



Each and every person is fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together in their mother's womb, and loved by God who knows everything about them (Psalm 139). All are precious and have worth to God. Therefore, the church should strive to be a place of welcome, inclusion and care for all – no matter their age, abilities, health or history.

At Slough Baptist Church we want our community to be a place where everyone is safe. We are aware that there are adults within our community who have vulnerabilities and we want to ensure that their needs are promoted and safeguarded.

This booklet is intended to outline the policy and procedure with respect to the safeguarding of adults who are at risk. It contains advice and guidance for those who may need it.

Any procedure is limited, so please do talk to Debs Warren or Dorothy Ayoma should you have any questions or concerns.

Andy Perryman
July 2021

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Policy Statement on Safeguarding Adults at Risk in the Church

Slough Baptist Church (referred to as 'the church')

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all adults at risk (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability). The church has sought guidance from the Baptist Union with respect to safeguarding adults at risk. The Baptists Together 'Safe to Belong' document (2015) has been used as a basis for much of the Slough Baptist Church policy and procedures.

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all adults but are particularly mindful of the needs of anyone within the community who has a vulnerability which could place them at increased risk.

In pursuit of this we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the abuse of adults within the church community. It is the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of adults at risk and to report any abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working within the church, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of adults at risk.

Safe working practices

The church is committed to provide a safe environment for everyone and to promote good practice to enable all people to be part of their church community in an enjoyable and safe way.

The church is committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity. The church will respond in a timely manner to any concerns of abuse or concerns that any adult is at risk.

Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding adults at risk within the church is everyone's responsibility. However, the church has appointed a safeguarding team and they will work together to achieve best practice in safeguarding within the church.

The church has appointed **Debs Warren** as Designated Person for Safeguarding to:

- Receive reports of disclosures, abuse or concerns and maintain confidential records
- Take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected
- Keep the safeguarding policy up to date
- Advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of adults at risk

The church has appointed **Dorothy Ayoma** as the Safeguarding Trustee to:

- Oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

Policy and Procedures

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the notice board in the main hall.

Anyone employed or volunteering with adults at risk within the church community will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be required to follow them.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of the church, or any other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.

Procedure for Safeguarding Adults at Risk in the Church

What is 'safeguarding'?

We all have the same rights and expectations to independence, respect, choice, fulfilment of 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.

Safeguarding is the actions required to promote individual's fundamental rights to be safe. This includes the maintaining of safe environments for all and having processes to follow if things go wrong.

What does 'adults at risk' mean?

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. (definition from Thirtyone:eight, the UK Christian safeguarding charity)

The term 'adults at risk' has replaced the previously used 'vulnerable adult', focusing on the situation rather than the characteristics of the adult themselves.

Some adults may be more at risk and there are sometimes where risks may increase. Some of these circumstances may include: learning, sensory or physical disability, old age or frailty, mental health problems, addiction, bereavement, past trauma / abuse or where English is not their first language.

What is abuse

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It comes from the misuse of power and control that someone has over another. Harm is the result of this mistreatment or abuse.

Abuse may consist of one single act or many repeated acts, and it can occur in any relationship at any time of life. It can take many forms. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act. Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Abuse can be perpetrated by an individual or a group. A partner or a professional. Abuse can take place in any setting, as well as via technology.

Types of abuse

The following table gives detailed information about the main types of abuse. However, there are other forms of abuse towards adults at risk and these are listed below the table.

Abuse	Definition	Includes.... <i>(please note that this is not an exhaustive list)</i>
Physical	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping and beating; • Shaking, pinching and pushing; • Kicking, burning and hair pulling; • Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint. • Giving inappropriate medication
Emotional	<p>The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes.</p> <p>Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour; • Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation; • The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation; • Making someone feel worthless, a lack of love or affection, or ignoring the person.
Sexual	<p>Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour.</p> <p>No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not consent or was pressurised into consenting; • Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner without consent; • Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing; • Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts; • Enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways; • Being spied on while a person is undertaking personal care activities.
Neglect	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services; • Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not giving someone proper food or assistance with eating or drinking;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult (particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess the risks to themselves or to others); • Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment. • Deliberately withholding aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids. • Denying social, religious or cultural contacts, or denying contact with the family; • Leaving alone or unsupervised.
Financial	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods; • Exploitation or profiteering; • Applying pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance, or financial transactions; • The abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will; • Being charged excessive amounts for services (such as minor building works on a property).
Spiritual	<p>The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister).</p> <p>The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcing religious ideas or practices onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices; • Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters – reducing individual choice and responsibility; • The misuse of scripture or power to control behavior and pressure to conform; • The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a “divine” position; • Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in people experiencing emotional, physical or sexual harm;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The denial of the right of faith or opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God; • Exclusion of people from the full range of church life (e.g. no arrangements for gluten-free wafers or non-alcoholic wine at Communion, or fear of involving those who are HIV positive).
Discriminatory	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageist, racist, sexist, or abusive behaviour based on a person's disability; • Abuse linked to a person's sexuality; • Harassment, slurs or similar treatment; • Withholding services without proper justification, or lack of disabled access to services and activities.
Institutional	<p>The mistreatment or abuse of an adult by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment.</p> <p>The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability of an institution to safeguard people from emotional or even physical harm and neglect; • Having fixed rules and routines by which people are controlled; • People being prevented from doing things that are their rights; • Not having access to personal possessions or personal allowance.

Other forms of abuse:

Domestic Abuse	Abuse between two adults who are or have been in a relationship or between family members. Usually there is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour.
Cyber abuse, bullying or stalking	The use of technology to harass or harm another person.
Self-harm / self-neglect	Causing intentional harm to one's own body, often as a way to cope with emotional distress. Neglecting one's own care needs can also cause harm.
Mate crime	When people befriend vulnerable people and use their 'friendship' to exploit and take advantage.
Modern slavery	The practice of treating people as property and using for enforced labour, sex slavery and trafficking.

Human trafficking	Buying and selling of people for financial gain and / or abuse.
Radicalisation	The process by which people come to support any form of extremism and in some cases, join terrorist groups.
Honour marriage / forced marriage	When one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are pressured to go ahead.
Historic abuse	Around one third of people who experience abuse in childhood do not go on to disclose until they are adults.

How to respond to abuse or concerns

If you suspect an adult is being abused or may be at risk of abuse, or if you have a concern about their wellbeing, it is important that you seek the right advice and report the concerns in the right way.

It is often not easy to recognise abuse or harm. Therefore, it is important to act if you suspect abuse – don't wait until you are absolutely sure. This doesn't 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.

It is our duty as a church to respond to concerns of abuse. If you have concerns, witness the abuse of someone or have seen changes in behaviour or living patterns that make you suspect that someone is being abused, it is important that you don't ignore what you have seen or suspect. **But remember that it is not your job to investigate; as soon as you have enough information you should implement the following safeguarding policy and procedures.**

If someone directly discloses abuse to you, remember to:

Listen	Take what is said seriously
Reassure	Tell them that they have done the right thing by telling you, and that you believe them
Remain Calm	No matter how difficult it is to listen to what is being disclosed. You have been chosen because the person feels able to talk to you
Be honest	Do not promise full confidentiality or offer false reassurance
Be open	Do not ask leading or closed questions, such as "Did she hit you?" It is not your role to investigate. As soon as you have enough information to concern you, stop probing.
Ask	Request their consent to share information and seek help.
Explain	Tell them that you are going to tell 'x' the Designated Person for Safeguarding and give them a timescale
Write	Document everything the adult at risk has told you, in their own words. You will need to record the questions you asked as well as the answers or information given. This should be done as soon as possible after the disclosure and should include the time and date

Report	Contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours (or appropriate alternative if necessary– see above) and report the disclosure
Keep quiet	The concerns you have should be kept confidential between you, the adult concerned, the Designated Person for Safeguarding (and the church safeguarding team). The Designated Person for Safeguarding may need to inform the Association Safeguarding Contact and the statutory authorities.

The flow chart below shows how a concern should be reported and what will happen in response.

Communication

A person may have vulnerabilities that make communication more difficult. This should be taken into account and consideration given to what support they need to enable them to share their concerns or any allegations. Consider age, culture, language, communication skills and disability. You may need to ask the person to repeat themselves or to check that you have understood what they said.

Safeguarding incident form

A safeguarding incident form should be completed within 24 hours if there are concerns about an adult being at risk of harm or a disclosure of abuse has been made. It is not your role to verify what you have been told but to record it as accurately as possible – including what questions you asked as well as the information given.

Forms are available in the office and once completed should be passed to the designated person for Safeguarding.

Mental Capacity

Within safeguarding, mental capacity is whether or not someone has the capacity or ability to make decisions about themselves and their safety and well-being. There is a fine balance between the individual's rights to autonomy and their need for protection. If there are any concerns about the mental capacity of an adult at risk, always refer to the Designated Person.

What if the adult does not want help?

The mental capacity of the adult at risk is vital in deciding what should be done. All actions should be based on the assumption that the individual has the capacity and the right to make their own choices in relation to their personal safety and well-being. This includes upholding their right to follow a course of action which others may deem unwise or eccentric, including staying in a situation of abuse.

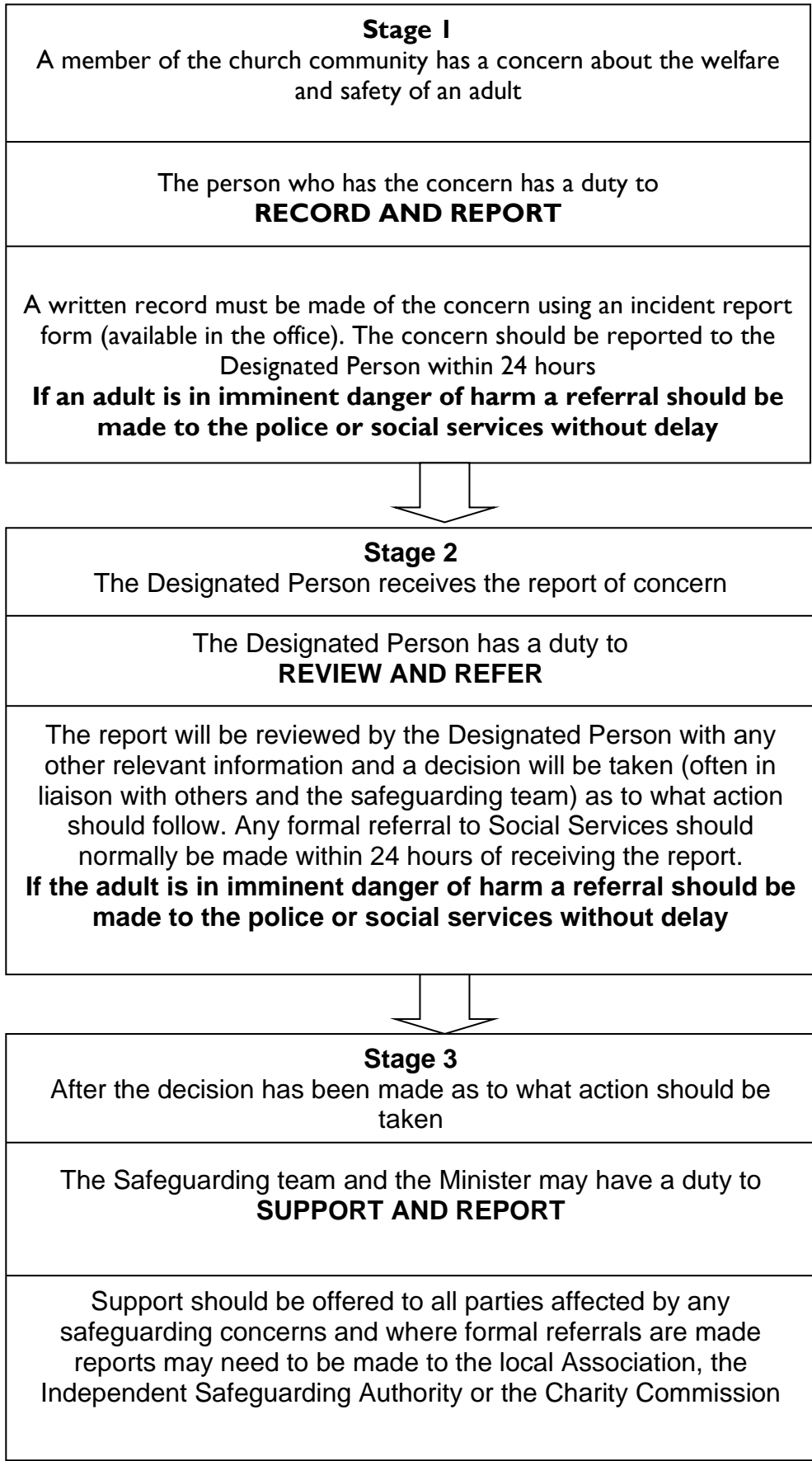
If the adult at risk doesn't want help it may still be necessary to inform the police or Adult Social Care Services, who can put a safeguarding plan in place so that, as far as possible, the adult continues to be protected. This is particularly important:

- **When the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice**
- **When there is a risk of harm to others**
- **In order to prevent a crime**

If at all unsure of whether or not to pass on information about abuse without permission, speak to the Designated Person for Safeguarding who should contact your Association Safeguarding Contact for advice.

It is also important that the individual knows where to get appropriate help and support if they should change their mind. The designated person for safeguarding can provide information that can be passed onto the individual.

Safeguarding adults at risk flow chart



Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

We recognise that adults who are at risk are part of our wider church community in many different groups and settings. We expect those in positions of leadership within the church to be aware of the needs of adults at risk and promptly report any concerns which arise.

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working within the church community, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of adults at risk.

Recruitment Guidelines

Leaders and helpers who have a specific role with adults at risk at Slough Baptist Church will be appointed and will follow the process laid out in these procedures in order to work with adults at risk.

Appeals for leaders should only be made in exceptional circumstances and by a trustee, one of the designated persons or a Minister and due care has to be given in order to ensure the safeguarding of all involved.

If a person is interested in working with adults at risk, he / she will need to complete an application form. This form will request information on basic personal details, two suitable referees and will also include a declaration confirming the person is prepared to work within the safeguarding policy and procedures as outlined in this document and the declaration of any previous relevant convictions. The decision as to the suitability of an applicant must involve two people, usually the group leader and the safeguarding trustee.

All interested in working with adults at risk are welcome to join a group as an observer and see the group in action, but need to complete the application form before becoming part of any team, an informal interview should also take place. The informal interview will discuss the following

- Details of the role
- Expectations and responsibilities of the volunteer
- The safeguarding procedures
- Support available
- Any training opportunities

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks or equivalent checks will be carried out for anybody working with adults at risk at Slough Baptist Church.

There are criteria which exclude someone from working with adults at risk at Slough Baptist Church, such as those who have been involved in misconduct in relation to children or adults, not depending on a criminal conviction. A criminal conviction in itself does not prevent a volunteer from working with adults at risk, this depends on the conviction and the circumstances.

Any information obtained will be handled and stored confidentially.

As in all other areas of church life, we welcome people to serve the church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God and we practise a policy of equal opportunities.

Making a safer church – good practice guidelines

The church is committed to provide a safe environment for everyone and to promote good practice to enable all people to be part of their church community in an enjoyable and safe way. The church commits to adopt ways of working which are necessary to ensure inclusivity.

Premises

The church will aim to make the building as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating should be addressed and where necessary aids and adaptations should be put in place. See our Health and Safety Policy and Disability Discrimination Policy and Audit for further details.

Language

Negative and uncaring attitudes can be a major barrier to accessing church life. This can include the language used within worship (for example referring to God as a father or lover can be difficult for some, and words like mankind and brotherhood exclude others) or the language used to describe people (such as derogatory words focusing on aspects of someone's disability, race or sexuality rather than the person themselves). Every effort should be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility.

Communication

The way that we communicate with adults at risk should be carefully considered.
Electronic communication can be a helpful tool but its use should be considering carefully.
The following are good practice guidelines that should be followed:

- Records of communications should be kept and messages not deleted
- Workers should be careful to keep their communications clear to avoid any possible misinterpretation.
- If an adult at risk is at a point of crisis the worker should seek to arrange a face-to-face meeting and consider if having a second person present would be helpful.
- If concerns are raised about the well-being of an adult at risk through their electronic communication or conduct in an online meeting the leader should consider if an in person follow up would be appropriate.
- If there are any concerns about communication, there should be a discussion with the designated person for safeguarding.

Worship

In all worship services consideration should be given to the wide range of requirements within a congregation.

Some examples include:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading

- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- The use of inclusive language
- Using a variety of liturgy and resources to cater for different levels of education and understanding
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear

Photographs and video recordings

Make sure that you have the person's permission to take a picture, and if you intend to upload it, make sure that they're happy for people to see it online. When taking group pictures remember to get permission from everyone who will be photographed.

Bear in mind that there may be many reasons why someone doesn't want their picture on public display, from simply not liking their photo being taken, to not wanting an abusive ex-partner to be able to identify their current location.

Financial integrity

Any allegations of financial discrepancies may be based on misunderstanding or confusion, therefore having clear processes in place will help to protect church workers as well as any adults at risk.

- If, as part of your church role, you become involved with handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.
- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts given to an individual over £20 received from an adult at risk should be reported to the Designated Person, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the Designated Person. We strongly recommend that volunteers or employees (including ministers) should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.

Training

All those working with adults at risk should receive safeguarding training. The church will deliver safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Confidentiality

Someone's personal information should not be discussed with others except with their permission. If concerns need to be passed to the designated person for safeguarding or to an outside agency, information must be kept confidential to those relevant parties. Do not tell or hint to others what has been disclosed, not even for prayer ministry.

Responsible people

Role	Responsibilities	How
Designated Person for Safeguarding	The recognised person for receiving disclosures or reports of disclosures of abuse.	Displaying name and contact information, preferably with photo, so church members know who to contact.
	Liaising with the Association Safeguarding Contact and external agencies where necessary.	Creating a list of contact numbers and having blank copies of the Safeguarding Incident Form ready to go.
	Keep the safeguarding policy relevant and up to date.	Annually review and update if necessary.
	Advocating and facilitating safe church practices.	Promoting a culture of best practice throughout the church life.
Safeguarding Advisor	Advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of adults at risk	Working with the safeguarding team to give advice on best practice and review policies and procedures
	Support the Designated Person in taking appropriate action when required	Working with the safeguarding team to discuss concerns and supporting the decisions taken.
DBS Verifier	Making sure that all relevant persons working with adults at risk have an up to date DBS check in place at all times.	Coordinating the completion and renewal of DBS forms, and liaising with the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding on the outcomes when required.
Minister	Support and assisting the Designated Person for Safeguarding.	Regular communication with the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding, particularly if a serious incident arises.
Church Meeting	Adopt the safeguarding policy	Discussing and agreeing the policy
Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon	Taking the lead on safeguarding matters on behalf of the trustees/deacons.	Regular communication and reporting from the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding and ensuring safeguarding is on the agenda at trustee meetings.
Trustees/Deacons of local church	Responsible for safeguarding best practice within the church	Make sure that all necessary safeguarding measures are in place (including policy, procedures, training, safe recruiting, etc.).

Appendix 1

Incident Report form

This report form is for the purpose of keeping a record of reports made to the Designated Person. As well as this report, you should make a full factual written record of your observations and any conversations, which should be signed and dated.

Name of worker

Name of organisation

Name of adult at risk

Date & time of incident

Nature of concern:

Have you made a full written record of the incident/concern? Yes No (Please tick)

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Adult at Risk Yes No (Please tick)

Carer Yes No (Please tick)

Organisation leader Yes No (Please tick) Name

Other Yes No (Please tick) Name

Social Services Yes No (Please tick) Name

What feedback have you received?

How have your concerns been followed up?

Signature of Worker: Date and time

Signature of Designated Person Date and time