

A. POLICY STATEMENT

The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (BUC) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and adults across the Conference. We recognise our duty and responsibilities as a church to provide an environment which seeks to eliminate the risk of abuse. We will take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risk.

- (a) In affirming the dignity and worth of each human being we will not condone neglect, bullying or any form of physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of any individual whether in the church or in the community.
- (b) The Seventh-day Adventist church has a responsibility to protect children and adults at risk who are involved in any of its programmes. We will do so through the creation of safe environments, and the provision of training, advice and support to all staff and volunteers.
- (c) The church will demonstrate senior management commitment to safeguarding and maintain arrangements to reflect this, with clear lines of accountability.
- (d) The church will report to the appropriate agency all allegations of abuse and will cooperate fully with other professional agencies who will identify the perpetrators and to protect children and adults who may be at risk.
- (e) The church will help persons in need to identify and access the range of professional services. It will assist families in grief over relationships that cannot be restored. It will address the spiritual questions confronting abused persons, seeking to understand the origins of abuse and domestic abuse.
- (f) When changed attitudes and behaviour open possibilities for forgiveness and new beginnings, the church will provide a ministry of reconciliation, but intervention by appropriate agencies must occur to hold the perpetrator accountable for his or her actions and to safeguard children and adults.
- (g) The church will promote and hold its staff and volunteers to the highest form of personal and professional behaviour as we reflect Christ in all aspects of our conduct. We will carefully select and support all those with a responsibility towards our children and adults who may be at risk. (See [Appendix 2\(a\): Code of Conduct](#)).
- (h) The church will respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all individuals are value to the community of faith.

1. DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

Each nation within the UK is responsible for drafting its own laws to safeguard children and adults at risk of harm. Wording and phrasing may therefore vary in defining abuse from country to country. Please refer to your country's legislation below for specific terminology.

England – [NSPCC Definitions and Signs of Abuse](#)

Northern Ireland - [Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse \(2014\) National Policy & Procedures](#)

Republic of Ireland – [Child First – Child Protection and Welfare](#)

Scotland - [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 \(Updated 2023\)](#)

Wales – [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) – [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act](#)

Safeguarding

Specific actions we take to protect children and vulnerable adults who are at risk of, or are being abused. In Scotland, the term 'Child Protection' is used in place of safeguarding.

Child Protection

Activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Abuse

Abuse of any type occurs when someone has power over another and uses that power to harm.

Harm and Significant Harm

'Harm' means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. 'Significant harm' is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and is based on comparing the child's health and development to that which could be reasonably expected of a child of a similar age.

Children Act 1989/Children Act 2004 and Adoption and Children Act 2002.

Forms of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment³. Children and adults may be abused or neglected by someone inflicting harm, exploiting them or failing to prevent harm. The categories of abuse include physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Other forms of harm come from bullying and exposure to domestic abuse and for adults may also include financial and institutional abuse. Additionally, the Church is concerned about spiritual abuse of children and adults and recognises the presence of other harmful practices. These include child sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation (FGM); abuse in the context of beliefs about spirit possession, and lack of online and digital safety.

Children and young persons

The terms 'child' and 'young person' are both used throughout this document. In the context of child protection, both terms relate to any person under the age of 18 with whom the church has contact through any of its activities.

Adult at risk

Adults at Risk are adults who - (a) are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights, or other interests, (b) are at risk of harm, and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not affected. An adult is considered to be at risk of harm if another person's conduct is causing (or likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or (b) the adult is engaging (or likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm. It should be noted that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates that in order for disabled children to be able to realise their rights, they need to be provided with age-appropriate disability assistance. Disabled individuals are more likely to be abused and exploited.

Legislation for protecting adults and children

Across the United Kingdom (UK) the protection of adults is governed by legislation and statutory guidance that reflects the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention). Child protection legislation likewise, is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for adults, The Care Act 2014.

Laws are passed to prevent behaviour that can harm individuals or to enable action required to protect a person.

Guidance sets out what organisations should do to play their part to keep children safe. Each UK nation is responsible for its own policies and laws around education, health and social welfare. Although the protection systems are different in each nation, they are all based on similar principles; most notably, that the welfare of the child or adult at risk is the paramount consideration.

Volunteers will be taken to include church members unless specifically stated.

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a vulnerable person so they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited, or trafficked ([see Appendix 17: Grooming](#)).

2. CATEGORIES AND SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHILDREN

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

³[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice to practitioners – HM Government, 2015](#)

Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which 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

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, including interactions that are beyond a 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.

Neglect

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.

Sexual Abuse

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

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation 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 (Taken from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#); see [Appendix 18: Criminal Exploitation and Gangs](#)).

3. OTHER CATEGORIES OF ABUSE INCLUDE:

Domestic Abuse

Includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterized by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.

Abuse Using social media

Online abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

Child Trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in human beings".

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the act of partially or totally removing the external genitalia of girls and young women for non-medical reasons. It is illegal within the United Kingdom. See the [Government's guidance on FGM](#).

4. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE - CHILDREN

Identifying abuse is not easy, and the indicators given here are examples only. Some of the indicators can occur in more than one type of abuse and it must be borne in mind that there can sometimes be other non-abusive explanations. However, they may alert you to the need to be aware of the possibility of abuse, to be observant and to record any concerns. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from a safeguarding professional.

Physical

- bruising in unusual places, patterns or shapes
- burns and scalds, especially in significant shapes (e.g. iron or cigarette end)
- adult human bite marks
- serious injury where there is a lack of, or an inconsistent explanation
- untreated injuries
- unusual fractures

Children may be:

- unusually fearful with adults
- unnaturally compliant with their parents/ carers
- wearing clothes that cover up their arms and legs
- reluctant to talk about or refuse to discuss any injuries, or fearful of medical help
- aggressive towards others

Emotional

- behaviour extremes: children may be overactive or withdrawn
- lack of confidence or self-worth
- lack of concentration
- physical indicators without an apparent cause
- difficulty in trusting adults or very anxious to please adults
- reluctance to go home; fear of parents being contacted
- social isolation
- behaviour that expresses anxiety (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting or thumb sucking)
- self-harming behaviour
- substance misuse
- sleep and/or eating disorders

- school non-attendance
- running away

Neglect

- children whose personal hygiene and state of clothing is poor
- children who are constantly hungry and frequently tired
- developmental delay
- low self-esteem
- social isolation
- poor skin tone and hair tone.
- untreated medical problems
- failure to thrive with no medical reason
- poor concentration
- frequent accidents and/or accidental injuries
- eating disorders
- begging and stealing

Sexual Abuse

- changes in behaviour – a child may start being aggressive, withdrawn, clingy, have difficulties sleeping or start wetting the bed
- avoiding the abuser – the child may dislike or seem afraid of a particular person and try to avoid spending time alone with them
- sexually inappropriate behaviour – or sexually explicit language
- physical problems – health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas or sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy
- problems at school – an abused child may have difficulty concentrating and learning and their grades may start to drop
- Giving clues – children may also drop hints and clues that the abuse is happening without revealing it outright

Signs That a Child or Teen May Be at Risk to Harm Another Child

More than a third of all sexual abuse of children is committed by someone under the age of 18. Children, particularly younger children, may take part in inappropriate interactions without understanding how it might be hurtful to others. For this reason, it may be more helpful to talk about a child's sexually "harmful" behaviour rather than sexually "abusive" behaviour.

Possible indicators are that the child:

- may experience typical gestures of friendliness or affection as sexual
- explores his or her own natural sexual curiosity with younger children or those of differing size, status, ability, or power
- seeks out the company of younger children and spends an unusual amount of time with them rather than with peers
- takes younger children to "secret" places or hideaways or plays "special" games with them (e.g. playing doctor, undressing or touching games, etc.)
- insists on physical contact with a child when the child resists the attention

Anxious, depressed or seeming to need help

- tells you they do not want to be alone with a child, or group of children, or becomes anxious about being with a particular young person
- was physically, sexually or emotionally abused and has not been offered adequate resources and support for recovery
- seems to be crying for help, i.e. behaves as if they want to be caught; leaves "clues" or acts in ways that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues

Impulsively sexual or aggressive

- links sexuality and aggression in language or behaviour (e.g. makes sexual threats or insults)
- unable to control inappropriate sexual behaviours involving another child after being told to stop
- engages in sexually harassing behaviour
- shares alcohol, drugs, or sexual material with younger children or teens
- views sexual images of children on the Internet or elsewhere

- forces sexual interaction, including direct contact and non-contact (like exposing genitals) on another adolescent or child

5. CATEGORIES OF ABUSE IN ADULTS

Physical abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication.

Sexual abuse

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.

Psychological/emotional abuse

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include scolding or treating like a child, making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour, blaming someone for attitudes or actions or events beyond their control, use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create over-dependence, lack of privacy or dignity, deprivation of social contact, threats to withdraw help and support, denial of cultural and spiritual needs, denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

Financial/material abuse

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds by omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation, where other forms of abuse occur, financial abuse is also likely. Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health). This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Also, refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money, property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan.

Neglect and acts of omission

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission.

This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. Also the inappropriate use of medication, lack of attention to hygiene, toe and fingernails or teeth.

Self-neglect

This has to be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves.

Discriminatory abuse

This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. Equalities Act 2010

Institutional abuse

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an

organisation.

[Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#), Issued under the [Care Act 2014](#) (Department of Health)

Spiritual abuse (Emotional/Psychological abuse in a religious context)

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'.

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between someone aged 16 or over and someone to whom they are or have been "[personally connected](#)" whether they are partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. 'Abusive behaviour' is defined in the act as any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

The statutory definition domestic abuse was updated by the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#).

Controlling behaviour

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Human trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is broken down into three elements:

- the act (what is done)
- the means (how it is done)
- the purpose (why it is done). The Palermo Protocol – Article 3

Modern slavery

The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation of bodies or body parts.

Siddharth Kara, Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited. Kevin Bales, Slavery Today 2008

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation or safety, and sexting.

6. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE IN ADULTS

As with children, this is not a definitive list of indicators but rather some examples of what

may be observed. Some indicators occur across the categories and not all categories are covered here.

In some of the examples below the action is a clear form of abuse:

Physical

- a history of unexplained falls, minor injuries or malnutrition
- unexplained bruises or untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- injuries to the head, face or scalp
- poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene
- dehydration and/or malnutrition without illness-related cause
- broken spectacles/frames
- physical indicators of being subjected to punishment or of having been
- injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the person restrained
- loss of weight
- a vulnerable person telling you they have been hit, slapped, kicked or mistreated
- varicose ulcers or pressure sores
- injuries reflecting the shape of an object
- unexplained burns, rope burns or cigarette burns.

Emotional

- adult being scolded or treated like a child (infantilisation)
- making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour
- blaming someone for attitudes or actions beyond their control
- use of silence
- humiliation
- bullying/harassment
- verbal abuse
- intimidation
- controlling or over-dependence
- lack of privacy and dignity.
- deprivation of social contact
- threats to withdraw help and support
- denying of cultural and spiritual needs
- denying of choice
- failing to respond adequately to emotional needs

Neglect

- poor hygiene and cleanliness
- clothing which is inadequate or in poor condition
- dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment
- persistent hunger
- dehydration
- weight loss
- an untreated medical condition
- poor physical condition rashes, sores, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- evidence of failure to seek medical advice or summon assistance
- evidence of failure to access appropriate health or educational services or social care

Sexual abuse

- unexplained changes in behaviour
- a significant change in sexual behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- pregnancy in a woman unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- bruises around the vagina or genital area
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- unexplained infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- hints about sexual abuse
- sleep disturbances
- self-harming
- a vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped

Self-neglect

- dehydration, malnutrition (or obesity), untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene
- hazardous living conditions e.g., improper wiring, no indoor plumbing, no heat, no running water
- unsanitary living quarters e.g., animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet,
- inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids e.g., glasses, hearing aids, dentures
- grossly inadequate housing or homelessness

Institutional abuse

- lack of flexibility or choice for people using the service
- inadequate staffing levels
- inappropriate or poor care
- no opportunity for snacks or drinks
- failure to promote or support a person's spiritual or cultural beliefs.
- a culture of treating everyone 'the same' as opposed to treating everyone 'equally'
- dehumanising language
- absence of individual care

Spiritual abuse

Those who have been spiritually abused may experience:

- a sense of betrayal leading to distrust and self-isolation
- silencing by their abuser
- a changed and damaged view of the church.
- feeling misunderstood
- long-term distress
- loss of church as safe space
- powerlessness.

Domestic abuse

- unexplained bruises or injuries
- unusually quiet or withdrawn
- panic attacks
- frequent absences from work or other commitments
- wears clothes that conceal bruises even on warm days.
- stops talking about partner
- anxious about being out or rushes away
- always accompanied by partner
- isolated, withdrawing from friends and family.

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

See above sections for both children and adults.

Human trafficking/modern slavery

- trauma
- complex medical, emotional, mental and practical needs
- potential for financial, legal and physical impact of experience to affect long-term recovery
- anger and post-traumatic altruism
- apparent high resilience masking trauma
- appears to be in a dependency situation
- travel, identity, financial documents are held by someone else
- unsure of home/work address
- may be living and working at the same address
- may appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood
- may be isolated, with limited social contact or time off and limited contact with family
- seems to be bonded by a debt
- experiences threats against themselves or family members unable to negotiate working conditions or leave their employment
- on low pay or have excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport
- may look malnourished or unkempt, lacking access to medical care, hygiene facilities and education

- may wear same clothes day in and day out
- expressions of anxiety, fear or mistrust
- previous history of having been trafficked
- untreated injuries or medical conditions
- reluctant to seek help or to trust others

7. SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

The British Union Conference has set in place the following levels of safeguarding structure to manage and support the effective safeguarding of children and adults at risk across the conference. An outline of the responsibilities for some of these roles are provided under [Appendix 3: Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities](#), p35.

BUC SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BSC)

The British Union Conference Safeguarding Committee (BSC) is a sub-group of the Executive Committee and provides oversight of safeguarding across the British union of churches. It will ensure the annual updating of these policies and the coordination of legal and practice measures necessary for safeguarding our church family.

CONFERENCE/MISSION SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

Conferences and missions play an important role in safeguarding. They disseminate the safeguarding policies and guidelines to churches and provide oversight and support to churches in discharging their safeguarding responsibilities. It would be for each conference and mission to determine how best they organise a safeguarding office and make provision for the following roles:

1. A **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is the nominated lead for compliance with safeguarding practices, who oversees matters on behalf of the conference or mission. They ensure our safeguarding policy and guidance are followed and provide the support, guidance and training to staff and volunteers. The DSL acts as an advocate on behalf of children and adults in need of protection, keeping accurate records relating to safeguarding concerns. DSLs working in partnership with statutory and other agencies. In larger settings one or more deputies should be appointed. This should be someone in a leadership role.
2. A **Communication Spokesperson** should be appointed by each conference/mission to supply information to the public, as appropriate and required, concerning incidents of child abuse, whether actual or alleged. It is essential that such a person has full and accurate knowledge of the situation but is sensitive to the confidentiality to which people are entitled. If there is only one spokesperson, confusion can be avoided and the information supplied will be kept within the legal limits when court proceedings are envisaged. This person is the focal point for the media.

Additionally, specific people (e.g., victims, survivors, parents and the accused) have a right to information. It may be that a local district, school or church organisation must be informed, and such a task will be executed by an individual identified by the conference/mission. The individual providing information to those personally involved should be distinct from the conference/mission spokesperson who is the focal point for the media. Information would be strictly on a need-to-know basis. Guidance from experts should be sought if there is any doubt about who needs to know.

3. A **Disclosure Clerk** (formerly Child Safety Officer) is responsible for administrating the safeguarding and protection activities across the conference. These include organising the DBS/PVG/AccessNI/NVB checks and keeping up-to-date records of these activities. They will be responsible for collating and reporting the periodic returns of these checks from churches to the Conference.



SAFEGUARDING ROLES WITHIN EACH CHURCH/ORGANISATION

Each church or organisation is called to appoint the following safeguarding roles to coordinate and manage safeguarding activities locally:

1. The **Safeguarding Person** is the designated church/department officer who leads on safeguarding matters on behalf of the church or department. They ensure our safeguarding policy and guidance is followed and provide the support, guidance and training to staff and volunteers. The DSL acts as an advocate on behalf of children and adults in need of protection, keeping accurate records relating to safeguarding concerns. DSLs work in partnership with statutory and other agencies. In larger settings one or more deputies should be appointed. This should be someone appointed to serve on the church board unless it is their professional discipline

2. A **Responsible Person** is each head of a department, whether an employee or church member who has been appointed by the local church/management to be responsible for a specific sphere of activity involving children and adults. Within their role the responsible persons would ensure that the right staff are appointed and follow safe working practices. (See [Appendix 3: Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities](#))
3. The **Disclosure Clerk** is responsible for undertaking the safeguarding administrative tasks within a church. These include organising the DBS/PVG/AccessNI/ NVB checks for church officers, issuing role descriptions (see [Appendix 4: Sample Role Description](#)) and keeping up-to-date records of these activities. They will be responsible for periodic returns to the conference and will receive training for their role from the Conference secretariat.

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The local church must let children and adults at risk know of their right to talk with an independent person or service, and that independent support is available for them. To this end each local church must ensure that it displays a poster (with child-friendly wording) advertising the name and telephone number of a recognised independent national organisation that individuals can contact; e.g. for Children: ChildLine, Kidscape, Children 1st, NSPCC; for adults: Samaritans, Age UK, Citizens Advice and Victim Support. This information should also be included from time to time in church bulletins and newsletters where these are produced.