

# **POLEGATE FREE CHURCH**

## ***Safeguarding Policy***

### ***Children & Adults***

**POLEGATE FREE Church agrees that children and adults have a right to live in a way that does not cause them harm or impede their human rights.**

We therefore acknowledge their right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice. We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by all at **Polegate Free Church**.

We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, whilst recognising that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources and training, to those who work with children and adults.

We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be responded to appropriately, including referring to the Police and Social Care if necessary, either Adult or Children's.

We will co-operate with the Police, Children's and Adult's Services in any investigation, will follow multi agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. They can be contacted as detailed below

Name Christine Luker

Contact phone number 07789 338078

Email address [chrisluker2@gmail.com](mailto:chrisluker2@gmail.com)

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator can be contacted as detailed below

Name Lorna Leaver

Contact phone number 01323 488347

Email address [2grans@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:2grans@tiscali.co.uk)

### **Aim and Purpose of this Policy**

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting the vulnerable, both children and adults. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children and adults within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events.

### **Who this policy applies to**

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies:

- to those who attend our Church/place of worship;
- to our trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- to organisations which hire our building with agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent United Reformed Church good practice guidance.

Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy, and our procedures.

Children refers to those under the age of 18 years.

### **Duty of care and confidentiality**

We have a duty of care to beneficiaries of the charity, either adults or children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

### **Preventing abuse**

The church will appoint safeguarding and deputy safeguarding coordinator(s) for children and adults. A role description is attached as Appendix 7.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessment will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with Children, appropriate records will be kept (see URC Record Keeping policy for further details), and adequate insurance will be in place for each event.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Obtaining Disclosure and barring checks wherever legally entitled to do so (see Appendix 8)
- Taking up two references (not family)
- Interviewing candidates

Training in safeguarding will be provided, and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers work within a code of conduct and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding personnel and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with children or adults must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this safeguarding policy as a condition of the letting agreement. If they have their own safeguarding policy they will be asked to provide a copy. If they do not have their own safeguarding policy, the church will encourage them to adopt one before agreeing to the hire (e.g. by referring them to [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk) for guidance on this). In some cases the church may agree to a small organisation following the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

### **What are we protecting from?**

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults. A copy of the definitions relating to children is attached to this policy at Appendix 1. The definitions of abuse in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 2

### **How to recognise abuse**

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. A list of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to children is attached at Appendix 3 and in relation to Adults at Appendix 4. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories.

It is essential to note that these are only **indicators** of **possible** abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for any of these signs and/or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

## **What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse**

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- Stays calm and listens carefully.
- Reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else.
- Informs the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the deputy or the Synod safeguarding personnel)
- Makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record (using the template in Appendix 5). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

## **Procedure in the event of concern**

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police should be contacted by dialling 999.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur:-

- The concern will be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies (see below for the relevant statutory contacts)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it using the template at Appendix 5. This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.
- The person about whom the allegation has been made must not be informed by anyone in the Church if it is judged that to do so would place a child or vulnerable adult at increased risk.

## **Statutory contact in the case of a Child**

Children's social care department 01323 464222

## **Statutory contact in the case of a Vulnerable Adult**

Adult Social services Department 03456080191

## **If someone in the church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults**

We will inform one of the Synod Safeguarding personnel, so that they can offer advice and support, and we will contact the relevant statutory agency.

## **If the allegation is regarding a church staff member or church volunteer**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation, possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the church should follow this decision.

LADO Amanda Glover 07825782793 = 01424 724144

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children, OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not work with children, because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct, or satisfied the harm test. or has committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

**This is a serious matter and should only be done with the advice and the support of Synod safeguarding personnel or URC Assembly Safeguarding personnel .**

## **Sources of advice, guidance, and support**

Synod Safeguarding Officer for Southern :

Belinda Herbert - 07716 640 596

Synod Safeguarding link person(s) - children:

Revd Roger Jones Tel. 020 8640 4053

Email [jones.ra@btinternet.com](mailto:jones.ra@btinternet.com)

Children and Youth Development Officer

Email [cydo@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:cydo@urcsouthern.org.uk)

Synod Safeguarding link person(s) - adults:

Revd Colin Telfer Tel. 01843 448705

Email [colintelfer@uwclub.net](mailto:colintelfer@uwclub.net)

Revd Hilary Nabarro Tel. 01303 268621 Email hnabarro@yahoo.com

United Reformed Church Safeguarding Officer:

Amy Slennett Tel. 0207 520 2729 Email safeguarding@urc.org.uk

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 24 hour helpline: Tel 0845 120 4550

*(n.b. out of office hours this should only be used for urgent advice which cannot wait until the following day)*

## Complaints

Should anyone have any concerns or complaints please contact:

Christine Luker (Safeguarding Coordinator)

Contact Mob: 07789 338078

Email address: [chrisluker2@gmail.com](mailto:chrisluker2@gmail.com)

or Lorna Leaver (Church Secretary)

Contact phone number 01323 488347

Email address 2grans@tiscali.co.uk

If would be helpful to have complaints in writing (email is acceptable) as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing complaints will be acted upon.

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

## Review

The Elders will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required, and informing Church Meeting that this has been done.

Date of most recent review:

Date of next review:

Signed .....

Date: .....

(on behalf of the church Elders)

## **Appendix 1**

### **What is abuse and neglect - Children.**

These definitions are taken from *Working Together 2013*

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 a child 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 care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

## **Appendix 2**

### **What is abuse? Adults in need of protection**

The following definitions of abuse are 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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **Neglect, or Act of Omission**

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult 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 well being or development is impaired

#### **Financial or Material Abuse**

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

### **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 vulnerable adult 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.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Signs of Possible Abuse - Children**

#### **Physical abuse**

##### **Physical Signs include:**

- Unexplained injuries
- Injuries that are inconsistent with explanation
- Injuries that reflect an article used e.g. an iron
- Bruising, especially trunk, upper arm, shoulders, neck or finger tip bruising.
- Burns/scalds, especially cigarette.
- Human bite marks.
- Fractures, especially spiral.
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs.
- Serious injury with lack of / inconsistent explanation.
- Untreated injuries.

##### **Psychological/Emotional Signs include:**

- Unusually fearful with adults.
- Unnaturally compliant to parents.
- Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Aggression towards others.
- Wears cover up clothing.

#### **Fictitious Illness by Proxy**

- Psychiatric Illness, whereby a parent or carer deliberately inflicts harm onto a child.
- Normally the child's mother.
- The child has commonly had genuine serious illness in the first year of life (a dependency on medical attention has developed in the mother).
- Very difficult to diagnose/evidence.
- Most common example – Beverley Allet – a nurse convicted of murder and actual bodily harm in the 1980's.

#### **Female Genital Mutilation**

A cultural (not religious) procedure whereby parts of female genitalia are removed - also referred to as female circumcision.

- Illegal in UK.
- Normally undertaken on pre pubescent girls.
- Girls either taken abroad for procedure or “practitioners” come to UK.
- There can be no anaesthetic, no sterile equipment, barbaric practice.
- Complications include – serious infection, septicaemia, death, numerous gynaecological problems.

## **Emotional abuse**

The classic description of Emotional Abuse is “Low Warmth High Criticism” style of parenting.

### **Signs include:**

- Physical, mental and emotional lags.
- Acceptance of punishments, which appear excessive.
- Over reaction to mistakes.
- Continual self-depreciation.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Fear of new situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).
- Self harm.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Drug/solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Bullying/Aggression
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Clingy
- Fearful/withdrawn
- Sleep disorders

## **Neglect**

### **Physical Signs include:**

- Tired/listless
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Poor state of clothing.
- Emaciation, potbelly, short stature.
- Poor skin tone and hair tone.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Failure to thrive with no medical reason.

**Psychological/Emotional Signs include:**

- Constant hunger.
- Constant tiredness.
- Frequent lateness/non attendance at school.
- Destructive tendencies.
- Low self esteem.
- Neurotic behaviour.
- No social relationships.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging.
- Multiple accidents/accidental injuries.

**Sexual abuse****Physical Signs include:**

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Soreness to genitalia area, anus or mouth
- Repeated stomach aches
- Loss of weight
- Gaining weight
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections, discharges or abdominal pain
- Unexplained gifts/money

**Psychological/Emotional Signs include:**

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Sudden changes in personality
- Lack of concentration, restlessness
- Socially withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting – day or night
- Suicide attempts, self mutilation, self disgust
- Eating disorders

## **Appendix 4**

### **Signs of Possible Abuse - Adults**

#### **Physical**

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

#### **Psychological**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia

#### **Sexual**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming

#### **Neglect or Omission**

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

#### **Financial or Material**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

## **Discriminatory**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care

## **Institutional**

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans
- Public discussion of private matter
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity



## Appendix 5

### INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

**Date and time (including year) of incident:** .....

**Date (including year) on which this report is written**.....

*(N.B. This should preferably be immediately or no later than up to 48 hours of the incident taking place)*

**Your name:** .....

**Name of Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult:**

.....

**Date of Birth**.....

**Address if known**.....

#### **Recording:**

Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible – do not interpret what was said using your own words.

Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or Vulnerable Adult said.

Include details such where the conversation took place and who else was present, if anyone.

If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion. It would assist, where possible, to also include descriptions of tone of voice, facial expression and body language.

Record

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Services

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Police

Name \_\_\_\_\_

NSPCC

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow up work:**

**Signed:**.....

**Dated:** .....

## **Appendix 6.**

### **Code of Conduct for working with children or young people**

We should all be aware that behaviour in a worker's personal life (including online) may impact upon their work with children or young people. Therefore, all workers agree not to behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model within the United Reformed Church.

More specifically, all workers agree to the following code of conduct:

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Don't abuse the power and responsibility of your role. Don't belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo).
  
- Do act inclusively, seeking to make all people feel welcome and valued.
- Don't exclude other children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason.
  
- Do treat people with equal care and concern.
- Don't show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc.) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts).
  
- Do encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently.
- Don't threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed or make empty threats.
  
- Do refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning of possible consequences.
- Don't feel you have to deal with every problem on your own.
  
- Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact.
- Don't use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent injury. This should be the use of minimum force.
  
- Do relate to children in public. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk.

- Don't spend time alone with children out of the sight of other people and without the knowledge of someone in leadership.
- Do make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent, and in a way which is transparent, accountable and noted / recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies.
- Don't keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences.
- Do have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with people's consent and URC good practice guidelines.
- Don't take photos and video without consent and stored in a place designated by the church and only use in the ways agreed in line with Good Practice guidelines.
- Do use physical contact wisely - it should be:
  - in public
  - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child.
  - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult.
  - respectful of the child's privacy, feelings and dignity.
- Don't use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual.
- Do respect children's privacy.
- Don't assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker.
- Do respect the right of children to wash, change and use the toilet in private.
- Don't walk in unnecessarily or unannounced/
- Do listen to children and do tell the safeguarding officer if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Don't promise to keep something secret if it is about a children at risk of harm, but only tell those who need to know.
- Do respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices.
- Don't work in ways that put your needs and interests before those of the children you work with.
- Do respect and encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture.

- Don't discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged.

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children & young people  
on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ [church name].

Name of worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 7**

### **The Role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator**

#### **Context**

We believe that our children deserve the best possible care that the Church can provide. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

#### **Purpose of the role:**

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church.
- To provide a first point of contact regarding safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for safeguarding in the church.

#### **Responsibilities:**

##### **To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church:**

- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually. kept up to date, and fit for purpose.
- To make others in the church aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as URC guidelines.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in recruitment of all workers, both volunteers and paid, including, but not exclusively, ensuring that relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Checks

##### **To provide a first point of contact regarding safeguarding issues.**

- To be a named person that children, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with child protection or safeguarding
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate people within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Local Authority Designated Officer of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.

- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To report summary safeguarding information annually to the Synod Safeguarding Officer to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

### **To be an advocate for safeguarding in the church**

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impacts of abuse
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and congregation, including both paid staff and volunteers.
- To update their own safeguarding training every 2 years
- To seek appropriate support, and advice, in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when they are on leave, and to publicise who this is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

## Appendix 8

### Eligibility for DBS checks

URC Good Practice guidance is that DBS checks should always be carried out for any role which is eligible, as part of a safer recruitment process. In order to identify which roles are eligible for a DBS check, it is important to firstly be clear about what each role entails. This is best achieved by producing a written role description which includes reference to: a) the type of work; b) the frequency and period of time over which the work will be done; c) if and how the work will be supervised.

#### Roles involving work with children (under 18 years of age):

**Regulated Activity** - For roles which fall within 'Regulated Activity' an Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check **must** be carried out, because it is a criminal offence to appoint somebody to such a role if they are on the Barred List. In local churches, such roles would typically include:

- any role which is likely to involve teaching or supervising or providing advice and guidance to children frequently (weekly) *E.g. workers in weekly children's and youth groups who are on duty most weeks; people responsible for moderating an online chatroom / social networking group for children; leaders responsible for supervising children within groups which are open to both adults and children such (choirs, music groups, drama groups etc)*
- any role which is likely to involve teaching or supervising or providing advice and guidance for 4+ days in a 30 day period. *E.g. leaders at a children's holiday club or similar event lasting 4 days or more.*
- any role which is likely to involve supervision of children overnight, irrespective of how many nights or how often. *E.g. leaders staying overnight at a children's or youth group sleepover / camp / other residential event.*
- any role which includes specific personal care of children because of illness, disability or age, irrespective of how frequently it takes place. *E.g. leaders of young children who help them with toileting, washing, bathing, or dressing; E.g. a leader who, because of a child's illness or disability, has to help them with eating, drinking, toileting, washing, bathing, or dressing.*
- those who drive children as part of their church role weekly, 4+ days in a 30 day period, or overnight *e.g. someone who has been asked by the church to transport children to and from a church activity.*

- moderators of internet chat rooms or social networking groups set up by the church for children *e.g. the worker who administers a church Facebook group for children*
- any role which includes the management or supervision of the above regulated activity.

*n.b. please note that the above list is not exhaustive but covers the roles which will be relevant to most churches.*

**Supervised workers** - In most church activities volunteers tend to work as co-workers rather than one supervising the other. Therefore, the above list assumes that the roles are not supervised at all times by a senior worker. The URC definition of supervision is where the person being supervised is in sight of the supervisor at all times. If one of the above roles is supervised in this way, it no longer falls within the current definition of regulated activity, but it is still eligible for an Enhanced DBS check only (i.e. without the barred list check) and this should be carried out as a matter of good practice.

**Regular but less frequent work** - those who work with children on a regular basis, but less often than every week, are now eligible for an Enhanced DBS check only (i.e. without barred list check) *e.g. workers on a rota for a weekly children's activity; e.g. workers for a monthly children's activity.* However, the church would be wise to think ahead about whether the person is likely to be involved in other regulated activity (see above) in the next year or two. If this is likely, it should be included in the role description and the Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check should be carried out.

**Helpers who are under 18** - The lowest age at which someone can apply for a DBS check is 16 years old. URC Good Practice guidance states that under 18's should be supervised at all times by an adult and therefore should never be engaged in regulated activity and will not require an Enhanced DBS plus Barring List check. However, if 16 or 17 year olds are doing one of the roles in the above list under supervision, then they are eligible for a DBS Enhanced check only.

**Activities in which all children are supervised by a parent/carers:**

**a) Parent/Carer and Toddler groups -**

**Scenario 1** - Any roles which are solely about working with the parents, providing refreshments or providing administrative support in such a group are not eligible for any DBS check. If the role of the workers does not involve supervision or personal care of children they do not require a DBS check, but the leader in charge of the group and their deputy should have an Enhanced DBS check.

**Scenario 2** - If the role of the workers includes supervision of children (e.g. to allow parents chat together) then Enhanced DBS checks only would be required for the workers and Enhanced DBS plus Barred List checks for the leader in charge of the group.

**Scenario 3** - If the role of workers includes unsupervised personal care of the children e.g. help with toileting (see Regulated Activity section above) then they and the leader in charge will require an Enhanced DBS check plus Barred List check (see above).

***b) All age activities e.g. Messy Church***

**Scenario 1** - Any roles which are solely about working with the parents, providing refreshments or providing administrative support in such a group are not eligible for any DBS check. If the role of the workers does not involve supervision, teaching or specific personal care of children (see Regulated Activity section above) they do not require a DBS check, but the leader in charge of the group and their deputy should have an Enhanced DBS check.

**Scenario 2** - If the role of any workers includes supervision of children (e.g. because some children attend without a parent/carer) they and the leader in charge (and their deputy) should have an Enhanced DBS check.

**Scenario 3** - If the role of any workers includes unsupervised personal care of the children (e.g. see Regulated Activity section above) then they and the leader in charge will require an Enhanced DBS check plus Barred List check (see Regulated Activity section above).

**Roles involving work with adults (18+ years of age):**

The definition of Regulated Activity is simpler for work with adults as it does not depend on frequency, period, or whether the worker is supervised. However, within a church setting, Regulated Activity with adults will be limited to a small number of church roles where the person is involved in any of the following activities as part of that church role.

- help with washing/dressing; eating/drinking; toileting; or teaching someone to do one of these tasks.
- help with a person's cash, bills or shopping because of their age, illness or disability. (A good example is helping someone pay a household bill. Posting the letter for the housebound person is not Regulated Activity but taking the money from them to take and pay at the PO counter is Regulated Activity. This would not usually be part of any church role but is included here for the small minority of exceptional occasions.)
- helping someone in the conduct of their affairs (for example, a Power of

Attorney for someone who is not a relative or friend). This would be very unlikely in a church context).

- driving someone (because of their age, illness or disability) to/from places in order to receive health, personal or social care. (Note: not as family or friend but as part of a church role.)

For roles involving the above activities an Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check **must** be carried out, because it is a criminal offence to appoint somebody to such a role if they are on the Barred List.

For other church roles in which a worker has a significant level of involvement with adults who are in need or at risk because of age, illness, disability or factors arising from social exclusion (whether temporary or permanent), then an Enhanced DBS check only (without Barred List check) should be carried out as a matter of good practice.

### **Safeguarding roles:**

The names person(s) responsible for safeguarding children and/or adults in the local church are not doing regulated activity, but should have an Enhanced DBS check as a matter of good practice.