

OXFORDSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
CHURCHES



# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2023

Trustee responsible for safeguarding  
Sandra Coleman

OXFORDSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
CHURCHES



# Document log

## Version 23.05


1. Reworking of policy structure
2. Contact details updated
3. Significant changes in policy are indicated by a vertical line to the left of the text
4. Significant changes to procedures are indicated by a vertical line to the left of the text
5. Procedures updated to reflect MyConcern as primary reporting tool
6. Role descriptions added
7. Training updates
8. See [Main Policy Changes 2023 doc](#) for summary of significant changes
9. Other cumulative changes made as per change log e.g. punctuation

## Author

Helen Thatcher

## Policy Approval

This policy was adopted by the OCC Trustees on 11 July 2023 for publication on 01 Sept 2023  
The policy will be reviewed annually

A stylized, light teal graphic of a tree and foliage is positioned on the left side of the page. The tree has a thin trunk and several curved branches that form a canopy. Below the tree, there are several large, rounded shapes representing leaves or bushes, all rendered in the same light teal color as the background.

**Speak out on  
behalf of the  
voiceless, and  
for the rights  
of all who are  
vulnerable.**

*Proverbs 31:8 (CEB)*

# Contacts

Please report all safeguarding concerns using MyConcern.

## Safeguarding Trustee

Sandra Coleman

## Charity Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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## Charity Safeguarding Manager

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## Deputy DSLs

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Carol Byrne | 07795 818865 | [carolb@rootsanddrivers.uk](mailto:carolb@rootsanddrivers.uk)

## Regional Safeguarding Leads

### Central Churches

Mark Eley | [marke@occ.org.uk](mailto:marke@occ.org.uk) | 07970 927082

### Edge Housing

Rachel Bashir | [rachel@edgehousing.org](mailto:rachel@edgehousing.org) | 07708 676738

### Roots + Rivers Churches

Carol Byrne | [carolb@rootsandrivers.uk](mailto:carolb@rootsandrivers.uk) | 07795 818865

### Opengate Churches

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### The King's School

Rebecca Gray | 01993 778463 (school hours only)

## Local Safeguarding Champions

Abingdon Community Church  
[safeguarding@abingdoncc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@abingdoncc.org.uk)

Aston & Cote Community Church  
Alastair Barnett | [alastairb@rootsandrivers.uk](mailto:alastairb@rootsandrivers.uk)

Carterton Community Church  
John Gridley | [johng@rootsandrivers.uk](mailto:johng@rootsandrivers.uk)

Cheltenham Church Plant  
Paul Meathrel | [paulm@rootsandrivers.uk](mailto:paulm@rootsandrivers.uk)

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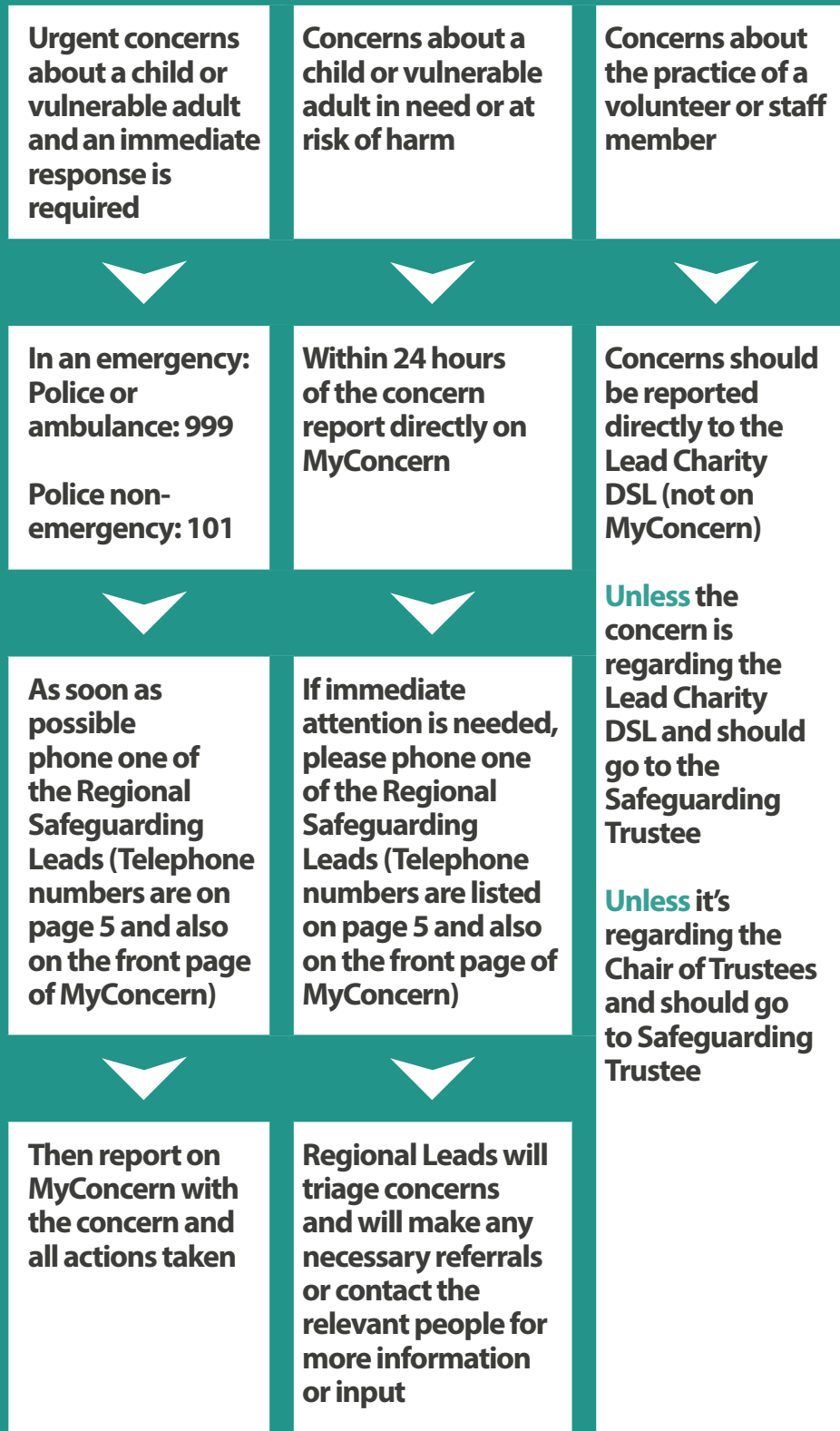
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Witney Community Church  
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# What to do if you have safeguarding concerns

## Flow



# What to do if you have safeguarding concerns

## General advice

Report all concerns within 24 hours following the above flow.

Your role is NOT to investigate.

When deciding what to do, ALWAYS put the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult first.

Listen carefully, make a clear record of what you are concerned about and what you have seen or heard, and date and time.

If in doubt, share your concern on MyConcern. It is better to report and be wrong than not report and be wrong.

If you continue to have concerns, keep raising them, and speak to someone listed above. Your concern may be the missing jigsaw piece.



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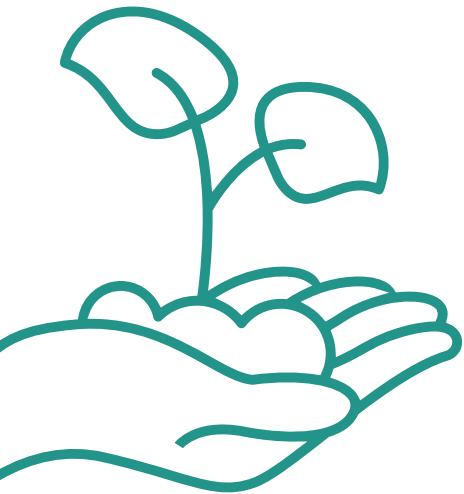
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# Section 1. How to use this document

- 1.1 Guide to reading this document
- 1.2 Glossary of terms and definitions
- 1.3 Role descriptions



# 1.1 Guide to reading this document

We recommend that everyone reads the whole document, because safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the best way to promote a healthy environment is for everyone to be aware of the way that we work. That said, there will be guidance that is specific to specific groups of people. This guidance will be clearly labelled and if you are not involved in an activity with this group of people then you do not need to read that section.

## **The WHOLE document should be read by:**

- Staff (full and part-time)
- Trustees
- Regional Safeguarding Leads
- Local Safeguarding Champions
- Anyone working with both children and adults at risk, or supervising those who do (most church leaders would fulfil this criterion, even volunteers)

## **Sections 1-4 and Annexes should be read by:**

- Volunteers working with children (this includes activities involving children on Sunday mornings, such as worship and other serving teams, and in mid-week activities)
- Anyone eligible for an Enhanced DBS check for a child workforce role within OCC

## Sections 1-3, 5 and Annexes should be read by:

- Those working with adults at risk (in a pastoral capacity or offering one-to-one support, whether as a staff member or as a volunteer. This includes personal pastoring, leading midweek groups or any work with vulnerable adults)
- Anyone eligible for a Basic or Enhanced DBS check for an adult workforce role within OCC

## 1.2 Glossary of terms and definitions

### Activity

*Any project, group or event, regular or one off, that is run by OCC or any of its operational areas for, or with, children, young people or vulnerable adults*

### Activity leader

*A volunteer who leads groups or activities*

### Adult

*Anyone 18 years old or above*

### Adult at risk

*An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 [England])*

Adult at risk of harm/in need of protection:

*A person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:*

- *Personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain;*

*and/or*

- *Life circumstances which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions*
- *Inability to protect their own wellbeing, property, assets, rights or other interests;*

**AND**

*Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed*

Child

*Anyone under the age of 18 and those in Year 13 or equivalent*

Church leader

*The senior leader of the church (often known as the Senior Pastor), or a member of a church's eldership/leadership team*

DBS

*Disclosure & Barring Service*

Lone working

*When a staff member or volunteer is working without any other staff members or volunteers present*

OCC  
*Oxfordshire Community Churches*

Primary ages  
*0-11 years old and primary school Year Reception to Year 6*

Local Safeguarding Champion  
*A worker with responsibility for ensuring good practice: see role descriptions for more details*

Secondary ages  
*11-18 years old, Year 7-Year 13 (including college)*

Staff member  
*Any person paid by Oxfordshire Community Churches (full or part-time)*

Volunteer  
*Anyone who is appointed by OCC to a role for which they receive no payment (other than out-of-pocket expenses that are appropriately authorised)*

Vulnerable adult  
*Umbrella term for any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of herself or himself, or to protect herself or himself from significant harm or exploitation. See also Adult at Risk, Adult at Risk of Harm/In need of protection.*

Worker  
*In this policy, a worker is defined as a staff member or volunteer who has been recruited using Safer Recruitment practices and undergone the relevant DBS check and safeguarding training for the role.*



**All volunteers and staff are required to undergo the relevant checks and training as part of our Safer Recruitment practice, before they are able to undertake a role with children or vulnerable adults. Only volunteers and staff members with valid DBS checks and up to date safeguarding training may work on OCC projects that relate to children and vulnerable adults.**

## 1.3 Role descriptions

### Safeguarding Trustee

- The named Trustee responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for reporting on safeguarding to the OCC Trustees
- Overseeing organisation-wide safeguarding related risk
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deals with complaints or concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Has overall responsibility for safeguarding incidents across the charity
- Oversees MyConcern and ensures concerns are dealt with correctly
- Part of charity safeguarding team
- Informs policy development
- Delivers and develops training

## Safeguarding Manager

- Oversees DBS admin across the charity
- Leads the charity safeguarding team
- Oversees safeguarding policy development
- Manages complaints process
- Develops training with DSL

## Deputy DSL

- Has deputised responsibility for incidents across the charity
- Assists with oversight of MyConcern and handling concerns
- Part of charity safeguarding team
- Assists with policy development
- Assists with delivering training

## Regional Safeguarding Lead

- Is responsible for best practice and outworking the procedure in the region/area
- Champions safeguarding in regional contexts
- May be involved in the follow up of MyConcern concerns reported
- Deals with queries from Local Safeguarding Champions
- Reminds Local Safeguarding Champions of their responsibilities
- Assists church leaders in recruiting Local Safeguarding Champions
- Ensures training log is kept updated and that people are receiving training

- Delivers training as needed
- Will be nominated by the Regional Leader and approved by the Safeguarding Manager
- Will collate a central record of local and regional Risk Assessments

## Local Safeguarding Champions

- Ensures policy and procedure is being followed in their operational area, including Safer Recruitment
- Ensures that all volunteers have the right level of DBS check for the activities being run (working with administrators as needed to ensure all paperwork is completed in a timely way)
- Promotes use of MyConcern by staff and volunteers
- Ensures the visibility of safeguarding and promotes healthy culture in churches
- Liaises with Church Leader and Regional Safeguarding Lead to give feedback on training, policy and practice
- Holds delegated responsibility from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and local church leaders for the creation, implementation and approval of all Risk Assessments relating to local church activities
- Ensures appropriate induction for volunteers

## Local Church Leader

- Ensures a Local Safeguarding Champion is appointed
- Ensures allegations concerning staff members and volunteers are reported to the DSL, according to procedures as outlined in this policy or the [Whistleblowing Policy](#), including referral to the statutory authorities

- Encourages use of MyConcern by staff and volunteers
- Ensures that the Local Safeguarding Champion is informed about all current and new activities which fall within this policy
- Ensures proper procedures are implemented in relation to sex offenders in the church ([see section 3.9](#))
- Ensures safeguarding procedure is followed and complementary pastoral care provided in instances of child or adult abuse and trauma, including pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children

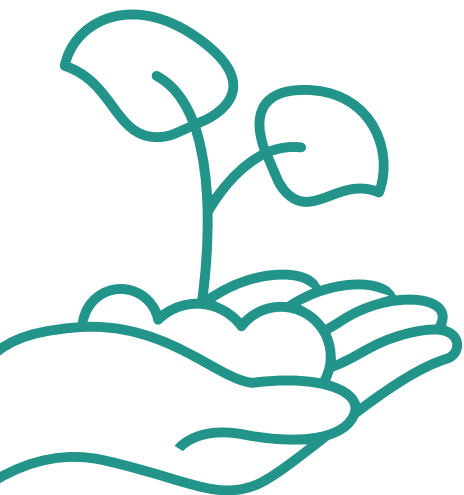
## Governance Teams

- Provide support and oversight for church leaders and staff members and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults in implementing safeguarding in local churches
- Nominate a Regional Safeguarding Lead to take a lead role in this area
- Provide support and oversight for local church leaders and Local Safeguarding Champions in implementing safeguarding as stated above, and ensure that activities with children, both within the operational area and in local churches, are provided according to good practice and safeguarding procedures
- In collaboration with the Charity DSL, refer cases to the Disclosure & Barring Service where allegations lead to disciplinary action, or resignation pending investigation into misconduct

**Note:** Churches may work together in regions to implement the policy and procedures, but it is important to remember that accountability will continue to rest with the leadership teams of individual churches. All activities must be overseen by a Local Safeguarding Champion working with their Regional Safeguarding Lead.

# Section 2. Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 Purpose and scope
- 2.2 Safeguarding policy statement
- 2.3 Context
- 2.4 Values and beliefs
- 2.5 Responsibilities and commitments



## 2.1 Purpose and scope

This policy with its annexes outlines how we will:

- a. Ensure that we provide a healthy, nurturing, and protective environment for everyone who engages with our organisation
- b. Ensure that everyone who comes into contact with our organisation is protected from harm and abuse and that if abuse is identified, it is handled effectively, promptly, and proportionately
- c. Ensure that our trustees, staff and volunteers are clear about their responsibilities and duties, are protected from harm, and are supported to competently and confidently fulfil them in a safe working environment
- d. Support the development of an open and transparent culture that listens to the views and wishes of staff, volunteers, service users and beneficiaries of our organisation, and supports the raising of concerns and complaints
- e. Provide leadership and accountability for everyone involved in our organisation in relation to safeguarding

This policy applies to everyone who works on our behalf with children, young people, their parents/carers and vulnerable adults, whether trustees, church leaders, group/ministry leaders, paid staff, volunteers, or others working on our behalf.

## 2.2 Safeguarding policy statement

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for anyone who connects with our organisation, and especially children, young people and adults at risk of abuse. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and all other agencies involved in safeguarding.

We undertake to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all our workers and will regularly review the operational procedures that form part of this policy
- Ensure that all premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that they are welcoming and inclusive
- Support the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

This document sets out policy, procedures and guidance in matters of safeguarding. Should **specific** circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which



might justify a variation to procedure, then the Charity Designated Safeguarding Lead must be consulted at the earliest opportunity (normally before any action is taken and if not then within 24 hours) and any variation must be recorded. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, then the Regional Safeguarding Leads will deputise as required.

In general, the policy does not pertain to interactions with anyone *beyond the official organised activities of OCC*. Where organised activities overlap with private non-commercial arrangements between family, friends or neighbours, we have made this clear in the text, e.g. parental lifts ([4.10](#)).

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation, has the right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, their parents/carers and their agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.
- OCC has a responsibility to keep staff members and volunteers safe.

## 2.3 Context

Oxfordshire Community Churches is a registered charity, number: 1056921

The operational areas of OCC are:

- Abingdon Community Church
- Aston & Cote Community Church
- Carterton Community Church
- Cheltenham Church Plant
- Chipping Norton Community Church
- Edge Housing
- Kingsgrove Community Hub (subsidiary)
- Lifehouse Community Church Bicester & Banbury
- Oxford Community Church
- The King's Centre Ltd (trading subsidiary)
- The King's Church Didcot
- The King's School, Witney
- Wantage Community Church
- Witney Community Church
- West Bicester Community Centre

The organisation's main activities include church and local community services, pastoral care, educational provision, and support and accommodation for homeless people.

The churches are led by church elders and leadership teams, with governance support. Other operational areas have senior staff who are supported by governance teams which include trustees, staff and volunteers. The OCC board of trustees is mainly comprised of volunteers from different operational areas, alongside a minority of remunerated staff.

Due to separate statutory requirements for Independent Schools, The King's School in Witney has its own safeguarding policy and adheres to that policy. The King's School is a valuable part of the OCC charity and reports in regularly to the Trustees.

Edge Housing, a ministry of OCC, has a supplementary safeguarding policy due to the work they do with homeless vulnerable adults.

## 2.4 Values and beliefs

- a. Everyone who engages with OCC has the right to be protected from any form of bullying or harassment, exploitation or abuse and we will seek to ensure that we provide a caring and nurturing environment that is open and transparent and that promotes the raising of concerns.
- b. We have a particular responsibility to protect and promote the wellbeing of those who are vulnerable, particularly to children, young people and adults at risk of harm, ensuring they are safe while in our care and that we respond appropriately to disclosures or indicators that they are experiencing abuse or neglect while in our care or elsewhere.
- c. Every member of our community has a responsibility to act to support the values and commitments outlined in this policy.

**Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.**

Proverbs 31:8 (CEB)

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Jesus came to save people from every tribe and nation, and the Christian faith has long been the most ethnically and culturally diverse movement in human history. We recognise that no one social group knows how best to care for all children and vulnerable adults, and we recognise the importance of learning from the experiences of others, especially from people with a different cultural or ethnic heritage. Therefore, if and when people from diverse backgrounds raise concerns about our safeguarding practice or suggest possible improvements to it, we will seek to listen carefully to ensure that those experiences and perspectives are truly heard and understood, and we will consider making any amendments that would improve our safeguarding policy and practice that fit within the law of the UK.

The policy and procedure presented in this document are intended to help staff members and volunteers to guard against abuse and respond appropriately when abuse is alleged, disclosed, discovered or suspected.

The nature and diversity of OCC's activities make it difficult to cover all aspects of the work in one policy document. Risk Assessments must therefore be drawn up for each event, group of events and regular activity to ensure that everyone is protected and that staff members and volunteers operate within guidelines

approved by OCC. Use the Risk Assessment proforma in [Appendix C5](#).

## 2.5 Responsibilities and commitments

### **Our responsibilities:**

- a. To ensure that the protection of all members of our community, but particularly children, young people and adults at risk of harm and the promotion of their welfare is of paramount importance to us and that best practice in safeguarding is embedded into the culture of our organisation
- b. To treat each person as equal in the sight of God; equally sinful, equally loved and equally offered the gift of salvation and reconciliation to God, and equally protected and respected
- c. To value, respect and listen to the wishes of every member of our community, including those who are vulnerable or find it difficult to make their voice heard
- d. To ensure that as an organisation we are alert to our duties around the Prevent Duty 2016 and to report appropriately
- e. To work in partnership with children, young people, their parents/carers, adults at risk of harm and local and national partner agencies and organisations to promote the welfare of and to protect each member of our community, and particularly the vulnerable

- f. To work to develop and maintain an environment that is protective, caring and nurturing for all who engage with our community

## **How we will seek to fulfil these responsibilities:**


- a. We will seek to visibly demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding throughout the organisation and our most senior leaders will support the development of best practice and provide accountability to everyone who works (whether paid or voluntarily) on our behalf, including providing accountability and challenge to each other.
- b. We will ensure that those who are responsible for safeguarding at the various levels of the organisation are appropriately trained and supported to competently and confidently fulfil their role.
- c. We will actively seek to create and maintain a culture that is consistent with our biblical principles and best practice in safeguarding.
- d. We will ensure that we have robust and relevant policies, procedures and systems that support the culture of our organisation and the work of all those involved in safeguarding and that these are regularly reviewed for effectiveness.
- e. We will ensure that we appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one deputy who will take responsibility for leading safeguarding children

and adults across the organisation.

- i. Safeguarding will be promoted and overseen by our senior leaders and trustees.
  - ii. Delegation of tasks and responsibilities will be clearly outlined in the relevant role descriptions and the organisation's safeguarding structures, complete with contact details, will be included in our procedures and made publicly available.
- f. We will adopt Safer Recruitment best practice in the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- g. We will ensure that we consider safety in all areas of our work and ministry:
- i. Developing a positive culture
  - ii. Managing health and safety through effective policies and procedures; using Risk Assessments, processes and proportionate systems
  - iii. Creating a positive and nurturing environment in all aspects of the community, including physical, social, emotional, psychological, spiritual etc. environments
  - iv. Considering the online as well as the physical environments, including our use of social media and technology
- h. We will ensure that we monitor the conduct of our staff and that we have policies, procedures and systems for managing allegations against staff or volunteers, supported by a culture of listening to allegations and responding with rigor, fairness and transparency.

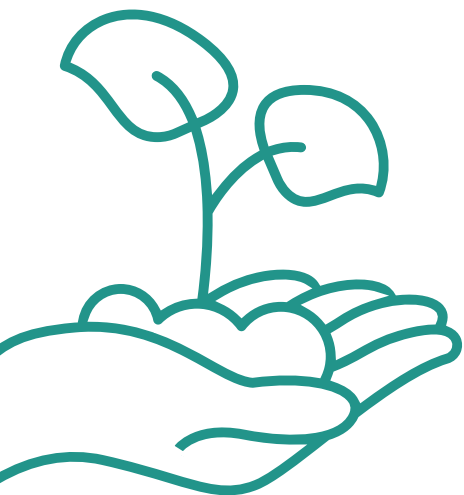
- i. We will seek to clearly identify concerns about the safety or wellbeing of those who are part of our community and to respond appropriately and proportionately:
  - i. To signpost or refer them to local or national services that can help them
  - ii. To provide information, guidance and support as we are able, to help them overcome their challenges
  - iii. To share information appropriately with partner agencies where we have concerns about the safety of an individual and statutory thresholds and/or criteria are met
  
- j. We will record and store information accurately, keeping it securely in line with our legal duties, information sharing policies and national and local guidance and agreements. This will include records such as:
  - i. Consent forms
  - ii. Attendance data for work with children, young people and adults at risk of abuse
  - iii. Accident and incident reporting
  - iv. Confidential recording of safeguarding concerns
  
- k. We will involve children, young people, their parents or carers and adults at risk of harm in our safeguarding processes wherever possible, making reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable them to participate in the decisions that affect them.



- 
- I. We will ensure that we have a culture and policies and procedures for raising concerns or complaints by any member of our community including children, young people, adults at risk or abuse and their parents/carers and for dealing with those concerns in an efficient, open, honest and fair manner, including clear appeals processes.

# Section 3. Safeguarding procedures

- 3.1 Purpose and scope
- 3.2 Governance and oversight
- 3.3 Safer Recruitment
- 3.4 Code of conduct
- 3.5 A safe and healthy environment
- 3.6 Concerns and disclosures
- 3.7 Complaints
- 3.8 Whistleblowing
- 3.9 Managing those who may pose a risk



## 3.1 Purpose and scope

It is important to recognise that it is people, and not only procedures, who protect. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in OCC by:

- raising awareness of the issues involved in protecting children and vulnerable adults in OCC, addressing their needs in all their cultural, spiritual, intellectual, racial and physical diversity
- responding to the needs of children and adults who have been abused, supporting and training those who work with children, encouraging them to work together to follow good practice
- caring appropriately for those in OCC who have abused children or vulnerable adults

*All those working with children and vulnerable adults in a paid or unpaid capacity will be carefully recruited and checked for registration with the DBS at the appropriate level through a criminal records check. They must also complete OCC safeguarding training.*

These checks will also be carried out on those supervising people working with children and vulnerable adults and on those whose representational ministry, office or status gives them the opportunity or the expectation for regular or unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults. This might include for example the church leader, the children's worker, employed youth worker etc.

These procedures aim to provide staff and volunteers with clear and simple instructions as to how safeguarding is promoted and how concerns should

be handled. They will not be used as a substitute for training, but will be used in conjunction with training materials.

These procedures will be applied to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of OCC.

## 3.2 Governance and oversight

OCC will provide effective oversight of safeguarding across the organisation by:

- a. Ensuring that leadership teams promote the importance of safeguarding and lead the development of a culture that is biblically faithful, healthy, transparent, and accountable
- b. Ensuring that a suitably knowledgeable and appropriately skilled Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy(s) and Local Safeguarding Champions are appointed and that they are adequately supported and resourced
- c. Ensuring that a proportionate and legally compliant safeguarding policy is in place and that it is reviewed by the trustees with input and support from the DSL and Deputy DSL at least annually, but more frequently as required
- d. That the DSL provides written updates to all ordinary trustee meetings

- e. That the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements is reviewed annually in line with the review of the policy and procedures
- f. That role clarity is achieved through a clear definition of the responsibilities of all those involved in safeguarding across the organisation ([see 1.3 Role descriptions](#))

## 3.3 Safer Recruitment

We are committed to ensuring the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers at OCC. The King's School Witney follows Safer Recruitment in Education guidance as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education. The other areas of OCC follow the procedures outlined here.

### Prospective visitors

A prospective staff member or volunteer can visit the activity for up to 2 sessions to observe but must not be counted within the ratios or be left alone. Their presence is for visiting purposes only.

### Recruitment process

- Written job/role descriptions will be made available to all staff and volunteers prior to deciding whether to take up the position.
- Lines of accountability and line management (in the case of paid staff) will be made clear.
- Prior to appointment, all staff and volunteers will be required to submit an application form. Where

necessary and appropriate, support can be provided for completion of the form (e.g. lack of literacy skills, English as a second language etc.).

- Appropriate records will be kept of all recruitment processes.
- DBS certificate numbers and date of issue will be kept on ChurchSuite, as well as a training log.
- DBS certificates will be returned to the applicant once seen and no copies will be kept.
- All applicants will be required to declare their agreement to the safeguarding policy and procedures.

**Note:** Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

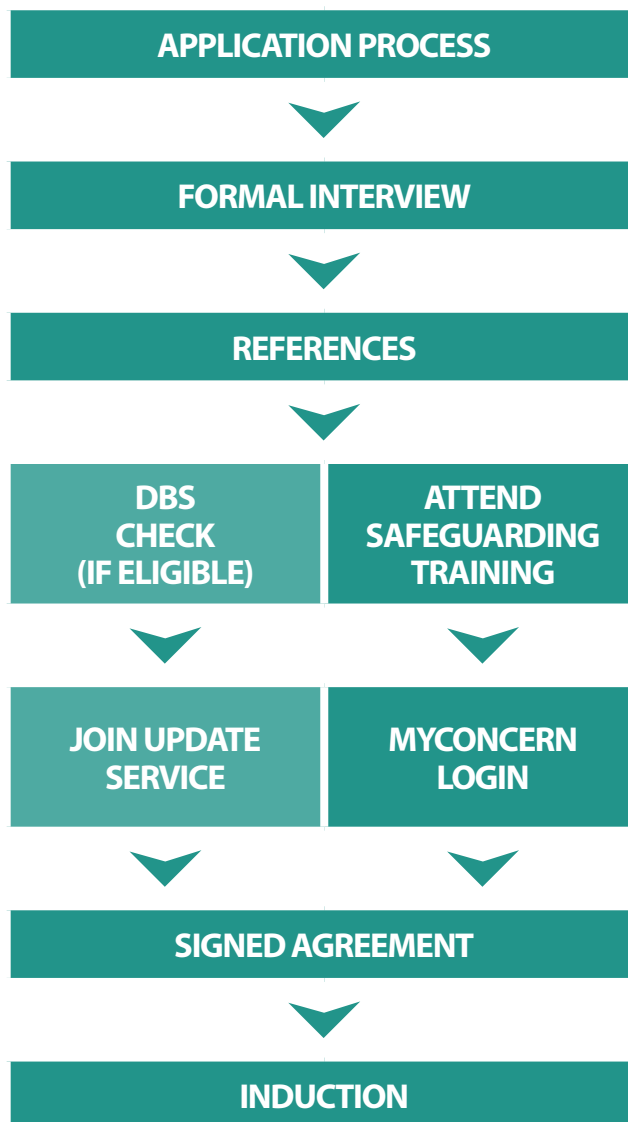
## Paid staff

- Prior to appointment, all paid staff will be required to attend a formal interview, regardless of whether a competitive process is in operation. At least two people should form the shortlisting and interview panel.
- Prior to appointment of staff, references will be sought, including, where possible, a reference from the current or previous employer.
- Upon commencement of their position, all staff will be required to complete an induction process as

outlined in their job description and including any matters identified during the recruitment process.

- All staff will be subject to a probationary period. Regular support, guidance and review will be provided throughout the probationary period and the outcome (passed, extended, failed) will be communicated to the employee prior to the end of the probationary period and records will be retained of all discussions.

## THIS FLOW CHART SHOWS THE PROCESS FOR RECRUITING STAFF

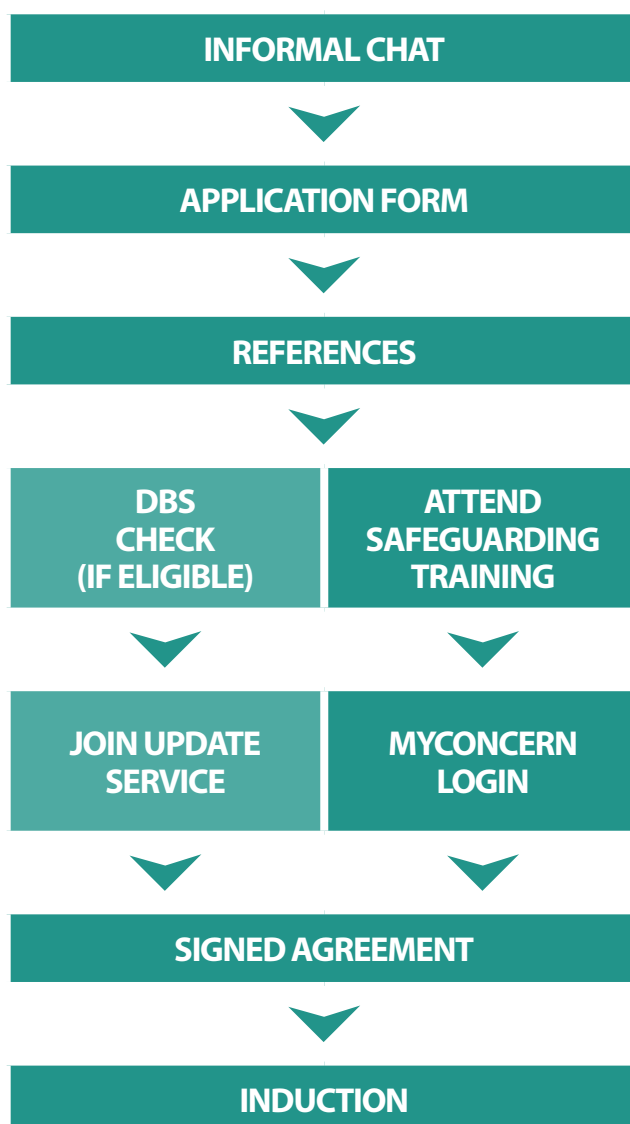




## Volunteer positions

- Prior to appointment, all volunteers will be required to attend an informal discussion to ensure their suitability and clarity of understanding of the role and its requirements.
- Two people, including either the activity or church leader should hold the informal discussion.
- All applicants will be required to complete an application form prior to appointment.
- Prior to appointment, references will be sought.
- All volunteers will be subject to a probationary period. Regular support, guidance and review will be provided throughout the probationary period and the outcome (passed, extended, failed) will be communicated to the volunteer prior to the end of the probationary period.

## THIS FLOW CHART SHOWS THE PROCESS FOR RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS WHO WILL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS



## Ongoing support and supervision

- All staff and volunteers will receive proportionate supervision and pastoral care. Supervision will include both personal wellbeing and performance management.
- Where DBS checks are required, this will be identified in the role description and these checks will be updated at least every three years.

## Training

All staff and volunteers in roles that involve regulated activity or those who manage such staff will be required to attend regular safeguarding training. At renewal, failure to attend refresher training will result in the worker no longer being able to serve in OCC activities.

Training will be given to staff members and volunteers working with vulnerable adults. This will be relevant for specific organised ministries, such as CAP or homeless ministries. It will also be relevant where specific one-to-one pastoral care or small group leadership of a vulnerable adult has been delegated to an individual by the church leadership.

ROLE	TRAINING	FREQUENCY
Trustee	Online webinar safeguarding for Trustees	Upon induction, and then every 3 years. Trustees also serving in other areas must also complete regular in-house training
DSL and Deputy DSL	OSCB/OSAB Level 3 training	Every 2 years
Local Safeguarding Champions	Full OCC training	Every 3 years
Elders and Leadership Team members (voluntary and paid)	Full OCC training	Every 3 years
Paid Staff (apart from finance)	Full OCC training	Every 3 years
Children and Youth Volunteers	Slim OCC training	Every 3 years
Vulnerable Adults Volunteers	Slim OCC training	Every 3 years

## Annual updates and regular briefings

In addition to safeguarding training, an annual safeguarding update briefing will be communicated to all personnel. Local Safeguarding Champions will ensure that regular briefings on procedures take place in local settings.

## Additional checks for staff members

An applicant's UK residency status and/or right to work in the UK will be checked when recruiting for a paid role.

## Overseas workers

Applicants currently residing overseas will need to undergo an additional criminal record check in their country of residence. Specific details by country are listed on the .gov website. Recruiters will inform applicants of any action needed during their application.

## Young helpers

By law, anyone under the age of 18 is classified as a child and cannot be treated as an adult team member.

Young helpers must always be closely supervised by a worker and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. The activity leader is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate ratio of workers to children is maintained with workers. Young helpers

can then be added as helpers in the room (in addition to workers) and do not need to be included in the children's ratio. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that young helpers are helped to develop their skills, attitudes and experience.

Safeguarding procedures apply to a young helper just as they do to any other person. Parent/guardian permission needs to be sought by the activity leader for young helpers to participate in and lead activities just as for any person under 18 years of age. New volunteers aged 16-18 will be asked to provide references and undergo a DBS check.

## Visiting Speakers

Speakers from outside the organisation, invited to join children's activities or groups of identified vulnerable adults, whether invited by staff or volunteers must be approved as suitable by the Local Safeguarding Champion or DSL, and must agree to support the ethos of the organisation to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

## 3.4 Code of conduct

As a Christian organisation committed to working with people including children and vulnerable adults, it is expected that all staff and volunteers conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while they are in this position of trust.

We are looking for compatibility with the Christian faith and Christian standards of conduct in those who work

with us. Some roles within the organisation may require a deeper commitment to the Christian faith, and this will be explained by the local leadership teams.

Everyone at OCC should seek to ensure that their behaviour does not bring OCC into disrepute, adversely affect the dignity of its staff and volunteers, damage our reputation or otherwise give rise to criticism of OCC.

We expect our staff, trustees and volunteers to perform the duties of their post diligently and to the best of their ability. In doing so, they must comply with our policies and procedures.

Everyone at OCC must ensure that the dignity and rights of those it serves and deals with are recognised and protected at all times. People must be treated with fairness, equity and courtesy in accordance with both OCC's policies and the law. Staff and volunteers must not allow prejudice or bias to influence their decisions in carrying out their work.

All staff and volunteers must remember their responsibility to the people that we serve and ensure that they provide a courteous, efficient and impartial service to all organisations, groups and individuals.

Failure to adhere to required standards of behaviour may lead us to apply our [\*\*Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.\*\*](#)

Safeguarding is about keeping yourself safe, as well as looking to prevent harm and keeping children and vulnerable adults safe. Risk Assessments must be

carried out for all activities ([see section 3.5](#)), including for any anti-social hours, lone working or one-to-one working. This is to ensure you have appropriate safeguarding measures in place, such as letting someone know you are visiting a certain person. All Risk Assessments must be reviewed at least annually by the Local Safeguarding Champion and approved by the Regional Safeguarding Lead and Regional Governance Team.

If you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, please use MyConcern to notify us of your concerns. Please see our [Whistleblowing](#) and [Complaints](#) Policies for details on raising concerns.

We ask that all those working on behalf of OCC, as staff or volunteers will:

- Ensure that they understand the policies, procedures, systems, guidelines and Risk Assessments, etc. that are provided and that they are implemented
- Attend safeguarding training on the frequency stipulated in this policy
- Work in a transparent and responsible manner that ensures that they are accountable to the church leaders and that they are open to discussion with and challenge from them
- Ensure that their conduct embraces their responsibility for the safety of those with whom they are working
- Maintain a state of vigilance to identify and report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns about people who may pose a risk to those with whom they are working



- Refrain from any abuse of their power or position and will always seek to act in the best interest of the individual
- Only engage in activity for which they are physically and mentally fit
- Treat everyone as an individual, and with respect and dignity

## 3.5 A safe and healthy environment

We will ensure that the health and safety of everyone who engages with our activities is protected by:

- Regularly reviewing our [Health and Safety Policy](#) to maximise effectiveness and ensure ongoing legal compliance
- Maintaining and implementing proportionate Risk Assessments, which should cover both the premises and the activity
- Maintenance and analysis of [Accident and Incident Reports](#) to ensure appropriate lessons are learned and timely responses are implemented and an overview analysis of reports that examines trends and recurring themes will be conducted at least annually
- Ensuring that adequate First Aid cover is available, as appropriate according to the risk assessment.
- Ensuring that appropriate safety equipment such as First Aid Kits etc. are available and maintained on an ongoing basis
- Key Health and Safety information will be prominent and best practice will be promoted through announcements, effective signage etc.

- Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for those working for the church including staff members and volunteers. OCC is committed to the safe wellbeing of all volunteers and staff members. If you are already or planning on lone working with children or vulnerable adults, the Local Safeguarding Champion must be informed so they can approve and risk assess the activity. Further information is available in the [OCC Lone Working Policy](#).
- The Charity Commission and OCC insurance both require a safeguarding policy to be in place. Each region and local church will produce Risk Assessments relating to any work with children and vulnerable adults.

## Risk Assessments

- A Risk Assessment must be carried out for all activities.
- Every Risk Assessment must be approved by the local leadership team, Local Safeguarding Champion and Regional Safeguarding Lead or Charity DSL's delegate, if they are the same person.
- Any change to a Risk Assessment requires reapproval before implementation.
- Risk Assessments should be reviewed annually by Leadership teams.
- Governance Teams should monitor Risk Assessments annually.
- Risk Assessments must be submitted to reviewers in good time ahead of the planned activity. For residential activities, this will be at least a month before the event.

## Rating your risk

When assessing the risk, you must consider the impact of the hazard occurring, as well as its likelihood. The score you give for impact and likelihood will impact the overall risk rating.

Risks that are likely to be **low**: slips, trips, falls (if mitigated effectively), electrical failure, communication risks, venue hazards

Risks that are likely to be **medium**: transport risks, risks associated with images being shared without consent, medical emergencies, fire safety, some safeguarding risks (if mitigated effectively)

Risks that are likely to be **high**: residential visits or day trips, foreign trips, swimming activities, some safeguarding risks

## How to complete a Risk Assessment

Five steps of Risk Assessment:

1. Identify hazards (anything that may cause harm)
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

Each Risk Assessment must be reviewed annually or as necessary depending on the activity of the session. A new Risk Assessment must be completed for any activity not within the normal range of activities.

Activities to be included in the Risk Assessment are:

- Pictures and videos
- Communication
- Toileting
- Equipment
- Challenging behaviour
- Transportation
- Trips, slips and falls
- Medical emergency (First Aid)
- Venue
- Fire safety

There may be other activities that are not listed above that should be added. Activity leaders, Local Safeguarding Champions and Regional Safeguarding Leads must determine anything else that should be added. Regional Safeguarding Leads have example Risk Assessments and can provide advice on how to create Risk Assessments. See [Appendix C5](#) for a Risk Assessment template.

## 3.6 Concerns and disclosures

See flow chart on [Page 7](#).

### Managing immediate risk

- Upon identification of a concern or receipt of a disclosure, the worker involved should make an assessment as to whether any immediate action is necessary to protect the individual.
- If you encounter a child or vulnerable adult in a situation where they are in imminent danger, you

must act immediately to secure their safety. Seek the assistance of the police and then report on MyConcern/call the Charity DSL or a deputy.

- If the person needs emergency medical attention, this must be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents of under 18s, if available, must be kept fully informed.
- The worker may seek advice from the activity leader or from the Charity DSL, however, the seeking of advice should not unnecessarily delay or prevent the protective action or place the individual at risk of further or increased harm.
- In such urgent situations and if the Charity DSL or deputy cannot be immediately contacted, the worker should contact either the police on 999 or Children's/Adult's Social care to obtain support. Under such circumstances, the Charity DSL or deputy should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Receiving and reporting concerns

- Use MyConcern and follow the flow chart on Page 7 for reporting concerns.
- Do not try to deal with any safeguarding concern on your own. Always tell your activity leader. Agree between you who will report the concern using MyConcern.
- If you are unsure if it is a safeguarding matter, report using MyConcern and the DSLs will advise you on any further action that is needed.
- Always make notes about a possible safeguarding incident or disclosure as accurately as possible and as soon as possible. These must cover what

has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the person's words exactly where possible. If possible, try to note the person's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

- Upload photos of any written notes to MyConcern for filing.

## Responding to concerns

- Do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child or vulnerable person who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.
- Stay calm.
- Listen attentively.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Do not press for information or ask leading questions.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame for what has happened.
- Reassure them that they were right to speak up.
- Inform them that other people will need to be told, and why.
- Explain what will need to happen in an age-appropriate way and with dignity where they are a vulnerable adult.
- Reassure them that support will be available during the difficult time to come.

## Specific guidance for working with vulnerable adults:

- Disclosures may not always be made verbally or in writing to the staff member or volunteer. Sometimes, a staff member or volunteer will observe a situation which seems to be abusive or neglectful. Sometimes the adult has no means to communicate verbally but communicates distress by some other means, such as tears.
- An adult may need support to tell their story. It is important that the story is received and taken seriously.
- It is often not easy to recognise abuse or harm. Therefore, it is important to act if you suspect abuse – do not wait until you are absolutely sure. This does not mean that you are jumping to conclusions or making judgements about the situation; it simply means that there is a safeguarding concern. You may suspect abuse because:
  - You have a general concern about someone's wellbeing
  - You see or hear something which could be abusive
  - Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them, or to an adult at risk, which could be abusive
- In these circumstances, do not delay. Report your concerns on MyConcern within 24 hours.
- Our safeguarding policy requires staff and volunteers to report all concerns of abuse on MyConcern, and the Safeguarding Lead will decide whether to refer on. Referrals to local authorities of concerns regarding vulnerable adults can only be made with

the adult's consent, and will only be acted on where there is a statutory duty to safeguard an adult. We can only report without consent where the risk is high, others are at risk, or to prevent serious crime being committed.

## Allegations against or concerns about staff and volunteers

Any allegation about a worker should be reported directly to the Charity DSL. **DO NOT LOG ON MYCONCERN UNTIL INSTRUCTED.** If the concern is about the DSL or the Chair of Trustees, report to the Safeguarding Trustee.

Non-safeguarding concerns should be raised using the Complaints process (see 3.7 Complaints below) or the Whistleblowing process if the complaint relates to a staff member (see 3.8 Whistleblowing below).

### 3.7 Complaints

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, and to have an opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that made the complaint. Read our [Complaints Policy](#) and refer to your local church website for the local complaints process.

Complaints relating to a risk of harm or potential harm to a child or a vulnerable adult will be dealt with in accordance with this safeguarding policy. For those who do not have access to MyConcern, please contact



your relevant Local Safeguarding Champion to report a safeguarding concern.

Complaints will be handled sensitively, with only those who need to know being involved, and in accordance with data protection requirements.

## 3.8 Whistleblowing

Complaints relating concerns about misconduct within OCC should be raised according to the procedure laid out in our [\*Whistleblowing Policy\*](#).

## 3.9 Management of those who pose a risk

The purpose of providing good practice for ministering to and providing pastoral care for those who pose a risk is to enable them to worship and be part of a church community more safely.

For those with a criminal conviction or caution for a sexual offence against a child and or vulnerable adult, this entails specific prohibitions from offices, roles or responsibilities within the established church e.g. CofE and can be treated in the same way within OCC.

The process set out below was created to support sex offenders but can be used to manage all those who present a risk to children.

## Contract of Agreement

Where ex-offenders are part of a local church setting, it is vital to have agreed procedures to ensure safety. These arrangements are known as a 'Contract of Agreement' and must be established in outline as part of each church's safeguarding arrangements. This agreement will cover a broad range of issues from committing to ongoing pastoral care to restricting access to certain activities or parts of a building hosting certain church activities.

## Dealing with ex-offenders (sexual convictions)

If through any means, a person is found to have been convicted, charged or cautioned in relation to a criminal offence relating to abuse of children or adults, the local church leader, Local Safeguarding Champion, Regional Safeguarding Lead and Charity DSL must be informed immediately, and the following action must be taken:

Presence in church settings:

- Any pending applications to work with children or vulnerable adults must be suspended. If the person is currently a volunteer or staff member, then they must be suspended from that role with immediate effect.
- The Regional Safeguarding Lead, Local Safeguarding Champion and church leader will meet to discuss the situation and agree on boundaries to be set whilst the ex-offender is in the church setting.
- The individual must be informed (face to face)

by the church leader of their decision and the further procedures being followed, as required. The church leader must also agree boundaries with the offender whilst in the church setting and ensure an agreement is signed. (These boundaries must be discussed with the Probation Service working with the ex-offender.)

- The church leader will discuss and establish pastoral care with the ex-offender.

Offenders working with children or vulnerable adults:

- In the event that the church leader, Local Safeguarding Champion and Regional Safeguarding Lead agree that a person convicted, charged or cautioned for a relevant offence may be appropriate to work on a particular activity, then the application process in [section 3.3](#) must be followed, if not already completed. On receipt of the DBS disclosure, the Regional Safeguarding Lead will contact the church leader and Local Safeguarding Champion to inform them of the details of conviction and when it occurred.
- The applicant will not work with any children or vulnerable adults until a decision has been received from the Charity DSL.
- The Regional Safeguarding Lead will submit all details to the Charity DSL for a formal decision as to the capacities in which the person can/cannot work with children.
- If the Charity DSL decides that it is appropriate for the applicant to volunteer, the Regional Safeguarding Lead and Local Safeguarding Champion will meet with the church leader to review the boundaries already set with the ex-offender in

light of the decision. The Contract of Agreement must be discussed and signed. These boundaries must be reviewed regularly and must remain in place for the whole time the ex-offender is in the church.

- Church leaders, personal pastors, key workers (those working with the ex-offender) and the ex-offender must be informed of the decision taken.

## Dealing with ex-offenders (non-sexual convictions)

If disclosures of non-sexual convictions arise, it may be appropriate to follow the same process as outlined above. However, in many cases, disclosures relate to minor offences in the distant past, or offences which do not suggest a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

In these cases, an interview with the person must be arranged to discuss the offence and decisions as to appropriate action and/or restrictions must be agreed between the Regional Safeguarding Lead, Local Safeguarding Champion and local church leader. If necessary, advice may be taken from the Charity DSL.

A record of the decision taken must be kept by the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

## Offender Contract of Agreement

I agree to abide by all the boundaries set out by this agreement, which will enable me to enjoy and experience the life of the church to the full, protecting me and the other members of this church from my weaknesses, and allowing me to grow into wholeness in Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-3).

I agree to come under the authority of the leaders of this church and will be obedient to them in all things.

I may have to be directed in church in various circumstances for my own wellbeing as well as that of others.

I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children.

I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where children's activities are in progress. This may mean exclusion from the building on certain days at certain times.

I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.

I will not attend community groups where there are children, unless agreed by the leadership.

I accept that there will be certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children for whom they care.

I accept that I will only be allowed to use the disabled toilet facilities and will not enter any of the other facilities.

I accept that I will only be allowed to sit in the section of the church as designated by the leaders.

I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, social services, and police (where necessary) who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary.

I accept that **[worker]** will provide me with pastoral care.

I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation.

I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.

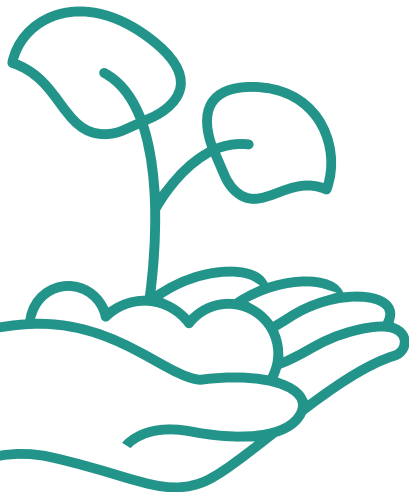
I understand that this agreement will be reviewed every **[XX]** months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signed church attendee	
Print name	
Signed church leader	
Print name	
Date completed	
Date to be reviewed	

# Section 4.

## Guidelines for those working with children

- 4.1 General behaviour
- 4.2 Ratios
- 4.3 One-to-one working
- 4.4 Physical touch
- 4.5 Discipline
- 4.6 Sexual health advice
- 4.7 Controlled substances
- 4.8 Online safety
- 4.9 Anti-bullying policy
- 4.10 Transport
- 4.11 Toileting
- 4.12 Special needs
- 4.13 Consent
- 4.14 Safe environment and venue
- 4.15 First Aid
- 4.16 Residentials
- 4.17 Additional considerations for activities



## 4.1 General behaviour

### Do

Act in accordance with this policy at all times, and in accordance with any guidelines from your Local Safeguarding Champion.

Be a role model – in language, attitude, behaviour, and modelling how to effectively challenge the inappropriate language, attitude, and behaviour of others.

Treat everyone fairly, without favouritism or discrimination.

Always listen to and respect children, taking their contributions seriously.

### Don't

Have a sexual relationship with any of the children that OCC works with. (It is an offence for you to do so, even if the relationship is consensual.) This applies to all under-18s, even if you don't directly work with them.

Engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst you are a staff member or volunteer involved in children and youth work. If you are found to be having an intimate/sexual relationship with a child, you will be immediately dismissed. Where a child is involved, the police will be informed, and legal proceedings will commence.



## 4.2 Ratios

The minimum staffing levels for children's activities are given in the table below and must be followed at all activities. At least two workers should be present at all group activities. Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more workers than the minimum. This would typically be assessed through the Risk Assessment process outlined in [section 3.5](#).

0-2 years 1 worker to 3 children
2-3 years 1 worker to 4 children
4-7 years ( <b>KS1: school years R-2</b> ) 1 worker to 6 children
8-11 years ( <b>KS2: school years 3-6</b> ) 1 worker to 8 children
12-18 years ( <b>KS3 and 4: school years 7-13</b> ) 1 worker to 10 children

### Footnotes:

- Ratios based on NSPCC best practice guidelines May 2023.
- The ratios apply to the school year that the child is in. So, 11-year-olds who will be turning 12 can be counted in the 12-18 years ratio.
- Activities that include children but are not 'children's activities' (eg. Worship team rehearsals) should have a minimum of 2 workers present on each occasion.

Please see online safety section for communication guidance on organising these activities.

## Best practice

- At least one male and one female adult for mixed gender activities with secondary ages. Where this is not possible, an appropriate Risk Assessment must be created and approved by the Local Safeguarding Champion.
- If small groups are in the same room or in an adjoining space with open access between them, then it is acceptable to have only one adult per group, as long as minimum ratios are followed and depending on the nature of the activity.
- For an 18-year-old to be counted in the ratios as a volunteer or staff member, they must have left college or equivalent training and be DBS checked and safeguarding trained. If the 18-year-old is serving in the youth group they were until recently part of, a separate Risk Assessment must be written to assess their suitability.
- No person under 18 years of age must be left in charge of any children of any age.
- Children attending a group must not be left alone at any time.
- Children 16 and over who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping must always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that the good practice and safeguarding procedures outlined in this policy are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.
- Children who start helping/leading between the

ages of 16 and 18 will be asked to undergo a DBS check and provide references. They will not be considered a worker until they have turned 18 and undergone training.

## 4.3 One-to-one working

You must not normally work in situations which require you to be alone in private with a child, of either sex. 'Private' is understood as somewhere where others are not present, e.g., a private room within a public building that does not have a window or visibility to regular passers-by.

One-to-one (1:1) work must take place in a public context, e.g., a café, or another location where others are aware of the meeting and free to interrupt, e.g., a room where there are windows in the door, or the doors remain open.

### **Mentoring young people in the home**

We want to support and protect our staff and volunteers, but also encourage families to include young people in their daily lives and recognise that it is sometimes appropriate for a child or young person to join a family for dinner, followed by a 1:1 session with their mentor. In this scenario, the following conditions should be met:

- Parental consent must be given.
- There must be at least one other adult in the house for the duration.
- The mentor must be DBS checked and safeguarding trained.

- The 1:1 meeting must take place in a living space that is not private or secluded.
- If there is more than one under 18 present, this is a group activity and the minimum adult rules apply.

## Do

If a child wishes to discuss a specific problem, you may find it useful to limit the length of the conversation to one hour. Then, if the conversation is particularly intense or complex, you may be able to arrange a further appointment, or simply take a break before resuming. If you feel out of your depth or want support in this process, ask your supervisor.

## Don't

Enter into or sustain a one-to-one conversation which addresses a child's personal life or problems if the child is of the opposite sex. If a conversation with someone of their own sex is problematic for the child, then you should consider adding a second worker to the conversation.

Never promise confidentiality to any child. Assure them that anything shared will be handled sensitively within the constraints of our legal responsibilities to inform others. The following are some examples of information that must not be kept confidential:

- Child protection issues, e.g. abuse, neglect etc.
- If there is a threat to life
- If there is a risk to yourself or others
- If there is a threat to national security
- If a criminal offence has been committed

## 4.4 Physical touch

Positive physical touch is essential for healthy child development. Some of the children OCC works with will have experienced negative physical touch. Others will have suffered an absence of positive physical touch and will actively seek it, including from members of the opposite sex.

We want to help children understand what types of physical contact are appropriate in different settings, and we want to meet their need for positive physical contact where this is appropriate. However, it is critically important that you follow these guidelines whilst doing so.

1. Physical contact must always be for the benefit of the child, not the adult, and normally initiated/requested by them (for example, you may think something they just told you is distressing for them and want to give them a hug. You must not initiate contact – but if they request a hug, you may respond, or if a baby cries in a group, then you may comfort the child, or if a child needed First Aid treatment and could not communicate, you should carry out First Aid).
2. Full hugs and sitting on laps must be avoided unless age-appropriate (6 years and under); 'side-hugs'/an arm around the shoulder can be appropriate, but you must assess the risks and possible perceptions before doing so.

3. Physical contact should be avoided in 1:1 settings, except where a child of the volunteer or staff member's own sex is extremely distressed and requesting touch. Even under these circumstances you should assess the risks and possible perceptions before responding.

4. Physical contact in a public space and appropriate for the context is fine, e.g., when meeting someone by shaking their hand or giving them a high five.

5. If a game requires physical contact, the nature and extent of this must be agreed with the group before starting.

6. You will be held accountable for any physical contact with children and must be prepared to explain any contact made.

Some children have no concept of appropriate physical boundaries with adults. If they request something which you feel is inappropriate, gently refuse – and then explain why. This will help them to keep themselves safe around other adults.

## 4.5 Discipline

The best discipline is preventative. Work with children at the start of a relationship or session to establish mutually agreed boundaries. Activity leaders will inform the team at the start of sessions when and how discipline will be enforced so that the team can present a united front. Sometimes children become angry, upset and disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others.

If a child is being disruptive, here are some things that may be of help:

Speaking eye-to-eye (crouch down if necessary), calmly but firmly ask them to stop.

Speak to them to establish the cause(s) of upset.

Distract/re-occupy them if possible, away from the cause of upset if necessary.

Give a warning that the behaviour is not acceptable.

If a second warning is required, inform them that they will be asked to leave the session if the behaviour continues.

Warn them that if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer term exclusion from the group.

Individual Risk Assessments may need to be used; please discuss with the Local Safeguarding Champion. If appropriate, parents may be contacted.

If a child is harming themselves, another person or property:

Escort other children away from the area.

With a second staff member/volunteer present, ask them to STOP. If they ignore you, warn them that you will consider calling for help (e.g., the police) if they do not stop.

In exceptional circumstances and with assistance, you might need to restrain them to prevent them harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for the police. This must only be done as a last resort.

After an incident, you must always record what happened as soon as possible after the incident and give a copy to the activity leader and Safeguarding Lead for the session. Your record must include:

- What activity was taking place
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour
- The child's behaviour
- What you said and how you and others responded
- A list of others present who witnessed the incident
- Date, time and location of the incident

Please write as clearly and objectively as possible.

## 4.6 Sexual health advice

If a child asks for sexual health advice or assistance in accessing services, you must balance their rights and wishes with our responsibility to keep them safe from harmful activities. Remember that underage sexual activity can be a sign of abuse or exploitation and that children aged 13 and under are legally considered incapable of consenting to sexual activity. It is illegal to have any form of sexual relations if you are under the age of 16 years old.

You may find the [Fraser Guidelines](#) helpful in considering whether the child has the maturity to make their own decisions and understand the implications of



those decisions:

- Do all that you can to persuade them to speak with their parents/guardians about accessing sexual health services.
- Assess if they are able to understand any advice given.
- Assess if they will engage in sexual activity with or without contraceptives/sexual health services – potentially leading to physical or mental harm.
- If they will not speak to parents/guardians and they are going to engage in sexual activity, it may be appropriate for you to support them in accessing relevant services. Staff members or volunteers must not provide contraception.

## 4.7 Controlled substances

All activities where OCC is acting in loco parentis (in place of the parents) must be drug, alcohol (except for communion directed by the local church leaders), tobacco, vape and offensive weapon free. (Any necessary medication must be listed on children's consent forms.) If an under-18 is found to have drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vape and/or offensive weapons with them at such an activity, the activity leader must confiscate it and record details in the [incident sheet](#). If an over-18 (and in equivalent of Year 13) has alcohol, the activity leader must remove it and return it to them when they leave; drugs and offensive weapons must be confiscated. If immediate support is required, call the police.

Anyone whose behaviour is disruptive due to alcohol or drugs must be challenged; if their behaviour is posing a risk to themselves or others, they must be asked to leave the session. You must consider how they got to the session and parents or guardians may need to be contacted.

## 4.8 Online Safety

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate with others and access the Internet, often referred to as Information and Communications Technology.

### **General guidelines:**

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.
- Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; do not abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information

from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.

- If it is necessary to give personal contact information to children, you must only give details that are publicly available, i.e., a mobile number held on ChurchSuite.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, email addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed on the consent form.
- Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of OCC and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.

## A. Electronic communications

Electronic communication **must** only be used when these three conditions are met:

- With children of secondary school age, in line with the age restrictions of the relevant platform.
- With children whose parents/guardians have consented to this on their consent form.
- Operated by volunteers or staff member.

With the world of electronic communication changing so rapidly, it is not possible to issue guidance that covers all eventualities. However, there are some general principles that can help; please consult your Local Safeguarding Champion or Regional Safeguarding Lead as required.

## Do

Use clear, unambiguous language (rather than abbreviations and 'text language')

If a child in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with you:

- Save the conversations
- Keep a log of who communicated, when and who was involved
- Report it on MyConcern

Use the blind copy (Bcc) function, in line with data protection policy, when sending emails to multiple recipients, unless you have permission from the whole group to share email addresses

## Don't

Use one-to-one electronic communication with primary-age children, e.g., text message, social media. Group video chat may be used but only with parental consent and sign off from your Local Safeguarding Champion.

Share any private information with children, or any information secretly

Request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of your role

Use electronic communication with children between the hours of 21:30 and 08:00 unless in an emergency

Participate in online gaming with children

Make a one-to-one video call to a child

Conduct any text-based conversation (a series of text messages being sent using digital means) with children using any means, such as WhatsApp, texting, Messenger etc.

Put any pressure on children to reveal their personal email addresses or mobile phone numbers

Use language which could be deemed as flirtatious, sexual or showing favouritism. Do not scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, even in jest.

## B. Social media

The Regional Safeguarding Lead must have admin or sign in details for all church-related social media accounts that are used to connect with and contact children. If the Local Safeguarding Champion and Regional Safeguarding Lead are the same person, administrative access to accounts must be provided to the Charity DSL or to the Deputy DSL.

Given the relational culture in OCC churches, outside of formal church activities there will inevitably be friendships between families, including between children and adults, and including on social media. While these are beyond the purview of OCC to regulate, we do encourage workers to gain the consent of

parents before befriending their under-18s on social media, and to consider which of the social media guidelines here are helpful for them, for example not engaging in 1:1 online conversations with children from other families.

## Do

Only use the church's social media accounts when communicating with children, apart from WhatsApp. For other approved social media, a church specific account can be created.

Adhere to age limits of social networking sites, i.e., do not connect with children who are underage for a site even if they have an account. Permission for a staff member or volunteer to communicate with a child must be obtained from the parent/guardian of the child.

Talk (face to face) with a child if you're concerned about the content of their profile (e.g., unsuitable photos). Un-friend them if they continue to post inappropriate content.

Ensure official church pages and profiles have a message stating who to contact (church details, charity details) if there is any concern about online conduct

Ensure a parent/guardian has given consent on a child's consent form before uploading images/videos of them

Ensure that all 'groups', pages and other profiles/ accounts have privacy settings such that they are closed and prevent non-members from accessing content. If there is a reason why a social media platform cannot carry this function, then permission must be obtained from the Charity DSL to use that social media platform.

If using WhatsApp (this is the only social media in which you may use your own profile) or Facebook Messenger, this must only be used in a group context. Such platforms must not be used for one-to-one chats.

WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger groups (for text only, no video) must include more than 1 adult, who must be relevant volunteers/staff members for the group or activity.

Any new and existing social media platform that the church wishes to use must be approved by the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

## Don't

Manage any digital communication with, or communication attempts from, children using your personal profile. Instead, where applicable, create a "church account" e.g., joyouthworkerfacebook. Then give the relevant Safeguarding Lead access to this account.

Delete messages within a church social media account

Give details that could compromise a child's safety, such as schools, locations, home addresses on a public website

Use video or audio chat to talk one-to-one with children

Send video or audio recordings to individual children

Add young people as social media friends, even if they are also family friends.

## Group video calls guidance

This applies to all group calls that are activities of OCC. Private, non-commercial arrangements between families or friends are outside of the scope of this guidance.

- In the context of a group video chat, the only platform OCC approves is Zoom.us. Zoom is the only platform permitted because at present, it is the only one with a room that you can close and doesn't leave people being able to connect over the platform.
- Two volunteers/staff members must be present for the whole meeting. Hosts must use a 'waiting room' to ensure that a minimum of two leaders are present on the call before young people are live on the call.
- Consent for children to be on calls must be obtained.
- Registers must be kept of volunteers, staff members and children.

### Meeting hosts must:

- Ensure that parents and young people are aware that the normal OCC safeguarding policy still applies



during these online sessions. This means that the session will be run by volunteers and staff members and that safeguarding concerns may be reported to the Local Safeguarding Champion

- Ensure that parents are present within the property when primary-aged children are online
- Ensure that parents are directed to ensure young people are in an appropriate location of their home with a suitable backdrop or using the green screen function if necessary. Staff or volunteers will also follow these guidelines and be sensitive to the privacy of those who are in their homes and to take relevant steps towards protecting this privacy.
- Not share the link for children to join a Zoom call on open websites; closed groups are fine
- Think carefully about which meetings with children you will share the link to join publicly on social media platforms or any other public forum.

## Meeting set up and practicalities

- Use a password when setting up meetings.
- Use an automatically generated meeting room rather than your personal meeting ID. When you set up a new scheduled meeting, under 'Meeting ID' choose 'generate automatically'.
- Disable private messaging on Zoom. An exception is made if private messaging is necessary for an activity e.g., Mafia, in which case it is only permitted between individuals and the game-master, and the chat is saved.
- Set screen sharing to 'host only' as this reduces the risk of 'Zoombombing' (where unwanted content is shared in a meeting).
- Disable 'file transfer' to prevent any malware being shared.

- DO NOT record the group call.
- Ensure that chat is automatically saved for sessions.
- End the call for all users at the end of the agreed activity session.
- The meeting host can mute a child or remove a child from the call if needed; if they remove the child, they must follow up afterwards with the child and parent. This may be done by a phone call if appropriate or face to face.

### Participants must:

- Dress appropriately for a public meeting
- Be encouraged to consider their setting and what is on view to others
- Not share the link to join a Zoom call on any public website; links can be shared in closed groups

## C. Cameras and videos

Staff members and volunteers can use their own phone with permission of the activity leader to take photos with documented parental consent. Photos must be used for the intended purpose only and then immediately deleted from the phone or device and where possible cloud storage.

The activity leader must ask visitors not to take any pictures or videos.

## D. Acceptable use policy (for use with consent forms)

- Where access to the internet is provided on our organisation devices or devices owned by an

individual via WiFi we control, we will exercise our right to monitor usage which includes access to websites, interception and deletion of inappropriate or criminal material or unlawfully copied text, video, images or sound.

- Where possible, WiFi access will be via a secure password that will be changed quarterly.
- Social media groups must be used in compliance with OCC's social media policy above.

### Children and workers should not:

- Search for or download pornographic, racist or hate motivated content
- Illegally copy or play copyrighted content where permission has not been given
- Send, request or display offensive messages or pictures
- Harass, insult or bully others
- Access the internet using another person's login details
- Access, download or send any data (including images), which OCC considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material

### Sanctions for violating the acceptable use policy in OCC's opinion of may result in:

- A temporary or permanent ban on internet use
- Additional disciplinary action in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour
- Where applicable, police or local authorities may be involved

## 4.9 Anti-Bullying policy

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- the needs of any bystanders
- our organisation as a whole

We will follow our safeguarding procedures when responding to concerns about bullying, and will provide support to affected parties.

### Online bullying

If we discover that bullying is taking place outside of our activities involving children who know each other through our activities, we will respond by:

- making sure children know not to retaliate online or reply to any bullying messages
- making sure children understand how they can take steps to prevent online bullying from happening again, for example by changing their contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room
- asking the child if they have shared the bullying content with anyone else (if so, who)

If bullying content has been circulated online, we will take action to contain it:

- If appropriate, we will ask the person responsible to remove the content.
- We may contact the host (such as the social networking site) and ask them to take the content down.
- If the content is illegal, contact the police who can give advice and guidance (including when to inform the parents/carers).

## Child-on-child abuse

All workers should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of activities, and online. Workers will be vigilant and report any concerns, including those which may be happening outside of activities or online.

All workers should understand that even if there are no reports at OCC it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if workers have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the Charity DSL (or a deputy). Some examples of child-on-child abuse can be found in [Appendix A1](#).

## 4.10 Transport

For some activities, you may need to transport children individually, in small or large groups.

Sometimes it may make sense to use your personal car to do so. In all forms of transport, there are risks of accidents, allegations or abuse, so you must abide by the following (Items 2-13 do not apply to parental transport):

1. If parents transport children, e.g. to and from activities, ensure that everyone knows such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved and not of OCC.

2. You must be suitably trained/qualified to drive the vehicle and the correct insurance must be in place. You should provide the Local Safeguarding Champion with evidence of your driving licence and insurance (including business use for staff members), as well as evidence that the vehicle you are using has valid tax and MOT.

The above documents are to be reviewed by the Local Safeguarding Champion annually, using the Driving Details Form in [Annex C](#).

If a volunteer needs business use, then the local church should pay for this.

3. Parents/guardians must have agreed to transport on the child's consent form.

4. All passengers and the driver must always wear a seat belt and abide by the road laws.

5. When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle, it is advised to keep children in the same groups on the outgoing and return journeys. This will avoid confusion over whether a child has been transported home.

6. Do not leave a child on their own at collection or dropping off points. Make sure that they are collected by an appropriate adult, or they have safely entered the property.

7. Do not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to you about an in-depth or sensitive matter and has waited until other children have been dropped off, you must explain it isn't appropriate to talk in that context and arrange to meet them in a public setting.

8. The presence of two staff members or volunteers in a car increases the sense of accountability but does not in itself guarantee protection for a child.

9. Be aware of instances where it may be unwise for you to transport a particular child, e.g., where there has been a disagreement or where they have a 'crush' on you.

10. Long journeys can lead to boredom and bad behaviour. Plan time for breaks and avoid travelling during rush hour where possible.

11. There may be times when you are alone in a vehicle with one or more children:

- For short periods, e.g., dropping off the last child from a group.
- In exceptional circumstances, e.g., transporting to or from an appointment or event.

Here are some things to think about when driving alone with a child:

- If there is only one child in the car, the adult needs to be the same sex as the child.
- If, in exceptional circumstances, a volunteer or staff member is transporting one or more children of the opposite sex home, they must get permission from a parent or guardian and inform the Local Safeguarding Champion.
- Would it be better for the child to travel in the back of the car?
- If there is a group of children in the car, then it's fine for a child to sit in the front.

12. Children must normally use a car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm tall (whichever comes first). The car seat must have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle, which shows they're EU approved. Children can travel without car seats in the following circumstances:

- In minibuses, but they must not sit in the front seats.
- In the case of a journey which is unexpected, necessary AND over a short distance.
- If there is no room for a 3rd car seat in the rear of the car.



13. Journeys with children should be reduced or avoided if possible, especially if it is not practical/helpful for the child to sit in the back of the car (because they are an older teenager, or because it would bring unhelpful awkwardness to a mentoring relationship).

In such instances, carry out a Risk Assessment which must be signed off by your church's Local Safeguarding Champion before the event. In the event of an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances which require a change to the agreed policy, the volunteer/staff member must contact the Local Champion or Regional Safeguarding Lead and obtain permission with a report written afterwards. The Risk Assessment must take into consideration points above as well as the following variables:

- The age and maturity of the child.
- The amount of time that will be spent in the vehicle together.
- The nature and length of your relationship with them.

Journeys must be planned as much as possible in advance and a Risk Assessment carried out; where this is not possible an agreement must be obtained from the parent/guardian and Local Safeguarding Champion or Regional Safeguarding Lead.

## 4.11 Toileting

Where possible, please encourage parents to take their children to the toilet before they come to the group.

Only DBS checked, safeguarding trained workers can take children to the toilet. In every Risk Assessment, toileting must feature, taking into consideration location, risk and children's needs.

## **A. Designated children's toilets**

If the building you are using allows for you to have designated children's toilets for your groups, then this would be the best practice. There must be suitable hygienic washing facilities and toilets must be clean for use.

## **B. Toileting for those not yet at primary school**

For those not yet at primary school, there should be ideally two DBS checked and safeguarding trained workers to take children to the toilet; however, one staff member or volunteer may be appropriate in line with your Risk Assessment. Written consent must be given by parents for any nappies to be changed (this may be stored on ChurchSuite). Toilets must be checked to be free from other adults whilst the children are in the facilities as part of the group.

## **C. Toileting for primary school aged children**

Primary-aged children must be taken to the toilet by a DBS checked and safeguarding trained worker. One staff member or volunteer can take the children to the

toilet. The staff member or volunteer must check the toilets are free from other adults and then wait outside. Another adult within the group must be informed you are taking children to the toilet. With younger children, you may sometimes need to enter the toilet to give some help. If you think this is going to happen, then you must take another staff member or volunteer with you where possible.

## **D. Toileting for children aged 11-18**

Children of this age should be able to go to the toilet on their own. Risk Assessments must be used to identify whether this is suitable. It may be appropriate for a volunteer/staff member to go and check there are no other adults in the toilet at that time.

## **E. Toilets for volunteers and staff**

Volunteers/staff members must not use the same toilets as the children, instead using another available toilet, including the accessible toilet if necessary (if, in individual circumstances, this is not possible, then the volunteer/staff member must inform another volunteer/staff member they are using the toilet).

## 4.12 Special needs

We want to welcome children with special needs to our activities. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent or guardian about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility of the child's parent/carer only.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people; this includes children.

## 4.13 Consent

Consent must be obtained for children to participate in all regular and one-off activities. This needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. You must record who has given consent for activities. A [consent form](#) must be completed for every child who attends groups or activities, including for visiting children. The form must be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs, including activities which the child is unable to take part in
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant
- Consent for social media (as per policy)
- Consent for communication (as per policy)

Separate consent must be obtained for one-off events and activities, e.g. swimming, outings, weekends away, etc. All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely in line with GDPR policy. An example consent form is contained in [Annex C](#).

Paper copies must be shredded once information is transferred to ChurchSuite or appropriate system.

Consent records must be kept for 5 years.

## 4.14 Safe environment and venue

For each activity, follow the guidelines below. A separate Risk Assessment must be completed for any unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, the First Aid Kit and fire precautions must be checked, and a Health and Safety Check must be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards. Things to check in a health and safety check are:

- Meeting places must be warm, well-lit, and well ventilated. They must be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Toilets and hand basins must be easily available with hygienic drying facilities, unless the activity is outside and no toilets or hygienic facilities are available; in this case, this must be added to the Risk Assessment and approved by the Local Safeguarding Champion.
- Appropriate space and equipment must be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared by OCC volunteers/staff members for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired. Please see government guidelines; Local Safeguarding Champions will sign off on what is needed.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.

- Volunteers/staff members must be aware of the fire procedures for the setting in use.
- Unaccompanied children should be discouraged from walking to or from your venue along dark or badly lit paths.

## 4.15 First Aid

A First Aid Kit and accident book must be available for all organised activities. The contents of the First Aid Kit must be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group must designate one staff member or volunteer to check the contents at prescribed intervals which will be added to the Risk Assessment. The below is a useful link for more info:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/what-employers-need-to-do.htm>

All activities must have someone designated to lead on First Aid, even if they have not received formal training. A qualified First Aider may be required depending on the outcome of the risk assessment. All staff members and volunteers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and the charity may provide access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders must be compiled and kept available.

All accidents (accident is something requiring treatment of any form) must be recorded in line with the OCC [Health and Safety Policy](#).

For all events run by Oxfordshire Community Churches the event organiser should check with the HSE that

the correct requirements are in place for all events. Guidance on this can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf>

This should be included as part of your Risk Assessment.

## 4.16 Residential

Residential must adhere to the following guidelines:

Give careful consideration to the gender mix of the group you will be taking; mixed gender groups should be accompanied by both male and female workers. Single sex groups must be accompanied by at least one worker of the same sex.

Research the destination(s) carefully and pre-visit the site(s) if possible.

Rules that apply for normal activities may need to be revised and communicated again to the young people and team before embarking on the trip. Any revisions need to be signed off by the Local Safeguarding Champion.

Risk Assessments must be created and follow the guidance in the Risk Assessment section. Consent forms must be obtained for every child.

If the trip involves an overnight stay, additional factors will need to be considered. If it is a purpose-built centre, then detailed liaison must take place with the management of the venue. If it is a camping trip, this will present other challenges including equipment preparation, hygiene etc. that need to be worked through by the leaders.

#### Sleeping Arrangements:

- Workers need to sleep in separate sleeping quarters, preferably adjacent to the young people for supervision
- There must be adequate provision for each gender, e.g. separate male and female sleeping quarters.
- Safe access to toilet facilities during the night must be available.
- Workers must stay awake until all children are asleep, or organise shifts to ensure that children are supervised if they are late to bed or wake early.

## 4.17 Additional considerations for activities

In addition to the above, the activity leader must:

Ensure any health & safety requirements are adhered to as outlined in the Risk Assessment for the activity

Undertake Risk Assessments with appropriate action taken and records kept



Keep attendance register of participants, staff members, volunteers and any authorised guests and consent forms up to date

Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present

Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally

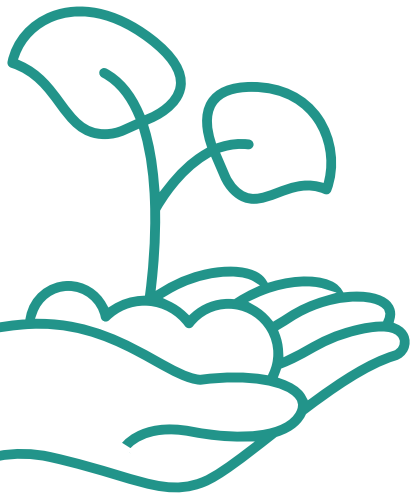
Liaise with the Local Safeguarding Champion over best practice

Always report any specific safeguarding concerns that arise on MyConcern

Any new activity must comply with the [Activity Practices checklist in Annex B](#). All existing activities must be checked for compliance against the checklist and checked every 12 months by the Local Safeguarding Champion and activity leader. Copies of completed checklists must be sent to Governance Teams.

# Section 5. Guidelines for those working with vulnerable adults

- 5.1 Definitions
- 5.2 Assessing vulnerability
- 5.3 Capacity
- 5.4 Good practice
- 5.5 Advocacy
- 5.6 Guidance in pastoral care



## 5.1 Definitions

The term 'vulnerable adult' has a number of different definitions. In order to bring into focus those adults for whom the church must have a particular care, this is the definition which will be used in this policy:

**Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of herself or himself, or to protect herself or himself from significant harm or exploitation.**

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the [Care and support statutory guidance](#) issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing

### Adult at risk

An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 [England]).

## Adult at risk of harm

An adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain  
and/or
- Life circumstances which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions

## Adult in need of protection

An adult in need of protection is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics  
AND/OR
- Life circumstances  
AND
- Who is unable to protect their own wellbeing, property, assets, rights or other interests  
AND
- Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed

The activity leader, Local Safeguarding Champion and church leader will be responsible for identifying who is classed as a vulnerable adult in their setting. This

impacts on the decision whether a person supporting them is eligible for a DBS check or not in accordance with guidelines from the DBS.

## 5.2 Assessing vulnerability

Vulnerability is part of being human and no one is invulnerable. All people may be vulnerable at some time during their lives. Vulnerability can be permanent or temporary and can be of a greater or lesser degree. It can be increased by various factors including any of the following:

- sensory or physical disability
- impairment
- learning disability
- physical illness
- mental illness
- dementia
- substance and alcohol misuse
- impact of an event in life such as bereavement, the actions of others or a change in living situation.

Vulnerability may bring with it some difficulties in making decisions or communicating those decisions. This may range from simple decisions, such as what to choose to eat, to more complicated decisions, such as whether to participate in certain activities or where to live. The capacity to make decisions should always be presumed to exist and care should be taken to understand what choices are being made, even where this is expressed non-verbally or in a different language.

Where the vulnerability prevents the ability to make certain choices, it should be assumed that other choices are not similarly limited, unless it is clear that this is the case.

## 5.3 Capacity

The issue of capacity is important. Capacity is not a universal concept. It must be applied in a specific context: Is this person able to make this specific decision at this particular time? Adults are presumed to have capacity to make all decisions about themselves. Those who work with them must use every endeavour to obtain the decision from the adult. If this fails, then the person who is working with the adult may make day-to-day decisions, e.g. what will they have for lunch. More major decisions, such as with whom they will have contact, need to be made in a more structured way. This will generally involve Local Authority Adult Services. Advice can be obtained from Adult Services if there is uncertainty about an important decision or a situation where harm may occur. If urgent, an immediate referral must be made.

If you are working with vulnerable adults, the following criteria should be considered to assess whether a person has sufficient understanding at any time to consent, or to refuse consent, to sharing of information about them or participating in specific activities:

- Can the person understand the question being asked of them?
- Are they taking an active part in the discussion?
- Can they rephrase the question in their own words?
- How would they explain it to someone else?
- Do they have a reasonable understanding of what the risks or benefits are of giving their consent or saying no?
- What do they say they think would happen if they agree to the action being suggested?

- Can they appreciate and consider the alternatives, weighing up one aspect against another and express a clear and consistent personal view? Encourage them to say out loud, or write down, their view of the pros and cons. You could recheck these views later or at a later contact with them.

If you are unsure that the person does have the necessary capacity, speak with the Local Safeguarding Champion and church leader to work out the best way forward.

## 5.4 Good practice

### Training

- This will include dealing with the specific issues relating to vulnerable adults. Adults may have a range of vulnerabilities which could be addressed by the appropriate use of aids and adaptations or particular skills. Specialist training may be needed with these.
- Adults may express their vulnerability by a range of behaviour. Training may be needed in how to deal with such behaviour, as well as in how staff members and volunteers are supported to avoid inappropriate behaviour and to recognise this type of behaviour, including bullying, in themselves and others.
- Training will also be needed in relation to the issues of decision making with adults whose capacities are impaired.

## Underpinning safe and inclusive practice

Our principles for safe and inclusive practice include:

### **Working in partnership**

Developing and maintaining constructive working relationships with individuals, carers, families, colleagues and wider community networks

### **Respecting diversity**

Working with individuals, carers and families in ways that respect and value diversity, including age, ethnicity, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality

### **Practising ethically**

Recognising the rights and aspirations of individuals and their families, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible. Allowing individuals to make their own choices.

### **Challenging inequality**

Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion on individuals, carers and families. Creating, developing or maintaining valued social roles for people in the communities they come from. This includes ensuring that buildings and practices allow inclusion.

### **Promoting recovery**

Working in partnership to provide help that enables individuals, families and carers to tackle problems with hope and optimism and to work towards a valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of any problem



### **Identifying people's needs and strengths**

Working in partnership in the context of the preferred lifestyle and aspirations of individuals, their families, carers and friends

### **Promoting safety and positive risk taking**

Empowering the individual to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their lives. This includes working with the tension between promoting safety and positive risk taking, including assessing and dealing with possible risks for individuals, carers, family members and the wider public.

### **Personal development and learning**

Take advantage of training opportunities which are provided by the charity.

These principles are adapted from [\*The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities\*](#) for those working in the mental health services.

## 5.5 Advocacy

Staff members and volunteers are often placed in the role of advocate. Advocacy for adults who are vulnerable is especially important. Advocacy is about speaking up for, or acting on behalf of, yourself or another person.

Advocacy can help individuals to:

- make clear their own views and wishes
- express and present their views effectively and faithfully
- obtain independent advice and accurate information
- negotiate and resolve conflict

Some people aren't clear about their rights or have difficulty in fully understanding these rights. Others may find it hard to speak up for themselves. Advocacy can enable people to take more responsibility and control for the decisions which affect their lives.

## Advocacy principles

What the person communicates and wants is the most important thing. Advocacy enables individuals to do more for themselves and lessens their dependency on other people.

Advocacy should help people to make informed choices. An advocate must ensure the individual is making real choices based on good quality information.

Advocates should not have a conflict of interest. They should be independent.

## 5.6 Guidance in pastoral care

Not all adults who receive pastoral care are vulnerable within the definitions at the beginning of this section. However, all staff members and volunteers involved in pastoral care should be working within the following guidelines. (These guidelines may also be helpful in other pastoral situations.)

Following such guidelines will not only protect vulnerable people but also help to ensure that staff members and volunteers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

## Pastoral relationships for vulnerable adults

Exercising any kind of ministry with vulnerable adults involves staff members and volunteers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the wellbeing of others and how they ensure the wellbeing and safety of themselves and others. People in positions such as staff members or volunteers who are working with vulnerable adults necessarily have power, although this may not be apparent to them; consequently, respecting boundaries is particularly important.

Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making the following guidance even more necessary.

Staff members and volunteers must exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.

Staff members and volunteers must be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.

Staff members and volunteers who exercise a 'healing ministry' should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.

Staff members and volunteers must recognise their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (e.g., therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice). In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.

Staff members and volunteers should consider issues of ethnicity and gender in their ministry.

Staff members and volunteers must avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.

Staff members and volunteers must treat those with whom they work or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.

Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations must be handled sensitively. Staff members and volunteers need to recognise such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements must be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned.

Staff members and volunteers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or drugs.

## Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are considered pastoral encounters. Staff members and volunteers must be aware of their language and behaviour. For example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the staff member or volunteer must be discerning about the motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist.

The staff member or volunteer must consider in advance:

The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, the worker's dress

The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby)

The physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past

Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction

The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone and personal safety in visits, especially in the evening

The personal safety and comfort of all participants

Establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration, and the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example, gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted

The specific pastoral needs of individuals and whether the worker has the skill to meet these without additional support. Certain people will need skilled and professional support to which pastoral work will be supplementary. It may be that the initial pastoral task in such a situation is to work with the individual in supporting them to access professional help.

## Sexual conduct

The sexual conduct of staff members and volunteers may have an impact on their ministry within the church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Staff members & volunteers must be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

Staff members and volunteers must never sexually abuse or harass an adult. Staff members and volunteers must take responsibility for their words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood) or talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and

refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.

Staff members and volunteers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and must refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.

Staff members and volunteers must avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted.

## **Financial integrity in working with vulnerable adults**

Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters must maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

Staff members and volunteers must not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.

Staff members and volunteers must not be influenced by offers of money.

Staff members and volunteers must ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.

Money received by the church must be handled by two unrelated people.

Any known gifts received must be disclosed to a supervisor or Safeguarding Lead, who must decide whether the gift can be accepted.

Care must be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved.

There are particular issues in relation to Lasting Powers of Attorney and wills. A Lasting Power of Attorney can be made by an adult with capacity and can deal with issues of finance and/or welfare. When the person making the Lasting Power of Attorney loses their capacity (ability to make decisions), the person named as Attorney can continue to make decisions on their behalf. The safeguards in this instrument require it to be registered with the Court of Protection. It would be appropriate for an individual who so wishes to name a staff member or volunteer as Attorney provided the individual has received independent legal advice on the subject before entering into this. This safeguards the staff member or volunteer from possible issues of undue influence. However, the staff member or volunteer should consider this carefully and may wish to seek their own advice. This is not a task to be taken lightly.

In relation to wills, the guidance relating to Lasting Powers of Attorney must be followed where appointment as an Executor is being considered or where the individual is considering a bequest to a staff member, volunteer or church.



## **Behaviour outside work and Christian ministry**

In church ministry, behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. Staff members and volunteers are expected to uphold Christian values throughout their lives.

# Section 6.

## Annexes

### **Annex A** - Recognising abuse in children and vulnerable adults

Appendix A1 Recognising abuse in children

Appendix A2 Recognising abuse in vulnerable adults

### **Annex B** - Checklists

Appendix B1 Proforma activity checklist (starting and managing existing activities)

Appendix B2 Appointment of volunteers and staff members checklist

### **Annex C** - Template Forms

Appendix C1 Proforma consent form for children

Appendix C2 Proforma for driving details record for Safeguarding Leads

Appendix C3 Proforma declaration of agreement to policy

Appendix C4 Staff/volunteer application form for working with children

Appendix C5 Sample Risk Assessment

Appendix C6 Health and Safety incident form



# Annex A.

## Recognising abuse

Appendix A1 Recognising abuse in children

Appendix A2 Recognising abuse in vulnerable adults



## A1 Recognising abuse in children

### A1.1 Recognising child abuse

Child abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse as described in the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018':

Physical
Emotional
Sexual
Neglect

Guidelines on responding to safeguarding concerns are contained in [section 3.6](#). It is important not to investigate yourself but to seek advice.

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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The four categories listed above are those recognised in statutory guidance as domestic violence/abuse.

Staff members and volunteers must also be aware that other forms of abuse can occur, for example:

stranger abuse
internet-related abuse, sometimes called 'e-abuse'
bullying (abuse by other children)
fabricated or induced illness
abuse of disabled children (who are far more frequently abused than non-disabled children)
deliberate self-harm (overdoses, cutting)
domestic violence/abuse see <a href="#">A1.2 Types of abuse</a> below
allegations of possession by evil spirits
child trafficking
sexual exploitation
forced marriage
peer abuse – can be confused with bullying

The government issues guidance documents or advice for several of these specialist topics.

What is significant harm?

Ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and physical abuse). Impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural) as compared to a similar child. (Children Act 1989 section 31(9))

Harm includes the impairment of a child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person.  
(Adoption and Children Act 2002)

## A1.2 Types of abuse

### **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 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. Such 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 the outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or 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)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Domestic violence or abuse**

The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are used interchangeably throughout this document. The Home Office defines domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic abuse and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover. For this reason, the statements and guidance below are predominantly made with reference to women.

Domestic violence affects both adults and children within the family. Domestic violence has an impact on children in a number of ways:

- Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene.



- Children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.
- Exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress which may express itself in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

Although separating from a violent partner should result in women and children being safe from harm, the danger does not automatically end. It should be recognised that the point of leaving an abusive relationship is the time of highest risk for a victim.

Domestic abuse also affects children because it impacts on parenting capacity.

A parent (in most families, the mother) may have difficulty in looking after the children when domestic violence results in injuries. In extreme cases, domestic violence can lead to the parent's death.

Exposure to psychological and emotional abuse has profound negative effects on women's mental health resulting in a loss of confidence, depression, feelings of degradation, problems with sleep, isolation, and increased use of medication and alcohol. These are all factors that can restrict the mother's capacity to meet the developmental needs of her child.

Belittling and insulting a mother in front of her children undermines not only her respect for herself, but also the authority she needs to parent confidently.

A mother's relationship with her children may also be affected because, in attempts to avoid further outbursts of violence, she prioritises her partner's needs over those of her children.

The impact of domestic violence on children increases when directly abused, when witnessing the abuse of a parent, or colluding (willingly or otherwise) in the concealment of assaults. This constitutes abuse of children and must be reported to the authorities.

Domestic violence can impact any and every age group. An alternative, safe and supportive residence is key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence.

## **Spiritual abuse**

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside of faith communities, including the church. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional abuse or physical abuse (e.g. forced healing rituals).

Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful, it must be referred for investigation in cooperation with appropriate statutory agencies.

Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those staff members or volunteers working with children with

the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of harm include the denial of the right of faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

## **Sexting**

Sexting can be seen as harmless but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created

## **Honour-based abuse**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to

the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

## Organised crime

Organised crime is a category of transnational, national, or local groupings of highly centralized enterprises run by criminals who intend to engage in illegal activity, most commonly for profit. Some criminal organisations, such as terrorist groups, are politically motivated.

The most harmful serious and organised crimes include modern slavery and human trafficking, organised immigration crime, child sexual exploitation and abuse, money laundering, fraud and other economic crime, bribery and corruption, cyber-crime, illegal firearms and illegal drugs.

## Forced marriage

Forced marriage (FM) is marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor, i.e. when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they are bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent. FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they are pressured to or not)

## **FGM**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting, and by other terms, such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

## **Up skirting**

Up skirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear). It can take place in a range of places including schools, public transport and leisure centres etc.

## **County lines or CDE (child drug exploitation)**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns.

## **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the

perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

## **A2 Recognising abuse in vulnerable adults**

### **A2.1 Forms and signs of harm in vulnerable adults**

Whilst there is a strong overlap in forms of abuse between children and young adults, it is worth considering the two areas separately.

Harm is that which results from abuse, neglect, bullying and harassment. It may take the following forms. It should be noted that the various forms of abuse and harm can overlap.

#### **Physical abuse**

Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. It may include the inappropriate use of medication and the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, health. Abuse can obviously be suspected if the person is seen to have injuries, particularly if these recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without explanation. It may be that the person indicates that they do not want to be with a certain person.

#### **Emotional or psychological abuse**

Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. This may occur directly or indirectly by telephone or internet. This may be seen in a person



becoming quiet or withdrawn, or conversely, becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. They may show a change in characteristics such as becoming helpless or tearful. It should be noted that such signs may also be seen in those who are physically abused or sexually abused. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.

### **Sexual abuse**

Includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.

### **Financial or material abuse**

Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. There are also material signs to watch out for, such as a sudden change in a person's finances, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings or getting into debt. Watch out for any official or financial documents that seem unusual, and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing.

### **Neglect and acts of omission**

Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. This may be evidenced in a person looking unkempt or dirty and their personal hygiene being compromised. Their weight may alter.

## **Discriminatory abuse**

Includes racist and sexist abuse, abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This may be observed in conversations or in reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. An example of this is where a person rubs their skin to try to remove the colour or who puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality.

## **Spiritual and ritual abuse**

In the church context, there has been developing realisation that spiritual abuse is another form of harm. The Church of England Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy cautions those who minister to beware of abusing their position.

Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice: this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

If such inappropriate behaviour occurs, it must be referred for investigation in the usual way. Careful

supervision and mentoring of those staff members or volunteers working with vulnerable adults with the pastoral care of adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way.

## **Domestic abuse**

The terms violence/abuse are used interchangeably throughout this policy. The Home Office describes domestic violence as follows: “Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality.”

The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage. Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Usually it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

Domestic violence occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, and children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they have seen, and there is a strong connection between domestic violence and child abuse.

Domestic violence can impact any and every age group. An alternative, safe and supportive residence is key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence.

## Forced marriage

Guidelines on forced marriage are set out in Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Handling Cases of Forced Marriage from which the following extracts have been taken:

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

Forced marriage is a form of child/domestic violence against women and men; it should form part of existing child and adult protection structures, policies and procedures.

In line with other publications on domestic abuse, these guidelines focus mainly on women's needs and not men's. This is because 85% of cases referred to the Forced Marriage Unit involve women and the consequences for women are different than those for men.

Although these guidelines focus on women, much of the guidance applies to men facing forced marriage – and men must be given the same assistance and respect when they seek help.

## Institutional abuse

This type of abuse is seen where an institution is inherently discriminatory towards a particular group. It may occur in a care home where the residents are routinely referred to in a derisory fashion or where their privacy and dignity is routinely compromised. An institution may then be unable to safeguard residents from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. The Church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.

# Annex B.

## Checklists

Appendix B1 Proforma activity checklist (starting and managing existing activities)

Appendix B2 Appointment of volunteers and staff members checklist



## B1 Activity checklist (starting and managing existing activities)

This appendix provides a check list of tasks that need to be completed when starting a new activity and also checked annually for existing activities to ensure that everything is in place. These must be completed before an activity starts.

### Task

Identify activity leader

Identify list of volunteers and ensure ratios are met

Check all volunteers are safeguarding trained and DBS checked

Check activity covered by insurance

Ensure that Risk Assessment is written/updated

Approval of Risk Assessment (Local Safeguarding Champions and Regional Safeguarding Leads)

### Create pack for activity leaders containing:

Accident form

OCC application form

Safeguarding policy

Create pack for volunteers containing:

Risk Assessment

Accident form

Manual handling guidelines

Safeguarding policy

What to do if you have concerns flow chart

## Conversation with activity leaders

Confirm Risk Assessment reflects reality of activity

Remind workers that accidents must be reported via accident form

Remind that prospective volunteers need to go through appointment process before being available to work

Circulate pack for activity leaders

Circulate pack for volunteers

[\*\*Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix B1\*\*](#)

## B2 Appointment of volunteers and staff members checklist

	Staff	Volunteer
Written job/role description made available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Formal interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Informal chat		<input type="checkbox"/>
Application form		<input type="checkbox"/>
References sought	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
References approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
UK residency status/right to work in the UK checked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DBS application (if eligible)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DBS certificate checked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joined DBS update service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attended safeguarding training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MyConcern login	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed agreement to safeguarding policy and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Induction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Probationary period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please keep secure and appropriate records of all recruitment processes, including DBS certificate numbers and dates of issue and training logs.

[Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix B2](#)



# Annex C.

## Template forms

Appendix C1 Proforma consent form for children

Appendix C2 Proforma for driving details record for  
Safeguarding Leads

Appendix C3 Proforma declaration of agreement to  
policy

Appendix C4 Staff/volunteer application form for  
working with children

Appendix C5 Sample Risk Assessment

Appendix C6 Health and Safety incident form



## C1 Proforma consent form for children

Activity	
Child's name	
Date of Birth	
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address	
Home Telephone	
Emergency Contact Number	
Email Address (Parent/Guardian)	
Accident form	
Email Address (Youth only)	
Doctor's Name and Address	
Surgery Telephone Number	
Details of any relevant medical condition with which your child has been diagnosed Condition: Any known allergies, including food allergies:	
Emergency Contact (should parent/guardian not be available) Name Telephone Number	

I give authorisation for my child to receive emergency medical treatment if it is considered by the doctor to be necessary  (please tick)

I am willing for my child to be photographed for display or publicity/media purposes  (please tick)

I am willing for my child to be transported to and from activities by a volunteer or staff member where required  (please tick)

I am willing for my child to access social media for communication purposes  (please tick)

Any other useful information:

I consent to  storing this information electronically for the purpose of emergency contact and communication of activities only.  (please tick)  
(This information will not be passed on to any third party).

Signed Parent/Guardian

Print Name Parent/Guardian

Date

Please inform us immediately of any changes to your personal contact information.

Your data will be stored in line with OCC's GDPR Policy which can be found on [occ.org.uk](http://occ.org.uk)

[Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix C1](#)



## C3 Proforma declaration of agreement to Safeguarding Policy

I confirm that I have read and understood the OCC Safeguarding Policy and hereby agree and commit to following this policy insofar as it applies to the work I do as a volunteer or staff member when working with children or vulnerable adults for OCC.

Signed

Full Name

Date

[Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix C3](#)

## C4 Staff/volunteer application form

Full name

Email

Date of birth

Mobile

Full address including postcode

Position applied for

Which church are you part of?

### Experience and qualifications

Faith journey

Please tell us about your faith experience (e.g. would you call yourself a Christian, have you attended church in the past, name of minister/leader, any activities undertaken)

Experience

Please give details of previous experience of looking after or working with children

### Qualifications and training

Please include details of any relevant qualifications or appropriate training, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity

### Medical

Do you suffer, or have you suffered in the past, from any illness which may directly affect your work with children? If yes, please give details.

## References

Name of first reference

Role or relationship to you

Email of first reference

Phone number of first reference

Length of time known

How long your first reference has known you

Name of second reference

Email of second reference

Phone number of first reference

Length of time known

How long your second reference has known you

## DBS

Do you have a current DBS certificate which is on the DBS update service?

If yes, what level of check do you have?

DBS Certificate Number

If yes, please provide your DBS certificate number

Previous position applied for

As written on your current DBS certificate

GDPR update service consent

I give permission for OCC to check my DBS certificate online  (please tick)

## Self declaration

The role involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Are you, or have you ever been, barred from such work?

Yes  No

Have you ever been cautioned or convicted for an offence?

Yes  No

Do you have any criminal convictions that would affect your ability to perform this role?

Yes  No

## Further details

If you have responded yes to any of the self declaration questions, please provide details here



Is your state of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health adequate to fulfil this role?

Yes  No

Do you agree to abide by the policies, procedures, risk assessments etc. that are relevant to this role?

Yes  No

Is there anything that you wish to add or that you wish us to take into account in relation to this self declaration?

Please tick to confirm that you have read and will abide by the OCC safeguarding policy, and understand your responsibilities regarding safeguarding and know how to report concerns

Signature

Please sign in the box

Date

[Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix C4](#)

## C5 Sample Risk Assessment

Church
Venue
Ministry/Activity

ACTIVITY	PERSON AT RISK	SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS	RISK*			RISK CONTROL MEASURES	RESIDUAL RISK**			ACTION DUE BY
			L	S	DR		L	S	DR	

Signed Originator
Position
Date Completed
Date For Revision

## **LIKELIHOOD (L)**

Frequent (5)  
Probable (4)  
Occasional (3)  
Improbable (2)  
Remote (1)

## **SEVERITY (S)**

Catastrophic (5)  
Major (4)  
Reportable (3)  
Serious (2)  
Minor (1)

## **DEGREE OF RISK (DR)**

DR = LIKELIHOOD x SEVERITY

\* Numbers used are for illustrative purposes only.

\*\* Residual risk is the level of risk that remains after suitable and sufficient control measures are introduced

[\*Download a Microsoft Word version of appendix C5\*](#)

## C6 Health and Safety Incident Form

Please follow this link to find the [Health and Safety incident form](#).

