

## **Definitions and Responsibilities**

### **Safeguarding**

We all have the same rights and expectations to independence, respect, choice, fulfillment of our ambitions, to be heard, included, and to have privacy and confidentiality. These expectations are central to the way in which we interact with each other in our life together.

Safeguarding involves a range of activities aimed at promoting the individual's fundamental right to be safe. These include making and maintaining safe environments for all, having processes to follow should something go wrong, and support for everyone involved.

### **Child**

Anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This classification does not change if the under 18 is living independently, in armed forces or in a young offenders institution, for example. The key defining feature of a child is their age, and that alone.

This also includes an unborn child.

### **Adult at Risk**

The term 'adult at risk' has replaced the previously used 'vulnerable adult', focusing on the situation rather than the characteristics of the adult themselves. The label 'vulnerable adult' may wrongly imply that some of the fault for any abuse lies with the abused adult.

There is no standard single definition for an adult at risk, so for our policy we are using the following simple definition taken from CCPAS (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service):

Any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

Some adults might be more at risk than others, and there are some times in life where risks may increase. Some of these circumstances may include (but not be limited to):

- Learning, sensory or physical disability
- Old age and frailty (especially if it creates a dependency on or needing help from others)
- Mental health problems
- Dementia or confusion
- Illness
- Addiction or dependence on alcohol, drugs or medication
- Bereavement
- Past abuse or trauma
- English is not their first language

### **Church Trustees**

The trustees of the church are ultimately, and legally, responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and resourced in the church.

Therefore all trustees should:

- Be fully conversant with the church Safeguarding Policy.
- Have a mechanism in place for monitoring or reviewing this policy.
- Be a support to those who are working with or alongside children and adults at risk
- Ensure that the training needs of workers are met.
- Make appropriate budget provisions for this work, including the training of workers.
- Find ways to communicate the policy to all within the church.

While the work itself may be delegated as appropriate, the ultimate responsibility must always remain with the church trustees.

### **Safeguarding Trustee / Designated Person for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk**

Within the team of Trustees, an individual must be given the role of 'Safeguarding Trustee'. Their responsibilities are as follows:

- To ensure on behalf of the trustees that there is a proper process in place to write and update the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the Trustees.
- To ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually and then presented to the Trustees.
- To keep the trustees informed of any safeguarding incidents **as appropriate**

It must be noted that the Safeguarding Trustee does not hold the responsibility of taking on this work and that the workload may be passed onto other appropriate people.

This individual's appointment must be confirmed by the Trustees and then reported to a church meeting.

This role can also be held by the same person who takes on the role of Designated Person for Safeguarding.

They are the key individual in helping the church to respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised about the safety or well-being of children and adults at risk. As such, they must have relevant skills and knowledge appropriate to the role and the time to put into the role's development, outworking and any regular training deemed necessary.

The role involves:

- Receiving and recording information from anyone who has safeguarding concerns.
- Assessing the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to.
- Consulting with outside bodies where appropriate to discuss concerns (Regional Minister, LADO, Social Services and/or the police)
- Making a formal referral to Social Services or the police if appropriate or advised.
- Making referrals as appropriate to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- Being the link between the church and the WEBA safeguarding liaison.

It must be made aware to all that if the Designated Person is the individual named in a suspicion or an allegation they must not be a part of any investigations or follow up. Instead, the allegation or suspicion should be taken straight to the Minister who then must deal with it as appropriate.

### **The Minister**

In addition to the responsibilities that the ministers share with all of the trustees, the minister will have particular responsibilities. Because of these responsibilities the minister should:

- Be made aware of any safeguarding issues within the church before a referral is made.
- Take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate pastoral support is provided in the context of any safeguarding investigation. Within this, these points should be noted:
  - The ministers need not do this themselves but just ensure that someone is offering care.
  - The same person should not provide care to both an alleged victim and an alleged perpetrator.
  - Church communities can easily become polarised in these situations and the minister may need to take a role that seeks to hold the church together.

### **Group Leaders**

Those who lead the ministries which work with and alongside children and adults at risk should:

- Know and carry out the correct process for appointing new workers.
- Know, carry out and support others in developing a ministry founded on good supervision.
- Know what to do if a worker shares with them a concern about a child or adult at risk.

### **Team Members**

Team Members are those who are part of the team which works with and alongside children and adults at risk.

All team members (without exception) should take personal responsibility for implementing the policy. They should each:

- Know and implement the guidelines for good practice.
- Follow the agreed code of behaviour when working with children and adults at risk.
- Be aware of ways in which people are harmed and possible signs of abuse.
- Know what to do if someone discloses abuse.
- Know what to do if an allegation is made about a fellow worker.
- Know who to speak to if they have any suspicions or concerns.

### **All church attendees (members and non-members)**

All church attendees have a part to play. It is the responsibility of all within the church community to ensure there is a welcome for children and adults at risk and an intolerance of all that brings them harm.

All attendees should be alert to situations where someone may be vulnerable and should know who to speak to if they suspect that someone is being harmed.