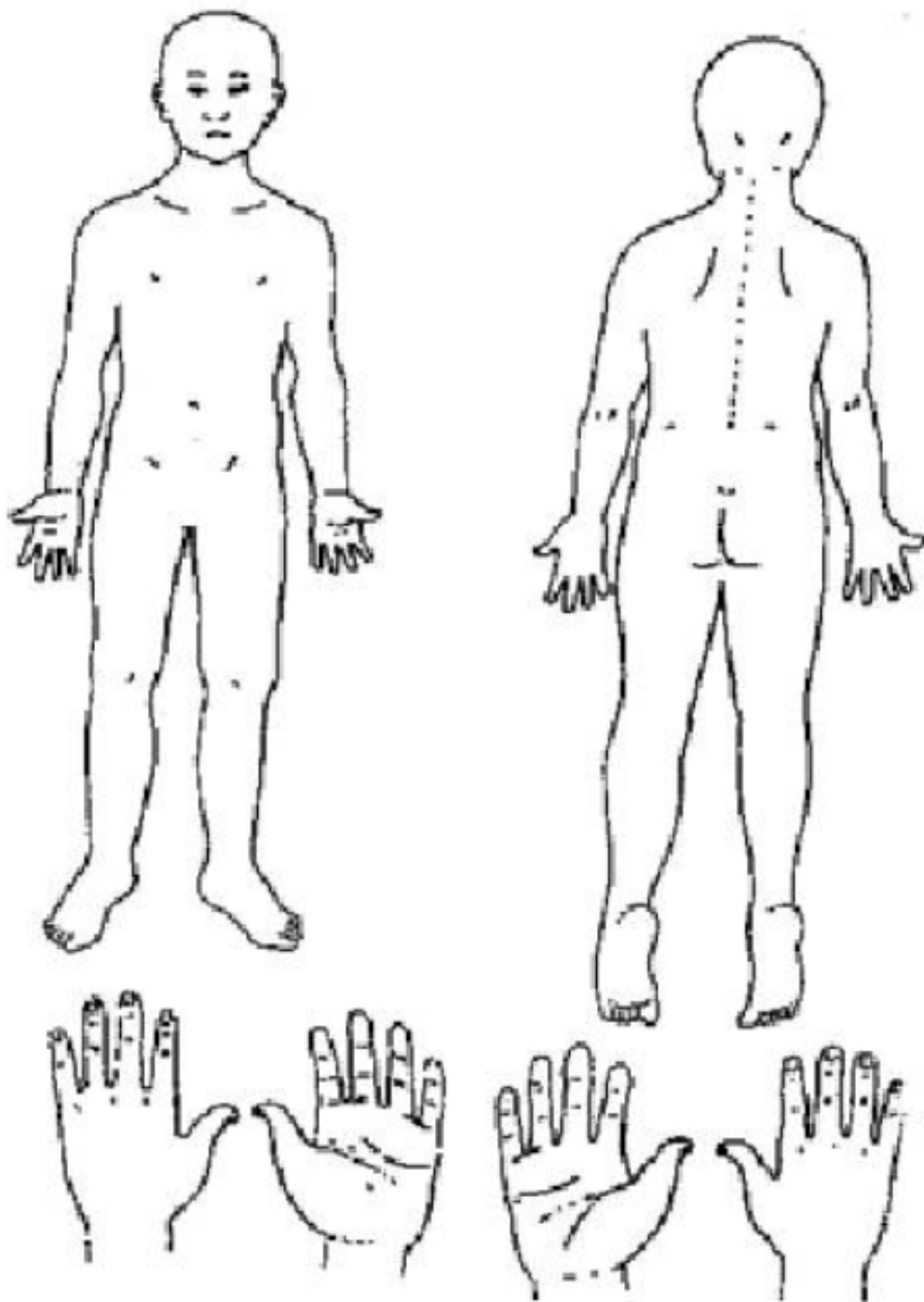
Good hygiene should always be practised. Disposable latex gloves and an apron should be used when dealing with broken skin, bodily fluids or faeces.

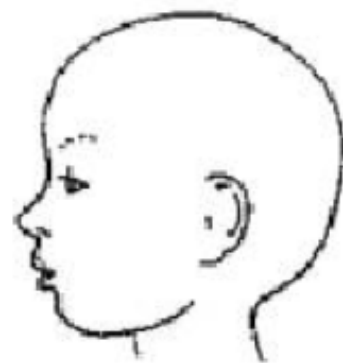
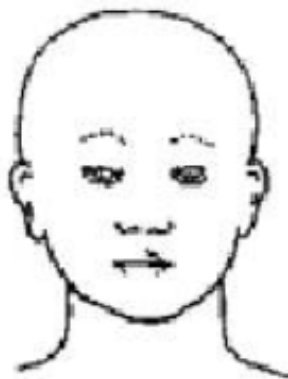
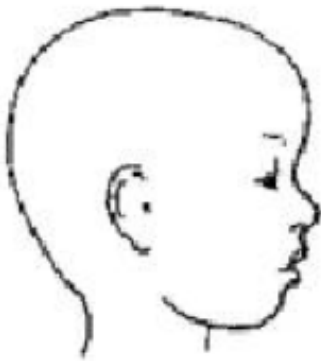
For first aid training and advice contact:

St. John's Ambulance, 27 St. Johns Lane, London, EC1M 4BU
Tel: 08700 104950
Web: www.sja.org.uk

British Red Cross, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ
Tel: 0207 235 5454
Web: www.redcross.org.uk

Skin Maps





Risk Assessment Guidelines

Before undertaking any activity the church should ensure that a risk assessment is carried out, and it is advisable to appoint someone specifically for this task. The following are some areas that should be considered:

- Identification of hazards.
- Who might be harmed and how this might happen.
- Assess the risks and take action to remove or reduce them as far as possible.
- Record the details and what action you have taken.

Compile a checklist for each activity you are undertaking which lists all the actions required to reduce the hazards identified.

Handling of Disclosure Information

Storage and Access

Disclosure information is kept securely by thirtyone:eight online disclosure service.

Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. A record should be kept of all those to whom disclosures or disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information must only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, disclosure information should not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep disclosure information for longer than six months, consultation should be made with the registered or umbrella body and/or the DBS. Advice can then be given to the data protection and human rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access would still apply in these circumstances.

Disposal

Once the retention period has lapsed, disclosure information must be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, disclosure information must not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). No copies of the disclosure information may be kept, in any form. However, a record can be kept of the date of the issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure, and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Abusive Practices amongst New and Emerging Communities

There is now a great wealth of cultural and ethnic diversity within the UK. It has emerged that alongside the positive experiences of living within a multi-cultural society, certain practices are occurring (some of which may have been acceptable or tolerated in other countries) that are illegal and/or abusive in the UK. It must be emphasised that these practices are carried out by a very small number of individuals and are not exclusive to minority ethnic groups. They nevertheless need to be challenged and eradicated wherever they are found.

The following six areas of child abuse are of specific concern.

Child Trafficking

The trafficking of human beings is happening world-wide and should be understood in this context. It is not the domain of one particular nationality or ethnicity. Having said this there is evidence that within the UK children are predominately trafficked from West or Central Africa, Eastern Europe, and South East Asia.

There are no accurate national statistics as to the prevalence of child trafficking purely because of the concealed nature of this criminal offence.

The reasons for trafficking are complex and cannot be disassociated from migration generally. It is not always for criminal exploitation. It can purely be for a child to receive what is perceived to be a better life or education.

Trafficking is often linked to 'private fostering'. The trafficking of a child is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police or Children's Social Services.

Trafficking of Women

Home Office research estimates that in 2003 there were up to 4,000 women in the UK that had been trafficked for sexual exploitation (UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking 2007). UNICEF UK has estimated that some 250 children were trafficked into the UK over a five-year period to 2003.

Private Fostering

The law on private fostering is covered by a number of pieces of legislation, including the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 together with the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. There are many reasons why parents place their children into private fostering arrangements. Such arrangements are subject to national minimum standards. Further information can be obtained from:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren/a0068804/private-fostering>

The most important part of the regulations in respect of a place of worship's responsibility and adherence to the law is Regulation 3, Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.

The regulations surrounding private fostering arrangements are very important because should a person become aware of an unauthorised private fostering arrangement and fail to inform the appropriate local authority, they could commit a criminal offence.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is centuries old. Worldwide, it affects more than 120 million women and an estimated 2 million girls are circumcised each year.

FGM is common to certain traditions and cultural beliefs, and where it is still practised incidents are more commonly found amongst faith communities. It is particularly difficult for the statutory authorities to investigate this offence because of the age of the victims/survivors and the family setting. The procedures are mostly done outside of the UK in unsanitary conditions by people without formal medical training, which can lead to serious infection and death. The peak age for female victims is between 10 and 12 years although it can happen to all ages through to adulthood.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is the primary legislation that deals with this criminal offence. It is not only illegal in the UK but also to travel outside the UK to have it performed. If such an incident comes to notice involving a child below 18 years of age, there is an obligation, in the interest of the child, for individuals to report the matter to the police or Children's Social Services.

Children Accused Linked to Faith or Belief (Witchcraft or Spirit Possession)

Over recent years there have been several high profile criminal cases involving child cruelty associated with witchcraft and spirit possession. These include cases of children receiving severe beatings, torture and even murder. Victoria Climbié is one such case and the fairly recent well-reported discovery of a mutilated body of a two-year-old African child is thought to be associated with practices in a small minority of faith communities connected to a belief in witchcraft and spirit possession. The blend of faith and traditional practices has led to a number of children being at risk in the UK. The issues should also be seen in a wider global context, however, and in recent years such offences are generally but not exclusively confined to African and Asian Diaspora communities.

National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

This action plan was created to help raise awareness of the issue of child abuse linked to faith or belief and to encourage people to take practical steps to prevent such abuse. It has been developed in partnership with members of the National Working Group, including central government and local statutory partners, faith leaders, voluntary sector organisations and the Metropolitan Police.

The action plan sets out actions which are being led by the Working Group members, both at a local and national level. It looks at tackling abuse linked to faith or belief from the perspective of the child, parent, community and faith group members and child practitioners.

It is organised into four themes: engaging communities; empowering

practitioners; supporting victims and witnesses; and communicating key messages.

The plan identifies key problems and solutions under each of the 16 actions and includes a number of short case studies profiling some of the work already being undertaken to tackle this type of abuse. It highlights areas where more needs to be done by government, local agencies, voluntary and faith and community sector partners to address this horrific form of abuse. The plan is owned collectively by the Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief.

Thirtyone:eight is part of the Working Group and along with other agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, AFRUCA (Africans Unite against Child Abuse), the Victoria Climbié Foundation and the Department for Education (DfE) is working to address these issues.

The National Action Plan was published in August 2012:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00094-2012>

Forced Marriage

There are clear differences between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage has families of both spouses involved and the choice to accept the arrangement remains with the individuals. A forced marriage is one where at least one party doesn't consent and some element of coercion is involved.

Forced marriage is primarily an issue of violence against women. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30 years, although, there is evidence to suggest some victims are male.

Parents who force their children to marry often justify their behaviour as protecting their children, building stronger families, and preserving cultural or religious traditions.

About Thirtyone:eight

Who Are We?

Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) has been advising on safeguarding since 1983. We are an independent Christian safeguarding charity serving not only churches, but also other childcare agencies, organisations, children and families.

What We Do

Help churches and organisations prepare and implement child protection policies and develop programmes to prevent abuse.

- Give advice and support to children's workers and leaders where there are issues of child protection and allegations of abuse that may need to be investigated by Social Services and/or the police.
- Provide advice and support to safeguarding advisers and co-ordinators.
- Run many training seminars every year throughout the UK, to help leaders and workers recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding issues such as developing safe practice, appointing workers, dealing with allegations of abuse and establishing child protection policies.

How We Are Funded

95% of our funding comes from those we serve - mainly from churches, trusts and individuals. We generate income from selling our wide range of resources, membership donations and training. Funding also comes from conducting DBS checks on behalf of churches and others.

The Home Office, the Department of Health and the Department for Education have endorsed the work of thirtyone:eight

The government has also provided short-term funding towards various projects and resources.

Company Registered in England 2646487

Registered Charity No. 1004490

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