



Seventh-day
Adventist® Church
BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE

Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom



British Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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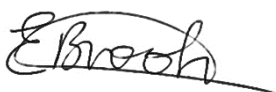
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FOREWORD

Promoting the well-being of those created in the image of God is integral to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a church body we care for and strengthen each other physically and emotionally as well as spiritually. Our Safeguarding Policy calls for us to do no more than purposefully reflect our God-given commission in the principles of how we behave towards one another.

This policy is accompanied by its related procedures which are country specific. Our union of churches covers England, Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland), Scotland and Wales. Each nation has its own legislation, statutory guidance and processes for responding to concerns regarding the abuse and protection of children and adults. The policy and the procedures for your country should always be read together. They are provided to guide and support you in fulfilling our shared safeguarding responsibility.

The real activity to safeguard our children and adults at risk comes through your purposeful attitudes and actions in your daily Christian walk. I sincerely trust that we will work together under God's guidance in keeping our church family safe through our Safeguarding policy.



Eglan Brooks
BUC President

INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places great importance upon family life. In line with our world church position statement¹ we affirm the dignity and worth of each human being and decry all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and domestic abuse. The church recognises the global extent of this problem and the serious, long-term effects upon the lives of all involved. We therefore believe that Seventh-day Adventists must respond to abuse and domestic abuse within both the church and the community. We believe that to remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate and potentially extend such behaviour.

The law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults differs in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Each must be used accordingly to guide all our safeguarding and child protection activities. Details of these are located within the separate country procedures that accompany this document. The Church makes a commitment to respond to concerns without delay and in cooperation with statutory agencies.

Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children².

This Safeguarding Policy sets out the church's guidelines relating to safeguarding our church family. It also provides the procedures to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to children and adults we have contact with through our paid and voluntary activities.

Please remember:

If you have concerns, talk to your responsible person or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated person and the pastor will evaluate all concerns and refer these on where needed.

NB: The term safeguarding is used in England, but in Scotland and Northern Ireland this is referred to as child protection or adult protection. Hence, in these documents the term safeguarding should be understood to refer to both.

¹[General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' position statement on abuse and family violence \(1995\)](#)

²[Working together to safeguard children – a guide to multi-agency working to help and protect the welfare of children, HM Government 2023.](#)

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](#)).

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

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.

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.

B. SAFEGUARDING WITHIN THE DIVERSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to being to be an organisation that is as diverse, equal and inclusive as we can make it within the biblical values of love, compassion, truth and justice. We believe that the church is the community of God's people and recognise that all people are of equal importance in the eyes of God. We are committed to the principles and practices of equality – fairly and consistently treating each person according to their diverse needs and valuing one another despite differences.

Under the Equality Act 2010, there are 9 protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The legislation aims to protect individuals in the workplace from discrimination and harassment specifically relating to these protected characteristics. This protection includes recruitment, training and promotion, pay and benefits, performance management, redundancy and dismissal.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where each person can feel a sense of belonging and can flourish.

Safeguarding and child protection require us to make sensitive and well-informed judgements about a child's needs, a parent's ability and an adult's capacity in any given circumstance. It is important that we are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles that vary across different ethnic and cultural groups within our churches. We must also be aware of the broader social factors that serve to discriminate against people from ethnic communities or particular groups, e.g. recent migrant groups or adults with learning disabilities.

Christians should guard against myths and stereotypes, whether positive or negative, that would in any way obstruct them from treating every individual and situation with objectivity and the highest respect for individuals created in the image of God.

We strive to cultivate a healthy organization that supports our mission to share God's love by valuing integrity, respect, responsibility, trust, servant leadership, valuing people, inspiring hope, transforming lives.

C. SAFER RECRUITMENT

A safer recruitment process will be followed in all cases which involves a number of steps and measures including, but not solely reliant on, relevant vetting and barring checks. To minimise the risk of abuse to a child/young person the church should adopt a careful selection process otherwise known as a safer recruitment approach.

1. THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS (EMPLOYEES)

The leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description and person specification for the post.
- Those applying for positions must complete an application form and a [self-declaration form](#). Self-declaration doesn't replace the need for a criminal record disclosure check for eligible roles but can provide additional information that a records check does not.
- Those shortlisted will be interviewed.
- Safeguarding will be discussed at interview.
- Written references will be obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A relevant criminal record check will be completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant will be verified.
- A suitable training programme will be provided for the successful applicant including safeguarding training to be undertaken prior to the commencement of employment.
- The applicant must complete a probationary period.
- The applicant will be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and must know how to report concerns.

The screening procedure for employees/volunteers working with children/young people should include the following elements:

- (a) Employees for formal roles will follow recruitment processes. This involves face-to-face interviews, verbal and written reference checks, identity verification, induction and supervision. Safeguarding should be discussed at the interview and a suitable training programme provided for the successful applicant. The applicant should be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and understand how to report a concern. They shall be required to complete an information form (see [Appendix 5: Self-Declaration Form](#)) and provide references (see [Appendix 6: Request for Reference](#) and [Appendix 7: Reference Form](#)).
- (b) All new employees should be subject to a probationary period of six months. Job descriptions and outlines of work should be reviewed bi-annually or when the job changes significantly.
- (c) Those applying for roles that will bring them into contact with children and adults at risk will be required to apply for a Disclosure check (i.e. DBS/PVG/AccessNI/NVB) and complete a Self-Declaration Form prior to commencement of employment. Requests for references should include the job description with the reference request. (see [Appendix 4: Sample Role Description](#), [Appendix 6: Request for Reference](#), and [Appendix 7: Reference Form](#)).
- (d) Where the conference/mission runs specific courses for those working with children or adults at risk, course directors should verify that criminal records disclosure checks have been completed. Should any concerns arise regarding their suitability, these should be addressed with the individual and their line manager or local pastor as appropriate. If the criminal record disclosure check reveals information relevant to safeguarding, a risk assessment must be carried out and /or if there is a cause for concern the safeguarding procedures outlined in [Appendix 10: Responding to Concern](#) should be followed.
- (e) Where employees are subsequently found to have had a history of sexual offending and/or violence and have failed to disclose it, they shall be immediately suspended from their position until the employing organisation have reviewed and assessed suitability for continued employment.

2. THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS (VOLUNTEERS)

To minimise the risk of abuse to a child/young person the church should adopt a careful selection process otherwise known as a safer recruitment approach. The screening procedure for employees/volunteers working with children/young people should include the following elements:

- a) Local church officers must be appointed through the process outlined in the Church Manual. The process of church family voting on officers provides a protective and transparent process for securing the right people to work with our children and adults at risk. [See Church Manual](#)
- b) All volunteers who carry out responsibilities that bring them into contact with children or adults at risk are required to have a criminal record disclosure check in order to fulfil their role (i.e. DBS/PVG/AccessNI/NVB). It is the responsibility of the Disclosure Clerk to ensure that these checks are administered.
- c) Should any concerns arise regarding a volunteer's suitability to work with children or adults at risk, these should be addressed with the individual and their local pastor and designated safeguarding lead. If the criminal record disclosure check reveals information relevant to safeguarding, a risk assessment must be carried out and /or if there is a cause for concern the safeguarding procedures outlined in [Appendix 10: Responding to Concern](#) should be followed.
- d) Where volunteers are subsequently found to have had a history of sexual offending and/or violence and have failed to disclose it, they shall be immediately removed from their position.

3. WHO REQUIRES A CRIMINAL RECORDS DISCLOSURE CHECK?

Vetting and barring checks help churches make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. These checks are processed by different agencies within the nations:

England & Wales - [The Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#)

Scotland - [Protecting Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\)](#)

Northern Ireland - [AccessNI](#)

Republic of Ireland - [National Vetting Bureau \(NVB\)](#)

Any individual working or intending to work with children and/or adults at risk, must have a criminal record check. Staff and volunteers who wish to work with children or adults at risk of harm within the Seventh-day Adventist Church require an enhanced criminal record disclosure (in the nations where varying levels of vetting exists) which shows details of spent convictions, unspent convictions and cautions that have not been filtered. This includes a check of local police records.

In deciding who requires a vetting and barring check the following question should be considered:

Does the role mean that the relevant individual either supervised/unsupervised on a frequent/infrequent basis, teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children/adults at risk or provides advice/guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being to children?

Regulated Activities with Children

In simple terms, regulated activity is work that a barred person must not do.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, regulated activity with children means carrying out any of the below activities frequently or with intensity (more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight).

Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; providing advice or guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children.

Working for a limited range of specified places with the opportunity for contact with children and young people, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises (excluding work done by supervised volunteers).

Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of how often they take place and whether or not they are supervised. These include:

- engaging in intimate or personal care of children.
- health care by, or under the supervision of, a registered health care professional.

In Scotland, regulated work with children can be paid or voluntary. It usually involves:

- working directly with children
- teaching or supervising children
- providing personal services to children
- caring responsibilities

The frequency and intensity requirement does not apply.

Regulated work can also apply to certain positions of trust within organisations, for example being a trustee of a children's charity.

For more information about the definitions of regulated activity and regulated work, please see Appendix 20: Legislation for the Protection of Children and Adults at Risk in your respective countries ([Appendix 20: England](#), [Appendix 20: Northern Ireland](#), [Appendix 20: Republic of Ireland](#), [Appendix 20: Scotland](#), [Appendix 20: Wales](#)).

Regulated Activity – Adults

The new legal definition of regulated activity for adults no longer uses the term 'vulnerable adults' and no longer requires the activity to meet a minimum frequency threshold. The definition now focuses on the nature of activities, which, if required by an adult, will define them to be vulnerable. The following activities fall under the category of regulated activity:

- Health care – any health care professional providing health care to an adult or anyone who provides health care to an adult under the supervision of a health care professional.
- Personal care – providing assistance, supervision, or advice in relation to activities including eating and washing.
- Social care
- Assistance with cash, bills, or shopping
- Assistance in the conduct of a person's own affairs
- Transporting an adult because of their age, disability, or illness to or from their home and a place where they will receive health care, personal care, or social care.

Any staff or volunteer who wish to engage in any of the above activities is required to have a DBS check.

The Validity of Vetting and barring Checks Across Organisations

NB - All staff or volunteers who have been DBS/PVG/AccessNI/NVB checked in their employment or other activities outside the remit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are STILL required to obtain a separate certificate in relation to their church activities.

In England & Wales the UK Government provides the [DBS Update Service](#) which can limit the necessity of checks for more than one employment setting.

The Update Service is an online subscription service that lets staff/volunteers keep their enhanced DBS certificates up to date. It also allows employers to check a certificate online, with consent.

Those registered with the service are able to take their DBS certificate from one job to the next, unless:

- an employer asks them to get a new certificate
- they need a certificate for a different type of 'workforce' (for example, they have an 'adult workforce' certificate and need a 'child workforce' certificate)
- they need a different level certificate (for example, they have a standard DBS certificate and need an enhanced one)

The employer can notify what DBS certificate is required.

Registration lasts for one year. The service costs £13 per year and starts from the date the DBS certificate was issued. There is no charge for those using a volunteer application or certificate to join the Update Service.

Benefits of joining:

- saves time and money
- the DBS certificate can be used from role to role (if within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required)
- employers can carry out instant online status checks on DBS certificates that are linked to the subscription
- the service enhances safeguarding processes

D. MANAGING STAFF, CHURCH MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

1. ROLE DEFINITION

Confusion over roles, responsibilities and accountability is the very framework within which child abuse can occur and be perpetuated. Therefore, the church must ensure that everyone who works with children and adults at risk has a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and to whom they are accountable. This requires background checks to be completed for ALL credentialed and affiliated leaders of the church annually.

Persons requested to be church officers will be presented with a copy of their proposed role description and access to the Safeguarding policy document. Their acceptance must involve signing an agreement form indicating that they have read and understood the policy and job role.

A copy of the signed role with their DBS/PVG (Scotland)/AccessNI/NVB number on it is to be kept by the Disclosure Clerk (see [Appendix 4: Sample Role Description](#)). A full set of sample role descriptions will be made available to each Disclosure Clerk by the Conference Secretariat.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

There is the need for good lines of accountability to keep children safe, thus the following measures are necessary.

- (a) Each Responsible Person must meet with their team of workers/committee on a regular basis (at least once a quarter) to:
 - (i) Review and plan the work for their particular activity area.
 - (ii) Provide an opportunity for team members to raise any concerns regarding any child or young person and highlight any observations. However, the reporting of any concerns should not be delayed until this meeting.
- (b) Keep minutes of each meeting. Where situations of suspected abuse are being discussed the minutes should be detailed with a clear decision regarding future action. Copies of the minutes must be shared with the local pastor who is then responsible for passing relevant information to the appropriate Conference departmental director or Mission sponsor.
- (c) Inform team members which person will take over responsibility when particular individuals are absent.
- (d) Every individual is to act to safeguard children and adults at risk by following the safeguarding and child protection procedures. While staff and volunteers have specific obligations to protect the vulnerable, safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

3. MANAGEMENT OF WORKERS

As Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers and volunteers should be issued with the code of conduct. (see [Appendix 2: Code of Conduct](#)).

4. MANAGING INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSIT

From time-to-time individuals will move from churches across conferences/missions and even internationally. As such it is important that local Churches fulfil the requirements to inform the receiving district. This pertains to individuals with a criminal conviction for a safeguarding offence and those who have known safeguarding concerns.

If a member who is the subject of a safeguarding concern moves to another congregation, church leaders must exercise their best judgement whether to inform the receiving church where there is no substantive evidence or specific allegation. While there is no legal obligation, where a safeguarding lead becomes aware that someone who poses a risk to others moves churches, the receiving church can be encouraged to contact the safeguarding lead of their previous church to ask for relevant details of the concern in order to protect vulnerable groups in the church they are attending. This is the preferred procedure so that the receiving church isn't informed unnecessarily should the person not end up going to that church. It is good safeguarding practice to share relevant and proportional safeguarding information. It is important to implement measures to minimise anonymity to create transparent mechanisms of communication. Such decisions are to be managed sensitively and do not require discussion by the church board.

Calls for employed or lay individuals to provide ministerial services must be processed through a service request whether the call is within the territory of the British Union or international. Service requests are approved by officers at various

administrative levels be that Conference/Mission and/or Union level within the UK and higher organisations for international requests.

E. TRAINING

Written policy and guidelines, however good they are, will not protect children from abuse. These are strengthened by staff and workers undergoing safeguarding and child protection training and remaining alert and responsive to the care and well-being of children and adults who may be at risk.

Training is important and equips individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge.

- All paid or voluntary personnel appointed to work with children and adults at risk, including senior leaders and pastors, are mandated to complete the core safeguarding training or an equivalent package provided in the local area and fulfil ongoing training requirements
- All paid staff who work with children and adults at risk, including pastors, must undergo safeguarding training on a bi-annual basis as a contractual condition of continued employment.
- All Responsible Persons are expected to complete the core training
- Safeguarding Persons will complete the core training; plus a further module or an equivalent package provided in the local area.
- The Disclosure Clerk's training will be the responsibility of the Secretariat.
- All individuals in senior leadership roles should complete advanced level safeguarding training (pastors, departmental directors and support staff, all those who hold office in local churches)

Training for our church family may be provided by the Conference; organised by your Designated Safeguarding Lead or commissioned externally. Safeguarding Leads must arrange awareness training for all whom they serve and use appropriate mediums (e.g. bulletin/newsletter) to keep the church/department alert to the safeguarding needs within their remit. A record will be maintained of all those who undertake the safeguarding training.

F. WORKING SAFELY

1. GOOD WORKING PRACTICES

To safeguard keep our church family, we need to adopt working practices that lessen the opportunity for harm to our children and adults. This involves:

- Planning the work of the department to prevent abuse.
- Using supervision to prevent abuse.
- Teaching children to be appropriately aware of how to remain safe and who to approach to report abuse or concerns.
- Recognising and responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse.
- Undertaking risk assessments and implementing risk mitigation measures for all church activities.

The Church also promotes best practice in the taking of photographs and filming and the use of digital technology and social media across all its activities. (See [Appendix 12: Online and Digital Safety](#), and [Appendix 13\(a\): Photographs and Filming](#))

2. CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Creating safe environments for our church family is a matter of applying good working practices across all our activities. The means we should:

- (a) Arrange, as far as possible, that no adult is left alone with a child or young person without the activity being observed by others. This may mean that doors will have to be left open or that small groups work simultaneously in the same room.
- (b) Organise and monitor activities so as not to allow individuals to create relationships or arrangements that exploit or abuse a worker's position of trust in relation to an individual, e.g., an elderly person feeling obliged to pay the debts held by someone helping them.
- (c) In a one-to-one situation with a child or adult at risk, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building, and the child or adult at risk should know they are there.
- (d) As far as possible, ensure that there are always at least two adults working with a group of children or vulnerable persons, especially when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. Consideration must be given to matching the gender of the workers with that of the group. The two-adult provision applies in changing areas and toilets, even if only one or two children are present.
- (e) Never do anything of a personal nature for children or adults that they can do for themselves. Be mindful of how and where one touches minors and adults at risk. Always seek consent before any physical touching.
- (f) Arrange when transporting children or young people by car or minibus to have more than one passenger in the vehicle. Vehicles must have appropriate seating for children (to keep them physically safe), drivers must be fully insured and age-appropriately authorised to drive the vehicle. Require leaders/workers to keep others informed if they have to drive a minor home on his/her own.
- (g) Provide an adequate number/ratio of adults to supervise events for children/young people according to the activity and especially where overnight activities are involved. There should always be more than one adult for any group and they should reflect the gender of the group. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in the ratios below. For further guidance see the OFSTED Guidelines www.ofsted.gov.uk or its equivalent within your country. An example of a minimum ratio is provided below.

For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every three children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every four children (1:4) (1:5 in Scotland)

For 3 to 8 years – one adult to every eight children (1:8)

For over-8s – one adult for the first eight children, then one for every additional ten children.

- (h) Any activities involving children or vulnerable adults outside of church, or taking place online should be risk assessed and accordingly managed (see [Appendix 10\(a\) & \(b\): Risk Assessment documents](#)).
- (i) In the event of any injury to a person, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded on an Accident Form and that the record is witnessed by another adult. Ensure that any necessary health and safety actions are undertaken. For more information on see the British Union Conference [Health and Safety Policy Statement, Organisation & Arrangements](#).

3. INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING – ADRA-UK

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is the international humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church serving in 118 countries. ADRA-UK organises initiatives both at home and abroad. Its work empowers communities and changes lives by providing sustainable community development and disaster relief.

ADRA-UK's disaster response work includes services to children and adults often in urgent need. In meeting these needs, their welfare and protection are prioritised in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) or regional equivalent, along with the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. ADRA-UK is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. The Safeguarding policy and procedures should be followed in conjunction with ADRA-UK's Code of Conduct and suite of safeguarding policies, specifically the Safeguarding, Child Safeguarding and PSHEA policies.

Where church activities involve work in another country, ADRA-UK must ensure that the Safeguarding policy requirements are met by all those who work for the church and that partner organisations have proper procedures in place to protect children and adults at risk. This includes completing safeguarding checks on personnel working on behalf of the church; a risk assessment, and following the Safeguarding code of conduct and all safe working practices throughout all our activities in that country. The Safeguarding requires clear and established reporting mechanisms being in place to address concerns and allegations of abuse. Additionally, ADRA-UK's work in those countries will be fully compliant with the safeguarding legislation, policies and standards of those countries as well as ADRA-UK's safeguarding policies.

Support for Volunteers and Staff

The psychological wellbeing as well as the physical safety of volunteers and staff who provide support to vulnerable groups, must also be protected. Those providing support may often be exposed to disturbing situations which are potentially traumatising. The reporting of concerns of abuse may create potential dangers due to the emotional reactions of those involved. ADRA-UK has a duty of care not only to those in need of support, but also to those who support them, and must be intentional about providing such assistance where it is required. Help may take the form of support from work colleagues or support through counselling provided by an outside agency.

Suspicion of Abuse by a Volunteer or Member of Staff

Where volunteers or staff are the subject of an allegation of abuse, appropriate support will be offered by ADRA-UK while fully complying with The Safeguarding protocols, ADRA-UK's safeguarding policies and cooperating with the statutory services during any investigation. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken where safeguarding violations have occurred.

Where a volunteer or staff member is suspected of abuse, ADRA-UK's complaints procedure will be followed.

4. THIRD PARTY HIRE OF CHURCH PREMISES

Where external organisations are using church premises, safeguarding responsibilities rests with that organization. Hire arrangements must make it clear and agreed that the organisations are to abide by the Safeguarding policy.

A summary of the policy to be used should be attached to the hire agreement. Hirers should be asked to sign a commitment to abide by our safeguarding policy, even when the organisation has its own, to acknowledge that this has been seen and will be adhered to. The church has a responsibility to ensure that health and safety obligations pertaining to the building are maintained (See [Hire of Church Premises Safeguarding Agreement](#) and [Safeguarding Policy Executive Summary](#)).

5. SAFER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Churches have a duty of care to make sure that all children who attend events and activities are kept safe, whether they are regular or one-off. When undertaking events that involve larger numbers than usual, different venues, overnight stays, or working with other groups, churches need to think about the extra measures necessary to put in place to keep children and young people safe.

Guidance for Event Organisers:

- Identify who has overall responsibility for child protection at the event or activity and how to contact them on the day.
- If you're using a venue belonging to another organisation, arrange a meeting in advance to discuss how things will run on the day and make sure your child protection and safeguarding plans are aligned.
- Anyone who is taking part in regulated activity or regulated work must have undergone a vetting and barring check.
- Get written confirmation that everyone working with children and young people has been recruited safely and has undergone the relevant checks.
- All staff and volunteers (including sub-contractors) should have completed child protection training to make sure they are able to recognise and respond to any concerns.
- Draw up a code of conduct for all the adults who are working or volunteering at the event or activity and make sure everyone understands it and agrees to follow it.
- Draw up a safeguarding and child protection plan for the event.
- Have a clear procedure for how staff and volunteers should respond to any welfare or child protection concerns that may arise during the event or activity.

Lost or Missing Children

Think about what measures you can put in place to prevent children getting lost and make sure you have clear procedures to follow if children go missing during your event or activity. Things you should consider include:

- whether you will have a designated meeting point for lost children, where this will be, how you will make sure children know about it and how it will be supervised.
- how you will contact parents or carers to inform them that their child is lost or has been found
- how you will verify that adults coming forward to collect a missing child are the child's parents or carers
- whether any of the children you are working with might need extra supervision to prevent them going missing, for example if they have a history of running away or if a learning disability means they get confused in unfamiliar places.
- who will co-ordinate the initial search for a missing child.
- who is responsible for contacting the police if necessary, and when this should happen. Refer to missing children's policy.

See [Photographing and Filming policy](#).

After the Event or Activity

Make time after the event or activity to review what happened and identify any improvements you can make to your future practice.

Health and safety

Make sure you have all the necessary health and safety measures in place. For example:

- make sure appropriate first aid cover is available
- make everyone aware of fire safety procedures

- find out as much as you can about external venues including visiting in advance wherever possible
- talk to any third party providers directly and make sure they are fully compliant with the law
- carry out comprehensive risk assessments in advance
- check that any organisations you are subcontracting to run activities comply with safety standards.

Take into account the level of ability and stage of development of the children who will be involved and think about any support they need.

More information about health and safety at events is available from the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#).

You should also make sure you have adequate insurance. If you are a member of an umbrella body or have a local council for voluntary service, they can give more information about this. The Cabinet Office provides information about insurance for voluntary and community events in its [guide to organising voluntary events](#) (Gov.uk, 2017).

G. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Life circumstances as well as illness can contribute to placing an adult at risk of harm. In those situations, the Church is committed to working together across its departments and with external organisations, to support and protect adults who are unable to safeguard themselves, their property and their rights. Similarly, children rely on adults for their protection and well-being. Their age and developmental stage can make them dependent and therefore vulnerable to forms of treatment that are abusive or neglectful. The Church is committed to early action in the recognition and response to concerns where individuals may be at risk of, or experiencing, any form of maltreatment.

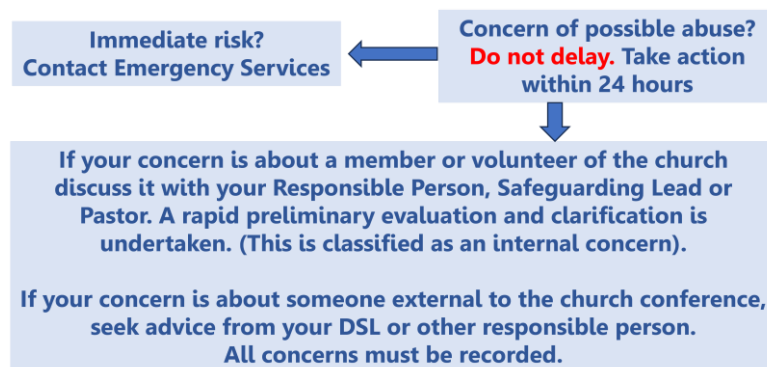
The church is not an investigative agency and therefore employees/volunteers must understand their role when working in child or adult-centred programmes of the church. **Under no circumstances should any person attempt to carry out any 'investigation' into the allegation or suspicions of abuse.** This is the responsibility of local statutory services, whose task it is to investigate the matter, under specific legislation and statutory guidance. Our role is to recognise concerns; undertake a rapid preliminary evaluation solely for the purpose of clarification and refer child or adult protection matters to our local statutory agencies.

What can the church do to safeguard children and adults at risk?

By 'safeguarding' and 'protection' we simply mean acting to safeguard our church family and this is a responsibility we all share. To meet this means each of us must undertake our roles to the highest standards of Christian conduct. Within our mission there already exist the commands to care for those in need. We must make ourselves aware of the protection procedures so we know how to respond and where to turn for advice or guidance where there are safeguarding concerns. We should then report any concerns without delay so that the appropriate support or protection is made available. Early help and support can prevent situations becoming or continuing to be harmful or exploitative. Details of how to respond in line with your national legislation and local procedures are located in the accompanying procedures for your nation. Please see [National Procedures](#) – Section I.

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. In all situations, informed and timely action should be taken. Do not delay; follow your country procedures and the flowchart therein on how to respond to concerns. If you happen to witness and incident of abuse or conduct by a third party or any other behaviour that warrants concern, and you wish to remain anonymous, the flowchart outlines how you can report your concerns; or you may use a listening line, e.g. [Cornerstone Counselling Services](#) (SEC Listening Line) - 0330 133 2495 or [Thirtyone:eight](#) - 0303 003 11 11. You can also call [Crimestoppers](#) – 0800 555 111.

The Union/Conference/Mission will not tolerate Malicious reporting and will implement sanctions to deal with individuals who engage in such conduct.



The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with the pastor will evaluate all concerns and refer these on where needed. The above process should also be used for the reporting of complaints and grievances. Where the allegation or concern involves the DSL or the pastor the person who is the subject of the allegation will be excluded from the evaluation process. Under no circumstances should the person who is the subject of the allegation be informed until after any allegation has been discussed and agreement reached with the statutory authorities. Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies.

Allegations against children and young people

Children and young people have always been curious about the opposite sex and/or experimented sexually. However, where a child in a position of power has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through engaging in sexual activity, this is likely to be regarded as abusive. The same applies where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child. This is not mutual exploration. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great (see [Signs That a Child or Teen May Be at Risk to Harm Another Child](#)).

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a disclosure made to someone in authority by an employee alleging corruption, malpractice, or wrongdoing. The act of blowing the whistle is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' ([see Appendix 17 – BUC Whistleblowing Policy](#)).

Types of activity or behaviour that give rise to whistleblowing may include:

- Bullying or harassment
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of procedure, which may advantage a particular party or any actions
- Behaviour likely to bring the reputation of the Church into question.

If a BUC staff member (lay employees and all ministers who serve in appointments under the control of the BUC) becomes aware of activities which give cause for concern in the context of safeguarding, the BUC allows concerns to be raised in confidence and, to allow for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter.

Any individual who makes a disclosure of wrongdoing or malpractice will be treated with respect and will be protected against victimisation. Anyone who victimises a whistleblower will be subject to the BUC's disciplinary procedure.

In the context of protecting children and adults at risk of harm, whistleblowing is not a substitute for following the safeguarding protocols outlined in these procedures. See the Government's guidance '[Whistleblowing for Employees](#)'.

It is in violation of the whistleblowing policy for anyone to make a knowingly false complaint of wrongdoing or to provide knowingly false information about a complaint. This will result in disciplinary action when possible.

H. CARING FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

1. Pastoral Care for the Victim/Survivor and their Family

Abuse is traumatic for those who are victims and their family members. It destroys the essential basis of trust and safety, especially where the perpetrator is a parent or a trusted church member. Abuse all too commonly breaks up families, and shatters beliefs about Christian conduct and human behaviour. These situations are never without pain and suffering by a child or adult at risk. They significantly challenge our church family in coming to terms with the fact that a professed Christian, and church member, has the capacity to abuse a child or vulnerable adult.

Children may be abused by children or adults who are not family members, but who are known by the child and often the child's family. The abuse inflicted is varied but often sexual or exploitative of a vulnerable person. Whatever has happened to a child or adult, their basic needs as an individual or family remain and they should continue to receive support from our church family.

Victims or witness of abuse can report to their local church DSL, pastor, or other trusted/responsible person.

Pastoral care for the victim/survivor and his/her family may include continued contact, prayer support, help to find legal advice, and accompaniment to court hearings. The church should ensure that:

- It does not become involved with possible inter-family disputes but should always focus on the needs of the victim as a priority.
- It works hard to maintain those links that the child or adult at risk has with the church so that their life within the church remains as normal as possible.

Recognising the confidential nature of the information available to the members of a child/adult protection conference, the pastor should seek an interview with the identified social worker to establish what risk the alleged perpetrator poses to the victim and others when they attend church-based activities.

2. Caring for the Congregation

Consideration must also be given to the impact of an allegation on the congregation. The DSL should discuss the provision of support with the pastor who will be responsible for coordinating it. This should be done in consultation with the statutory authorities and the media office and the following areas considered:

- what information can be shared
- when and how information can be shared - this may include a statement to the congregation delivered by the agreed minister (local, Conference/Mission)
- where and to whom people can go for support.

At the end of an investigation or actions taken to deal with an issue, which has had a significant impact on the church, consideration should be given to a process that allows the church to heal. It can be difficult to define the right moment for this as the church may continue to manage the situation and the subject's involvement in the church for many years to come but it is good pastoral practice to review the differing needs within the church and its wider community.

3. Pastoral Care for the Alleged Perpetrator

During the difficult period of investigation following an allegation of sexual or other form of abuse, the church should arrange appropriate support for the alleged perpetrator, who is a church member, without compromising the position of the victim/survivor, their family or the church.

- a) Pastoral care for alleged perpetrators may include continued contact, prayer support, help to find legal advice, and accompaniment to court hearings. It is unlikely that the same person would be able to provide support to meet the conflicting needs of the various parties, i.e. victim/survivor, victim's family, alleged perpetrator. The church may find it helpful if one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, while another offers support to the victim and his/her family, and a further person gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator.
- b) Pastoral care for an alleged perpetrator must not be given at the expense of the victim, the victim's family, or justice. The victim/survivor should not sense that the church is in collusion with or taking the side of the alleged perpetrator.

4. Agreement of Care

For individuals whose history or behaviour pose a risk to children or adults at risk, an Agreement of Care must be completed. This would serve as a measure of protection for others from further or future concern. (See [Appendix 14: Agreement of Care](#)).

5. Pastoral Care of Known Abusers

The local pastor and/or elder should:

- Talk to the offender's Probation Officer who should know the person and be able to advise on management.
- Meet with the offender and the church elders and lay out the boundaries that the offender will be expected to keep. Explain what support the church will give. Get the offender to sign an [Agreement of Care](#) form. While this sounds formal it helps in dealing with the potential manipulative ways of the sex offender, which might pose a risk
- Inform key people, (elders, the Sabbath School leader, Youth leader, Adventurer and Pathfinder leaders, etc.) for the events that the offender is attending, that the individual should have no contact with children or young people. This is always on a 'need to know' basis. Offenders must never be on their own with children or adults at risk, to whom they pose a threat.
- Inform the offender that a failure to keep to these conditions may lead to him/her being barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the church leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (Probation and Social Services) and any other relevant organisation.
- Provide the Conference/Mission DSL with the details of the offender along with a copy of the completed [Agreement of Care](#).

6. Pastoral Care for Employed Workers

Pastoral work with children, young people and adults in the aftermath of an incident of child or adult abuse will be extremely stressful. As the main burden of this work will inevitably fall upon the shoulders of the employee, they should be provided with a counsellor while they are working in this specialised area. The employee should not feel guilty in accepting the services of a counsellor, but should see it as a necessary support for them to remain objective while working in a highly emotional and stressful situation.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

1. Local Churches

Local churches are responsible through their Church Board for ensuring that the Safeguarding policy is implemented with respect to all personnel whose work involves contact with children and adults at risk.

Each Church Board will appoint a Disclosure Clerk. This individual will be responsible for reporting to the conference/mission office, in a manner prescribed by the latter. This information will relate to those individuals currently working in a paid or voluntary capacity with children or adults at risk; it will record their compliance in completing the necessary forms as outlined in the policy and detail the level of training they have completed.

Churches must also appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead to coordinate the response to safeguarding concerns and arrange training for those coming into contact with children and adults at risk. The church should display a safeguarding statement (see [Appendix 8: Church Safeguarding Statement](#)) and must also maintain oversight of safeguarding through the work of the Church Board. Local pastors will be responsible for holding their churches accountable for the full implementation of the Safeguarding policy and procedures.

2. Conferences/Missions

The local conference/mission will monitor the implementation of the Safeguarding policy within its territory. It will be responsible for:

- (a) Holding the local churches accountable for implementing the policy at the local church level.
- (b) Organising an annual schedule of training seminars, doing so in consultation with the departmental directors/sponsors and the training team personnel of their conference/mission.
- (c) Providing core training to those with safeguarding roles using the BUC training materials or an equivalent package.
- (d) Assembling a training team in consultation with the appropriate departmental directors/sponsors of their conference/mission to facilitate the provision of training for local church officers and volunteers.
- (e) Appointing a Communication Spokesperson to supply information as required to the public concerning incidents of child abuse, whether actual or alleged.
- (f) Nominating an individual who will be responsible for coordinating the above duties.

3. Union Conference Level

The Executive Committee of the British Union Conference will appoint an advisory committee who will be charged with:

- (a) Overseeing the implementation of the Safeguarding policy in the conferences and missions.
- (b) Reviewing and recommending amendments to the Safeguarding policy to the British Union Conference Policy Committee. This will be undertaken annually.
- (c) Working with the conference/mission nominated personnel to produce standardised training materials for core training and beyond.

Support, advice and referral information

Designated Persons should ensure that they keep a current list of support and advice points for effective coordination of safeguarding matters. This should include a full list of referral agencies indicating how to access support and advice at all times, whether in normal working hours or outside them. This should be a comprehensive list of contact addresses and telephone numbers, including relevant national and local voluntary bodies. A sample of this is included in [Appendix 9: Safeguarding Contact Details](#).

Governance

The overall responsibility for the full implementation of child and adult protection arrangements is held by the president at conference level and the pastor at church level. Where the identified roles are not appointed, the president or pastor should ensure that those functions are carried out until an appointment has been secured.

British Union Conference
January 2024

APPENDICES

National References and Resources

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Local children or adult services and NHS Health Promotion Service (via local/online directories).
- [Thirtyone:eight](#) - ☎ 0303 003 11 11
- [NSPCC](#) - Weston House, 42 Curtain Rd, London, EC2A 3NH. ☎ 0207 825 2500
- [Children 1st](#) - 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh, EH9 1AT, ☎ 0131 446 2300
- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection](#)

These organisations may also be approached for training or literature.

HELPLINES

- [Thirtyone:eight](#) - ☎ 0303 003 11 11
- [ChildLine](#) - ☎ 0800 1111 (also handles adult calls)
- [NSPCC](#) - Child Protection Helpline: ☎ 0808 800 500
- [Children 1st](#) - Helpline: ☎ 08000 28 22 33
- [Samaritans](#) - ☎ 116 123
- [Alzheimer's Society](#) - ☎ 0300 222 11 22 (National Dementia Helpline)
- [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) - ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [National Centre for Domestic Violence](#) - ☎ 0800 970 2070
- [Women's Aid and Refuge](#)
 - FREEPHONE ENGLAND NATIONAL 24HR HELPLINE ☎ 0808 2000 247
 - SCOTLAND 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE ☎ 0800 0271 234
 - WALES 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE ☎ 0808 8010 800
- [Rape Crisis \(England & Wales\)](#) - ☎ 0808 802 9999
- [Respect - Men's Advice Line](#) - ☎ 0808 801 0327
- [Mankind Initiative](#) - ☎ 01823 334 244

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- [Safeguarding Older People from Abuse and Neglect. Factsheet 78. May 2015](#)
- [NSPCC](#) publishes a series of separate information leaflets for parents, children and teenagers.
- [Thirtyone:eight](#) supplies books, DVDs and material to use with children. Send for their resource list at the above address enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope.
- [Kidscape](#) – Help with Bullying - 82 Brook Street, London W1Y 1YG, supplies materials for parents to use with children, and kits for use, particularly in schools.
- [Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scottish Government](#) website
- [Department for Education](#) – Responsible for education and children's services in England – has some useful links to safeguarding documents to guide professionals
- HSE – Republic of Ireland – [Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults](#)

VETTING AND BARRING DISCLOSURE CHECKS

- England and Wales: [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) - Guidance for Employers
- Northern Ireland: Checks are carried out by [AccessNI](#)
- Republic of Ireland: [National Vetting Bureau](#)
- Scotland: The [Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme](#) (PVG Scheme)

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- [Action on Elder Abuse](#) - Elder Abuse Response helpline: ☎ 808 808 8141
- [Alzheimer's Society](#) ☎ 0300 222 11 22 (National Dementia Helpline)
- [Age UK](#)
- [Action on Disability](#) ☎ 020 7385 2098 / 7381 2042
- [Citizen's Advice](#) - contact your local branch
- [MENCAP](#) – advice for those with learning disabilities ☎ 0808 808 1111
- [MIND](#) – The National Association for Mental Health ☎ 0300 123 3393 or text 86463
- [RNIB](#) – The Royal National Institute for the Blind ☎ 0303 123 9999
- [Women's Aid](#) - Provides services for women and children who have been affected by the experience of domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse. ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [Refuge](#) - Refuge is the national charity which provides a wide range of specialist domestic violence services to women and children experiencing domestic violence. ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [Rape Crisis](#) (England & Wales) - Rape Crisis Centres offer a range of services for women and girls who have been raped or experienced another form of sexual violence. ☎ 0808 802 9999
- [Scope](#) - the main national organization for those with cerebral palsy ☎0808 800 333
- [Livability](#) (formerly The Shaftesbury Society) ☎ 020 7452 2000
- [Through the Roof](#) - Christian body who help to improve access of disabled people to the Church ☎ 01372 74995
- [Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse](#) - Support and self-help for survivors *Website:*
- [MACSAS](#) - Support and networking for survivors of sexual abuse by those in ministry ☎ 08088 01 03 40
- [NAPAC](#) - National Association for People Abused in Childhood ☎ 0808 801 0331
- [RESPOND](#) - For survivors or abusers with learning difficulties ☎ 0808 808 0700
- [Survivors UK](#) - Support for male survivors ☎ 0203 598 3898
- [Stop It Now](#) - Child protection charity, working to prevent child sexual abuse
- [Victim Support](#) – an independent charity that helps people affected by crime or traumatic events get the support they need.
- [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) (Refuge) - The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [National Centre for Domestic Violence](#) - The National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence. 24-hour helpline: ☎ 0800 970 2070
- [Men's Advice](#) Line (Respect) - A confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members). ☎ 0808 801 0327 (Monday - Friday 9am-5pm)

- [Mankind Initiative](#) - Support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence ☎ 01823 334 244 (weekdays 10am to 4pm)
- [Respect](#) - The Respect phone line is a confidential helpline offering advice, information and support to help you stop being violent and abusive to your partner. ☎ 0808 802 4040
- [Samaritans](#) - A 24-hour helpline for any person in emotional distress ☎ 116 123
- [SafeLives](#) - SafeLives is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. It provides practical help to support professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims, with the aim of protecting the highest risk victims and their children – those at risk of murder or serious harm. SafeLives does not provide direct support or advice to victims of domestic violence. However, if you are experiencing domestic abuse or are supporting someone who is in that situation, immediate help is available via the National Domestic Violence Helpline. ☎ 0117 403 3220
- [Rights of Women](#) - Provides women with free, confidential legal advice by specialist women solicitors and barristers.
- [Domestic Violence Intervention Project \(DVIP\)](#) - Helps to make women and children safer. With services across London, they work to stop domestic violence and to reduce the harm it causes to women, children and families. ☎ 020 7633 918

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- [Home Office](#) - Information regarding domestic violence and abuse, including links to further material on the new definition of domestic abuse; coercive and controlling behaviour; domestic violence disclosure scheme; domestic violence protection notices and orders; Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR); Independent domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and MARACs.
- [The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\)](#) - Often called 'Clare's Law' after the landmark case that led to it. This gives any member of the public the right to ask the police if their partner may pose a risk to them. Under Clare's Law, a member of the public can also make enquiries into the partner of a close friend or family member.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

- [Cornerstone Counselling Services](#) - SEC Listening Line ☎ 0330 133 2495 or for appointments ☎ 020 7423 8050
- [Enditnow](#) - Adventists Say No to Violence - is a global initiative to raise awareness and advocate for the end of violence around the world. It aims to mobilize Seventh-day Adventists around the world and invites other community groups to join in to resolve this worldwide issue.
- [General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists](#) Official Statement on Family Violence

NB – SDA SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS SHOULD ALWAYS OPERATE ALONGSIDE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES, NOT AS AN ALTERNATIVE

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

- [Restored](#) - Restored is an international Christian alliance - working to end violence against women and to transform relationships.
- [RAVE](#) - RAVE is an initiative that seeks to bring knowledge and social action together to assist families of faith impacted by abuse.
- [Hidden Hurt](#) - Hidden Hurt is designed to help understand the dynamics of relationships where abuse is taking place, the different forms abuse can take, its effect on both direct victims (i.e. person being abused) and indirect victims (i.e. children living in a house where abuse occurs), specific issues facing the Christian abuse victim, and helpful links and telephone numbers inside the UK.
- [Faith Trust Institute](#) - A US-based multi-faith organization working to end sexual and domestic violence.
- [Eye](#) - run a family refuge in Northamptonshire and provide training on domestic abuse prevention and response

ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR WORKERS

- [Women's Aid](#) - Provides services for women and children who have been affected by the experience of domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse. ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [Mankind Initiative](#) - Support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence ☎ 01823 334 244 (weekdays 10am to 4pm)
- [Refuge](#) - Refuge is the national charity which provides a wide range of specialist domestic violence services to women and children experiencing domestic violence. ☎ 0808 2000 247
- [Domestic Violence Intervention Project \(DVIP\)](#) - provide training programmes and expert support for practice development. ☎ 020 7633 918
- [Respect](#) - Respect is the UK's principle training organisation for frontline work with perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse, male victims and young people using violence. Training courses provide professionals with the skills and knowledge that they need to work safely and effectively in the domestic violence sector.

AGENCIES WORKING WITH MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

- [AFRUCA](#) – Safeguarding Children - ☎ 0844 660 8607
- [CIAC Chinese Information and Advice Centre](#) - ☎ 0845 313 1868 ex 211
- [Kiran Project](#) – Supporting Asian Women - ☎ 020 8558 1986
- [LAWRS](#) (Latin American Women's Rights Service) - ☎ 020 7336 0888
- [Southall Black Sisters](#) - For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women - ☎ 020 8571 9595 Mon – Fri 10am – 5pm Closed Wed
- [Domestic Violence Intervention Project \(DVIP\)](#) - Helps to make women and children safer. With services across London, they work to stop domestic violence and to reduce the harm it causes to women, children and families. ☎ 020 7633 918

RESOURCES CONCERNING HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

- [Karma Nirvana](#) supports those who suffer or are at risk of honour-based abuse or forced marriage. ☎ 0800 5999 247 (9am – 9pm Weekdays & 10am – 4pm Weekends)
- [Forced Marriage Unit](#) - The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage. If you are worried that you might be forced into a marriage or are worried about someone else who may be you should contact FMU on ☎ 020 7008 0151 (9am – 5pm) or 0207 008 1500 (if outside the office hours (ask for the Global Response Centre)

APPENDIX 1: SAFEGUARDING – A BIBLICAL MANDATE

A quote of disputed origin claims that “The measure of a civilization is how it treats its weakest members.” While the source of the reference may be in doubt, the truth of the sentiment resonates the plethora of biblical calls to advocate and act on behalf of the vulnerable. The psalmist urges God’s people to, “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 82:3-4 ESV).

For Christians, the moral responsibility that flows from the heart of God to protect both children and adults at risk overarches government’s statutory requirements and guidance. The various safeguarding legislation within the UK nations are secular requirements that in broad terms reflect biblical principles. Such legislation provides vital frameworks within which we discharge our scriptural mandate. When it comes to safeguarding, our faith must inform our actions.

The need to protect vulnerable groups has been a constant feature of the biblical narrative almost from its inception. The Mosaic law in the Old Testament warns of the severest punishments on those who mistreat the widows, fatherless children and strangers in their midst (Exodus 22:21-22). Jesus does not mince His words when emphasising His feelings towards those who take advantage of innocence. He states, “If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” Matthew 18:6 (NIV).

Isaiah upholds compassion toward the needy as a true demonstration of sacrificial love (Isaiah 58). James echoes the prophet by pointing to our attitude toward vulnerable people as the indicator of the authenticity of our faith. He states, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). Jesus Himself states that such compassion for the vulnerable is the standard by which He will separate “the sheep and goats” (Matthew 25:31-46). These passages, and many more like them, show that safeguarding is at the very heart of Scripture and should be one of our primary concerns.

It is also indicative of the Lord’s heart for the vulnerable that at the moment of the greatest sacrifice of love the world has ever seen, one of the concerns uppermost in Jesus’ mind was the care of His widowed mother Mary (John 19:26-27).

Safeguarding laws and guidance offer protection of the rights of children and adults at risk to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect, with organisations and individuals working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. These are fundamental human rights as expressed in the Government’s Care and Support Statutory Guidance (June 2020, HM Government, Section 14.)

Sadly, despite the church’s high calling to protect the vulnerable, the scrutiny of the law and government inquiries has uncovered many shocking examples of not only a failure to prevent abuses, but also disgraceful attempts to protect the guilty by covering up violations of power. Such violations not only abuse the innocent, but also bring reproach on God’s name. According to Proverbs 14:31, “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God.” The higher the calling, the greater the responsibility. It is therefore incumbent on all within the church, especially those in positions of leadership to adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards.

The protection of children and adults at risk calls for a recognition of their inherent dignity (Genesis 1:27). Wherever possible and appropriate, we must have regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action, even at times respecting those with capacity to choose in their own worst interests. Even in the face of obvious suffering, Jesus did not impose His will, but respected the autonomy of the sufferer (Mark 10:51, John 5:6). Those who are vulnerable are not to be seen just as victims but as those with a voice that deserves to be heard. Therefore, safeguarding is not just something done for the vulnerable, but with them.

We must not allow any partiality in our care and be willing to explore any unconscious biases that may compromise our capacity to demonstrate the universality of Jesus love to those in need (see John 3:16, Rom. 2:11).

Placing the needs and interests of vulnerable people at the heart of our ministry ensures that safeguarding becomes an integral and essential element living out our gospel calling. The Bible charges every Christian to, “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable” Proverbs 31:8 (CEB).

APPENDIX 2: CODE OF CONDUCT

BUC behaviour code for working with adults at risk of harm

The BUC believes that Christians are called to represent Christ in all aspects of their behaviour. 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.

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The Role of Staff and Volunteers

In your role, you are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model by young people and are expected to act appropriately.

We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers working with Children

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
 - ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures
 - including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing and online safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to [insert name/role of person to report to]
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures
 - this includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting Children & Young People

You Should:

- Listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible o if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.
- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid showing favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
- if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible
- unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Engaging in behaviour that is in any way abusive (e.g., patting, pinching, hugging, repeated brushing against another person's body, etc.) including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- Developing inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- Acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Patronising or belittling children and young people
- Making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people
- Making inappropriate promises to children and young people
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches Seventh-day Adventist's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers working with adults at risk of harm

Be accountable

- Be honest with yourself and others about what you can do, whether or not the adult is being provided with any services.
- Recognise your abilities and limitations.
- Only carry out or delegate tasks agreed in your role description.
- Be able to justify and be accountable for your actions
- Ask your leader/supervisor for guidance if you feel inadequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your role.
- Tell your leader/supervisor about any issues that might affect your ability to perform your role.
- Always establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your relationships with people.
- Never accept any offers of loans, gifts or benefits from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them.
- Comply with United Reformed Church (URC) policies and procedures.
- Tell your leader/supervisor or person in charge of safeguarding if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.

Promote the privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing of people

- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Ensure that a vulnerable adult is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than the way in which a person who is not an "adult at risk" would be treated in a comparable situation.
- Always act in the best interest of people, with their present and past wishes and feelings being considered.
- Put the needs, views and wishes of people first, helping them to control and choose the help and support they receive.
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent.
- Always maintain the privacy and dignity of people who have help and support, and their carers.
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts.
- Always make sure that your actions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing.
- You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit anyone.
- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour.
- Always take comments and complaints seriously; respond to them in accordance with Good Practice 5 and inform your leader/supervisor/safeguarding designated person.

Work effectively with other volunteers/colleagues

- Understand and value your contribution and the vital part you play in the church.
- Recognise and respect the roles of other church workers/colleagues and those from other denominations and agencies; work in partnership with them.
- Work openly and co-operatively with other church workers/colleagues, including those from other denominations and agencies, and treat them with respect.
- Work openly and co-operatively with people who have help and support, including their families or carers, and treat them with respect.
- Honour your commitment to the church and be reliable, dependable and trustworthy.

Effective communication

- Make efforts to assist and facilitate communication, using whatever method is appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- Always explain and discuss any help and support you are offering/providing with the person; only continue if they give consent.
- Communicate respectfully with people in an open, accurate, effective and straightforward way.
- Communicate effectively with other church workers/colleagues as appropriate.
- Maintain clear and accurate records of the help and support the church provides, as appropriate.
- Recognise both the extent and the limits of your role, knowledge and ability when communicating with people who have help and support.

Respect people's right to confidentiality and decision-making

- Treat all information about people who need help and support, and their carers, as confidential.
- Ensure people participate as fully as possible in any decisions being made, with support in place to help that participation in a way understood by the adults.
- Only discuss or disclose information in accordance with legislation and URC policy.
- Always seek guidance from your leader/supervisor regarding any information or issues that you are concerned about.

Unacceptable behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Engaging in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with adults at risk
- Developing inappropriate relationships with children and adults at risk
- Acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Patronising or belittling adults at risk
- Making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of adults at risk
- Making inappropriate promises to adults at risk
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches Seventh-day Adventist's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

To fulfil our mission, we must reflect Christian care and compassion treating all with dignity and respect as individuals created in the image of God. Christians should always ensure that their behaviour properly reflects their high calling.

Any behaviour that falls contrary to the Church's code of conduct will be addressed in accordance with the directions within the Church Manual.

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave [name of group/organisation]. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

APPENDIX 3: SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BRITISH UNION SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE (BSC)

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

KEY TASKS

- Auditing and monitoring of safeguarding across the BUC.
- Annual reporting to the Executive Committee on the effectiveness of The Safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.
- Ensuring insurance and charity commission requirements are met.
- Annual updating of the Safeguarding policy and procedures, drawing on the views of all sectors of our church family.
- Making sure safeguarding structures are in place at all levels across the BUC.
- Keeping the Executive Committee updated on significant safeguarding issues or changes in the field.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead leads on safeguarding matters on behalf of the conference/mission/department or church. They ensure our safeguarding policy and guidance are followed and provide the support, guidance and training to staff, volunteers or church members. In larger settings, one or more deputies should be appointed.

KEY TASKS

- Deal with concerns and suspicions of abuse.
- Promote safeguarding and protection throughout their church or department.
- Organise training for all personnel.
- Work with the pastor or senior management to secure the appropriate services needed to support those who are victims, and manage and supervise those who may pose a risk.
- Report to the conference or mission secretary/Church Board on safeguarding arrangements in place or needed.
- Keep the church updated on safeguarding matters.
- Coordinate the church's response and involvement in abuse cases.
- Collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.
- Keep the local pastor, and at conference level, the president, aware of referrals to statutory authorities on a 'need to know' basis without breaching confidentiality in keeping with GDPR, which informs the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Be aware of local procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult has been abused or is 'at risk'.
- Pending the outcome of a formal investigation, notify your Conference/Mission of any individual (paid or unpaid) removed from working with children or adults because the person poses a risk of harm to them. NB. It is the Conference's responsibility to notify the DBS/BUC of such removals.
- Carry out risk assessments for those with blemishes on their DBS check.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

The head of every department in the church is a Responsible Person. They are the first point of contact for any church member with concerns for the well-being of a child or adult.

KEY TASKS

- Ensure their team completes all disclosure checks required.
- Support their team in fulfilling their roles and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Maintain safe working practices across their department.

LOCAL PASTOR

The local pastor maintains oversight of effective management of adult and child protection concerns within their church community. They are responsible for informing the appropriate conference/mission personnel on a 'need to know' basis of any significant safeguarding issues in keeping with the Data Protection Act 1984 and 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1999.

KEY TASKS

- Ensure safeguarding matters are handled in line with the Safeguarding policy and procedures and that protective measures are in place as needed.
- Ensure with the Church Board that safeguarding roles are appointed and the duties fulfilled.
- Support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in carrying out their role.

DISCLOSURE CLERK

The Disclosure Clerk is the nominated person at conference and church level responsible for overseeing compliance amongst staff, volunteers or church members in completing the necessary safeguarding activities. These include completing disclosure checks and attending child and adult protection training. Disclosure Clerks will collate this information and include it with their periodic reports to their Conference/Mission.

KEY TASKS

- Ensure all disclosure checks required are completed by the relevant personnel.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of staff, volunteers and church members currently working in a paid or voluntary capacity with children or vulnerable adults/adults at risk.
- Return periodic reports as specified by their conference on the disclosure checks and adult and child protection training undertaken

JOB GUIDELINES FOR: Youth Leader		SAMPLE ROLE DESCRIPTION
Name of volunteer:		
Name of group: Youth Department	Age range: 16-30 years	
Person to whom responsible: Designated Elder		
<p>Youth Department</p> <p>The Youth Department plays a key role in developing our young people spiritually and holistically during their formative years and developing them into being fully integrated into our church family.</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Youth Leaders are laid out in the Church Manual; they include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and social development of each individual. • Being alert to the particular spiritual and welfare needs of young people and planning programmes that properly address these. • Coordinating the work with other departments to ensure that all activities organised by the church protectively include young people. • Being responsible for the safety of all the young people who attend any function organised by the local Youth Department, and taking action to maintain their safety and well-being. <p>Duties to be undertaken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arranging for regular programmes and events as agreed with the Church Board, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sabbath programmes ▪ Youth meetings, youth clubs, fun days, outings, local camps 2. Ensuring sufficient staff cover at all times. 3. Engaging young people in active service and witnessing programmes and training them for Christian leadership. 4. Providing nurturing and safeguarding activities and support to young people and young adults at risk. <p>Ensure the safety of all young people in the church by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the BUC Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 		
Signed: (Responsible Person or Pastor)	Print Name:	Date:
<p>To be completed by the volunteer:</p> <p>I understand the nature of the work I am to do with the children/young people who attend this church programme and agree to disclosure checks where requested. I have read the Safeguarding Policy and I understand that it is my duty to protect young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is disclosed or discovered.</p>		
Signed:	Print Name:	Date:

Note: These guidelines should be reviewed biannually (at the time of church officers' election). If the job changes substantially a new form should be completed. Copies should be retained by the volunteer and the Responsible Person.

To be completed by the Disclosure Clerk

Date checks applied for:

Vetting and barring Check No.:

Date received:

APPENDIX 5: SELF-DECLARATION FORM

Private and confidential

All information will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and guidance. You have a right of access to information held on you under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Employee or Volunteer information		
Full Name		Known as:
Maiden or former names		
Address		
Contact number(s)	Daytime	Evening
Date of birth		Gender
<p>Please give details of previous experience of looking after or working with children and/or adults at risk.</p> <p>Why do you want to work with children and/or adults?</p> <p>(Continue on a separate sheet if required)</p>		
<p>Reference: Please give the name, address, telephone number, and position or relationship to yourself of two individuals who know you well.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>		
Relevant Qualifications:		
Have you already received certificated child protection training?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you already received certificated adult at risk training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you prepared to undertake appropriate training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Declaration of Individual

1. Do you have any unspent conditional cautions or convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you have any adult cautions (simple or conditional) or spent convictions that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you been formally charged with any other offence in any country which has not yet been disposed of?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are you currently subject to any criminal investigations or pending prosecutions by the police in any country which may have a bearing on your suitability for this position?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you ever been known to any Children's Services department or the police as being a risk or potential risk to children?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Have you been the subject of any formal action, disciplinary investigation and/or sanction by any organisation due to concerns about your behaviour towards children?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you ever been dismissed for misconduct from any employment, volunteering, or other position previously held by you, in circumstances which may have bearing on your suitability for this position?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are you currently subject to any fitness to practise investigations or proceedings by a regulatory, governing, or licensing body in any country, which may have bearing on your suitability for this position?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – please provide further information <input type="checkbox"/>

Confirmation of Declaration

Please tick the boxes below and then sign this form.

I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment may be withdrawn or dismissal may result if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently comes to the organisation's attention.

In accordance with the organisation's procedures, if required I agree to provide a valid vetting and barring check certificate and consent to the organisation clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.

I agree to inform the organisation within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children or young people.

I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the vetting and barring check and information supplied by third parties may be supplied by the organisation to other persons or organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard other children.

Signature	
Print name	
Today's date	

When completed this form must be held in confidence and should be retained by the local Church Disclosure Clerk, or Conference Secretariat Department.

Retention period: 12 months

APPENDIX 6: REQUEST FOR REFERENCE



PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

(Date)

Dear (Name)

Applicant: [name]

As I am sure you are aware, before we can accept anyone to work with children and young people, whether on a voluntary or paid basis, we must be sure that they are suitable. The above-named person has applied to us for the post of [job title] with (name of setting) and has given us your name as a referee.

I am enclosing a copy of the job description and the person specification for the post and would be grateful for your views on [Name of applicant]'s suitability for this position.

We would be most grateful if you could complete the attached form and return it to us in the envelope provided, within the next week.

We would be grateful if you could confirm details of (name of candidates) employment dates and supply a reference as to (his/her) suitability to carry out the duties in the enclosed job description. Please can you also confirm whether you know of any reason why [name of candidate] would be unsuitable to work with children.

Any information you are able to give will be kept in strictest confidence and used only in consideration of the suitability of the applicant for this position.

Should you require any further information do not hesitate to contact [name]

[telephone number] _____.[email] _____.

Yours faithfully

Name:

Position / Job Title:

Enc. Job Description and Person Specification:

APPENDIX 7: REFERENCE FORM

Private & Confidential

In considering whether the person is fit to work with children and young people please consider the following alongside the job application: previous experience of looking after or working with children or adults at risk; ability to provide consistent care; commitment to treat all children and adults as individuals and with equal concern. The position for which this person is being considered gives substantial access to children and young people.

Candidate Reference	
Name of Candidate:	Candidates Home Address:
Position Applied for:	
Position held:	Dates of Employment:
Roles and Responsibilities held:	
Has this individual ever been subject to a disciplinary procedure during their employment with you? Please give details	
Having read the job description and person specification, do you feel this individual has the skills and attributes required for the post?	
Has this individual ever been subject to any disciplinary offences related to children? Including any in which the penalty time has expired. Please give details and the outcome of any disciplinary procedures	
How would you describe this individual's performance history and their conduct in the job? Including performance management issues, disciplinary investigations, proven disciplinary offences (whether time expired or not)	

<p>Please state whether you know of any reason why the applicant might be considered unsuitable to work with children or whether you have any concern about their suitability for such work in an early years setting.</p>	
<p>Would you re-employ the individual? Yes No If no, please give your reasons below:</p>	
<p>Declaration</p> <p>I confirm that all the information supplied is a true and correct record of the above-named individual's performance with our organisation.</p>	
<p>Signature:</p> <p>Name:</p>	<p>Position:</p> <p>Date:</p>



Promoting a safer Church

Our Church fully adopts and follows the British Union Conference safeguarding policy and procedures. We are committed to protecting the children and adults at risk who take part in our services and activities.

We believe it is the responsibility of all to keep our church family safe. If you have any concerns about safeguarding, contact the appropriate person/service listed on this notice.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Contact:

Pastor:

Contact:

Responsible Persons:

All department leaders can be contacted regarding safeguarding concerns

Children's Social Care:

Adult Protection Services:

If there is immediate risk or danger – contact the emergency services on 999

Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility



Safeguarding Contacts

Emergency Contacts
Police 999
Children’s Social Care:
Adult Protection Services:

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns
Church Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
Pastor:
Conference/Mission Safeguarding Lead:
SDA Counselling Services
Cornerstone (SEC) - 0207 723 8050
NEC Counselling - 07539 211442

Helplines
Police non-emergency - 101
NSPCC - 0800 800 5000
ChildLine - 0800 1111
Thirtyone:eight - 0303 003 11 11
Child 1 st (Scotland) - 08000 28 22 33
Women’s Aid - 0808 2000 247
Hourglass (Elder Abuse) - 0808 808 8141
Alzheimer's Society - 0300 222 11 22
Men’s Advice Line - 0808 801 0327
Samaritans - 116 123
National Dementia Helpline - 0300 222 11 22
National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000 247
National Centre for Domestic Violence - 0800 970 2070
SEC Listening Line - 0330 133 2495
Victim Support - 0808 1689 111

APPENDIX 10(a): RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDE

As a church we are committed to protecting those we serve and all who work with them. It is important that our acts or omissions do not cause injury to our fellow workers, members or visitors while attending our services. All activities and environments carry an element of risk. Our responsibility is to minimise or reduce those which are not acceptable in any given situation.

Each church must adopt safe working practices. Working safely means that we think about the safety aspects of every organised activity, including outings and holidays, and then do what is necessary to keep those involved safe. This is called a risk assessment.

A risk assessment is: identifying sensible measures to control the risks in an activity.

It involves looking at an activity or environment to identify potential hazards (things that could cause harm) to individuals and then thinking about what needs to be put in place to eliminate or reduce the risks.

Our responsibility is to identify foreseeable risks, e.g. door movements that could slam onto little fingers; or recreational activities that must be led by a trained/qualified person; or first aid and emergency communication arrangements needed. Some things carry a higher risk or will affect a larger number of people and these should be addressed first.

Carry out a risk assessment when: an activity involves vulnerable people, is a one-off activity, is to take place off site, or is a regular activity which is being reviewed.

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as open fire, deep water, crossing roads, climbing heights, etc.

The **risk** is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Use the four questions risk assessment process: to identify the risks associated with an activity or event. This will enable you to identify the actions needed in order to make it safe for all those who would be participating.

*Some practical steps you could take include:

- ✓ trying a less risky option
- ✓ preventing access to the hazard
- ✓ organising activities to reduce exposure to the hazard
- ✓ using protective equipment
- ✓ having first aid facilities on hand
- ✓ briefing workers and audiences on safety measures

1. What are the potential hazards?

E.g. open fire, deep water, climbing heights, crossing roads, etc.

2. Who might be harmed and how?

E.g. wheel chair users bumping into equipment; active children falling into a river, running across roads.

4. Have all the points been recorded? Now act on them.

Review the hazards, the potential harm and what's in place to control the risks. Make sure to prioritise those risks that would cause serious harm or affect the most people.

3. What are the risks and our precautions*?

How likely is the harm to occur, i.e. what is the level of risk? What's already in place to control the risk? Then: a) Can we get rid of the hazard altogether? b) If not, how can we control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Simple risk level estimation

Acceptable = Equivalent to usual risks in daily life – no specific action needed

Moderate = Beyond acceptable and attention should be given to reducing the risk

High = Serious harm possible unless the risk is reduced or removed before the activity begins

Grave = Risk of death or major injury beyond that which can be tolerated; must be substantially reduced or fully removed

Risk is a part of everyday life and we are not expected to eliminate all risks. What we must do is make sure we know about the main risks and the things we need to do to manage them responsibly. We are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks or take measures that are outweighed by the time, money or trouble they would take to control the risk.

The activity/event:

Number of people involved:

Date of risk assessment:

Completed

by:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Audio visual cables	Staff and visitors may be injured if they trip over the additional cables laid.	Cable tidy or large mats placed over cables. No trailing leads or cables.	Make announcement for all to be careful.	Duty Elder	Morning of the event	xx/xx/xx xx/xx/xx
						Hint , tab here for new row

You should review your risk assessment if you think it might no longer be valid (e.g. following an accident or if there are any significant changes to hazards, such as new activities).

For further information see the Government's [Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work](#)

APPENDIX 10(b): ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Include additional headings for specific/unusual activities to meet the needs of participants

Activities and Events Risk Assessment Form	
Activity:	Date:
Location:	
1. Potential Hazards:	
2. Who will be attending?	
3. Who will be most at risk from the hazards?	
4. List controls (existing and to be put in place) i.e. supervision, existing guidance, ratios, etc.	
5. Arrangements to cope with hazards not subject to above controls:	
In the event of an emergency	
Contact Name:	Contact Number:
Risk assessment completed by: (print name).	
Signed	Position:
	Date:
	Review Date:

APPENDIX 11: HIRE OF CHURCH PREMISES SAFEGUARDING AGREEMENT

Hire of Premises Safeguarding Agreement

The [.....] Seventh-day Adventist Church has a Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk. A copy is attached. Your booking agreement is conditional upon you complying with it even if you already have an equivalent policy of your own.

You are required to ensure that children, and adults at risk are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring; and that you carry full liability insurance for this.

Our policy requires that:

- you will comply with the attached good practice guide with children and young people or vulnerable adults unless you already have an equivalent.
- you will provide the church with a copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy/ies or if you do not have one adopt the current parish policy.
- you will recruit safely all current paid and voluntary workers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, by obtaining satisfactory disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service where eligible and keeping records of dates and disclosure numbers indefinitely.
- you will keep a list of the names of all paid and voluntary workers with regular and direct contact with children/vulnerable adults and update it annually.
- you will always have at least two leaders over the age of 18 years in any group of children and young people, no matter how small the group.
- no person under the age of 18 years will be left in charge of any children or young people of any age.
- no child or group of children or young people should be left unattended at any time.
- a register of children, young people or vulnerable adults attending the activity will be kept securely. This will include details of their name, contact details of parent/guardian/carer etc., date of birth and next of kin;
- you will immediately (within 24 hours) inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of:
 - the occurrence of any incidents or allegations of abuse or causes of concern relating to members or leaders of your organisation, and contact details for the person in your organisation who is dealing with it.
 - any known offenders against children or vulnerable adults seeking to join your membership and manage such allegations or agreements with offenders in co-operation with statutory agencies, and with the church.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for [] Church is:

Name:

Email:

Tel. no.

DECLARATION

I agree to abide by appropriate safeguarding procedures. I understand that my booking agreement may be terminated in the event of my failing to comply with these procedures.

Signed:

Role/Job Title:

Organisation:

Date:

Two copies to be signed, one to be retained by the church, and one by the organisation

APPENDIX 12: ONLINE AND DIGITAL SAFETY

Young people and many adults use smartphones and tablets as their preferred means of communication. The ease and exclusive nature of these devices make them mediums for entertainment, communication, information and sadly abuse. All those working with children and adults should remain vigilant to signs of abuse through these mediums. Below are the guiding principles to be followed when communicating with children or adults at risk:

Working with Children

Requirements for Church Workers/Volunteers:

- 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 avoid suggesting or offering a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information shared; avoid abbreviating or short-cuts in communications. Clear and unambiguous language should be used.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Avoid sharing 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. Keep the content of the communication appropriate to the subject.
- Ensure all communication is in a group context.
- Only give personal contact details to children that are within the public domain of the church/ organisation, including your mobile telephone number.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.
- Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of the church/organisation and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Establish an agreed duration for conversations with children and a curfew for instant messaging, i.e. not between 10pm and 7am.
- Where possible seek to use equipment provided by the church/organisation to communicate with children.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.
- As far as is possible, ensure your church/organisation domain name/logo appears with every Internet post made by a church computer user. Any user may thus be viewed as a representative of your church/organisation while conducting business on the Internet.
- Only send emails to communicate specific information. (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- When sending an email or text to young people or adults at risk, workers should copy it to a third-party adult within the church/department to maintain accountability.
- Email history should be kept and dated.
- When using email/internet for communication with children, it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. It is advised that there should be no email communication after 9pm.
- Use of Zoom and any other web camera or visual communication via the internet is generally not permitted.

- Workers should refrain from using such methods on a one-to-one basis. It can be used for conference calls and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use.

Social Media Policy

- On social networking sites such as Facebook the presumption must be that adult leaders are not added as friends on a young person's site. Leaders should instead use a 'role' profile i.e. 'Youth Leader' that is held generically between the leaders.
- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children under 18 shall be limited to monitored/administrated groups.
- Text and any other media posted shall be subject to the acceptable use policy.
- All interaction on social media groups shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any private messages shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred onto the safeguarding co-ordinator.
- All users of social media must be above the minimum age limit i.e., 13 for Facebook.
- Workers should ensure their privacy setting ensure the highest levels of security in order to restrict children being able to see any more than what is relevant to communication within the group.
- All social media groups should provide links to statutory authorities such as [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\)](#), to enable children to report online abuse.

Consent for photographic images and videos online

- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will endeavour to prevent children from being easily identified.
- Exercise caution when sharing identifying information/images of children on any internet site. Do not name the individual child without consent from the person with parental responsibility.
- Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed and images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought and how the image will be stored if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated, and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Do not place children's profiles or personal details on a site without written consent of the person with parental responsibility.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved, permission should be sought in line with the photographic guidelines.

Legislation allows for images of anyone in a public place to be published as long as the photography is not intrusive. Extra care should be taken not to capture children or adults at risk in situations that highlight vulnerabilities. For example, publishing or broadcasting images of [looked-after children](#) may place them or others in danger in cases of abuse or domestic violence.

Before using a photograph/film of activities involving minors (under-16s), their consent and the written consent of a person with parental responsibility for them should be obtained. This must specify for what purposes the photograph/film will be used and how it will be stored if not destroyed. A sample consent form can be found in [Appendix 13\(b\)](#).

Acceptable Use Policy - (This can be included with consent/registration forms for children and young people with a request for acknowledgement by both parent and child)

Ensure that any of the church's electronic devices used by children and young people for accessing websites employ security controls.

Regular checks should be undertaken to identify and block any improper use of digital equipment or social media.

- Where access to the internet is provided on organisation devices or devices owned by an individual via WiFi, we may exercise the 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.
- WiFi Access will be via a secure password that will be changed quarterly.
- Social media groups must be used in compliance with **(insert church name)'s** policy on social media.
- Administrative control should be put in place and regularly monitored on all devices that are owned by the church.
- Involvement with any online forums should be moderated.

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, send or receive any data (including images), which **[insert church name]** considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.

Any form of communication received which causes concern should be saved and passed onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Sanctions for violating the acceptable use policy in the opinion of (insert church name) 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.

<p>Parent/Guardian Agreement</p> <p>As the parent/guardian of [name of child], I declare that I have read and understood the Online Safety acceptable use policy for [insert church name] and that my child will be held accountable for their own actions. I understand that it is my responsibility to set standards for my child when selecting, sharing and exploring online information and media.</p> <p>Child/Young Person Agreement</p> <p>I understand the importance of safety online and the church guidelines on acceptable use.</p> <p>I will share any concerns, where I or another person may be at risk of harm, with the safeguarding coordinator or a trusted adult.</p>		
Parent/Guardian (Please print)	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Child Name (Please print)	Child Signature	Date

Working with Adults at Risk

We are all vulnerable at certain times of our lives, depending on our circumstances and life events. When thinking of those more at risk than others, this could include a wide range of people e.g., those with physical disabilities or illnesses, care leavers, people with mental health difficulties, those with addictions, homeless people, abuse survivors, those in poverty, ex-offenders, ex-service personnel, minority groups, etc.

Despite the risks, we want to be online. We want all the benefits – the connections, the cost savings, the opportunities, the knowledge, the learning, the entertainment. For anyone with vulnerabilities or additional needs, the internet brings possibilities to combat isolation, join communities of interest, manage medical conditions, access self-help and overcome myriad barriers they may face in the physical world. For homeless people, internet access via a smartphone can be a lifeline to the world – the key to socialising as well as accessing services.

The internet can give vulnerable adults a wide range of options and tools to manage their lives and keep in contact with people. However, it can also expose them to abuse and crime.

Internet crime

Some fraudsters rely on the internet to commit crimes. The range of internet crime is growing, and it is important that adult at risk protected. Examples of internet fraud can include:

- bank and cheque card fraud
- business directory fraud
- charity donation fraud
- government agency scams
- health scams
- identity fraud
- online shopping fraud
- plastic card fraud.

It is important to use reputable internet sites. Find out more at getsafeonline.org.

Tips

It is a good idea to think about safety when using the internet, using some simple techniques can help protect your use of the internet and social media. Below are some tips to stay safer online.

Security

You should:

- install security software keep most viruses out
- get updates to reduce the ability of hackers and criminals to access to your data
- use complex passwords with no personal connection
- use encryption to stop others looking over your communications
- change your password regularly.

Social media

You should:

- take your phone number, address and date of birth off social media
- change your passwords if someone could guess them
- back up your data
- make sure you know who is using your computer
- check your privacy settings
- be careful what personal pictures you use and share with others
- only accept social networks from people you know and trust.

Shopping online

You should:

- take care with smaller, unknown retail sites
- make sure there is a secure symbol, usually a padlock when making a payment
- look out for poor spelling, grammar or anything unusual
- check there is a postal address, by law all traders must provide this
- use a credit card to pay, comes with insurance for purchases over £100.

Mobiles and other devices

You should:

- keep your phone well-hidden because they are easily stolen
- tag your device and battery with an ultraviolet marker pen with your name and contact it will make recovery more likely if lost or stolen
- use key pad lock
use a password or pin
- register your device
- record your serial number which will help you report if your phone is lost or stolen
- insure your phone in the event of theft or damage
- restrict alternative Wi-Fi connections which can be a security risk
- block expensive calls and texts by phoning your provider.

For more help, contact ActionFraud or getsafeonline.org.

Responding to risk

There are various steps you can take to help prevent and respond to these risks:

Support the person to keep themselves safe online e.g., can you use existing educational materials? Technical settings (blocking, filtering, passwords etc.) may be appropriate. Discuss the kinds of online activities which would be illegal, inappropriate, or break an app's terms & conditions. Are they informed about their online rights? Where would they go for help if they needed it?

Look to your own and others' roles: how can you best support the person to exploit the benefits of the internet whilst managing the risks? How much do you (or someone else in their environment) need to be a positive part of their online experience (within professional boundaries)? You may find our resources for parents and carers useful.

Check your organisation has sufficient risk management policies and processes in place – look for resources specific to your organization.

Responding to online harm

You may be managing a concern which has occurred online. This may be where you have become aware of harm through a digital service your organisation runs, where a member of your team sees harm online or it has been shared with you online. It may also be a situation where a member of your team has used your IT systems to perpetrate harm.

You may consider:

- **Where the concern is on a social media platform:** you should flag and report the concern on the third party platforms own community reporting systems (e.g. [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)). These vary by platform and may depend on your administrator rights.
- **Where the concern is about child sexual abuse pictures and videos (including non-photographic images):** report to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#).
- **Where you are concerned a child is being sexually abused or groomed online (including an unknown person communicating with a child for sexual purposes):** report to [National Crime Agency's \(NCA\) Child Exploitation Online Protection \(CEOP\) Command](#). If you have already reported your concern to your local statutory service, including the local Children's Social Care or the Police, you do not need to make a report to CEOP.
- **Where intimate images or videos have been shared:** sometimes called "Revenge Porn", this includes sharing intimate images, either on or offline, without their consent with the intention of causing distress. This can also include threats to share intimate images; webcam blackmail ("sextortion") and upskirting. Report to the [Revenge Porn Helpline](#)
- **Online material promoting terrorism or extremism:** this includes articles, images, speeches or videos that promote terrorism or encourage violence; websites made by terrorist or extremist organisations and videos of terrorist attacks. Report to the [Home Office](#)
- **Other forms of online harm:** you may become aware of a wide range of harmful and distressing activity online including abuse, bullying or harassment or content which is violent, features self-harm or suicide or is pornographic. Report to the [Report Harmful Content](#) website.

APPENDIX 13(a): PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMING

Children and adults hold the right to have their personal identity respected and protected from indiscriminate taking of pictures and videos when they are taking part in activities. Parents are clearly entitled to take pictures of their children. Any pictures taken of children and adults who may be vulnerable should be taken with the consent of the subject. They should be for the individual's private use only and are not to be modified and placed on social media without the subject's consent. Below are the guiding principles to be followed with any request to capture still or moving images of children or adults who may be at risk:

- Use a parental permission form to obtain consent for a child to be photographed/videoed.
- Obtain the child's and/or adult's permission to use their image.
- Do not allow photographers unsupervised access to children.
- Provide written expectations of professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event, making clear the church's expectation of them in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

Where images or videos are to be used in displays or promotional materials (printed or online) the following points should be observed:

- Avoid using children's names (first name or surname) in the caption. Where the child is named, avoid using their photograph.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress and posture.

Legislation allows for images of anyone in a public place to be published as long as the photography is not intrusive. Extra care should be taken not to capture children or adults at risk in situations that highlight vulnerabilities, for example, looked after children, adopted or those on a child protection plan. It may not be acceptable for them to appear in photographs or on film. Where church services are live streamed or posted on social media, permission will be required for children's images to be displayed. Churches may wish to identify seating areas where cameras are not focussed. Announcements should always be made and notices posted to inform attendees that services are streamed or recorded.

Before using a photograph/film of activities involving minors (under-16s), their consent and the written consent of a person with parental responsibility for them should be obtained. This must specify for what purposes the photograph/film will be used and how/long it will be stored if not destroyed. A sample consent form is shown in [Appendix 13\(b\)](#). The obtaining of consent could be done via the church bulletin or an announcement as long as provision is made for those individuals who do not wish to be included in the photograph/film.

APPENDIX 14: RESPONDING TO ABUSE – RECORDING GUIDANCE AND FORM

A step-by-step approach

- At the time of the disclosure only make very brief notes if this does not interfere with the intimacy or flow of the disclosure. Try to focus on who, when, where, what and how.
- Write up your notes as soon as possible after the disclosure (preferably within one hour - always within 24 hours). Ensure you record the place, date and time the conversation took place and who was present.
- Be sure to record who it is about (names of all key people, including any potential witnesses.)
- What happened? (Where possible, use exact quotes from the source of the information, using quotation marks.)
- How did it happen? (For example, if physical violence is alleged, was this done using an implement or with a kick or a hit?)
- When and where did this take place?
- Record any explanations offered to you by those involved. However, **DO NOT INVESTIGATE OR ASK LEADING QUESTIONS. Never ask a victim of abuse why they think the abuse occurred.** Quite apart from anything else, this could sound as if you are blaming them.)
- What should happen next? (What actions will follow? What will you do next? What is X going to do? Create a reminder to follow up in Y days' time.)
- Record what did happen next and the checks made to ensure effective follow up. (Did X do what they said they were going to do?)
- Views/perspective of the person at risk should be included. Avoid giving your own opinion on the matter.
- Do not destroy your original notes.
- Record the actual words used; including any swear words or slang.
- Depending on the age of the person, you might want to go through your written record with them afterwards to ensure you have captured everything correctly. They may or may not wish to do this or they may wish to add their own written notes too. Be led by the wishes of the person disclosing.
- You can record observable things but not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual. So, you might record that 'X was crying continually throughout the conversation'. However, you should avoid writing about emotional state, such as, 'X was very distressed throughout the conversation' as you may not know what distress looks like for X. Your observations may be shared with the person making the disclosure so you should be able to justify the reasoning for making any personal commentary. If a person is disclosing domestic abuse and they are wearing dirty, worn clothing and appear to have limited access to washing facilities etc. this might be relevant information about their current situation. If you offer your own analysis or opinion, rather than fact, this should be made clear in the record.
- If you have seen bruising or an injury, use a body map to record details. Again, ensure that the map is dated and attached to information relating to the person's comments about the injury.
- Save and date any drawings or artwork that formed part of the disclosure. Ensure these are submitted with the written report.
- Submit written record to relevant safeguarding lead/regulatory body/local authority/police without delay. Where concerns are raised for more than one individual in the same household a form must be completed for each person.
- Records must always be dated, and the author identified.

Record of Concern

(For use by any staff/volunteers– This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)

Name of Church/Group:

Name of Child/Adult:

Subject of Concern: (Physical abuse / Emotional abuse / Neglect / Sexual abuse / Financial abuse / Inappropriate conduct / Historical abuse)

Address

Date of Birth: (or approximate age)

Gender:

Name of person reporting incident

Phone contact number:

Email address:

Date and time alleged incident:

Time:

Other members of the household (There may be other victims/perpetrators):

Is this person aware of the allegation made? No [] Yes [] (Must not be contacted until/unless authority given by the Designated Safeguarding Officer)

The Concern: Sequence of events/actual words used/observations

Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. (please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

How did the concern come to light?

What is the child/adult saying about what has happened?

Subject of the allegation (where relevant the name and details of the alleged perpetrator)	
Name:	
Relationship to the person about whom the concern is being raised:	
Position: (Minister, church officer, church member etc.):	
Are you aware of any previous concerns relating to this person? If yes, please give details	
Is this person aware of the allegation made? No [] Yes [] (Must not be contacted until/unless authority given by the Designated Safeguarding Officer)	
Action Taken (including person(s) contacted):	
Date and time of writing this report:	
Date and time of discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Pastor:	
Notes	
Signature:	Role/Job Title:
Name:	Date:

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

Please pass this form to your Safeguarding Coordinator without delay

Action Taken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible

Information received by DSL:	Date:	Time completed:	From whom:		
Any advice sought , if applicable	Date:	Time completed:	Source of advice: name/organisation:		
	Advice received:				
Advice received about informing parents or in the case of adults, seeking consent/capacity ¹ :					
Initial Assessment of concern following advice ²					
Action taken with reasons recorded (e.g. Referral completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff, etc)	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
	Referral		To whom		
	Signposting to other community resources				
	Pastoral Care and other support from church				
	Ongoing Monitoring				
Parent/carer informed?	Y	Who spoken to:	Date:	Time:	By whom:
	N	Detail reason:			
Any other relevant information					
Name of Safeguarding Lead:			Signature:		

Any other relevant information			
Name of Safeguarding Coordinator:		Signature:	

OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS

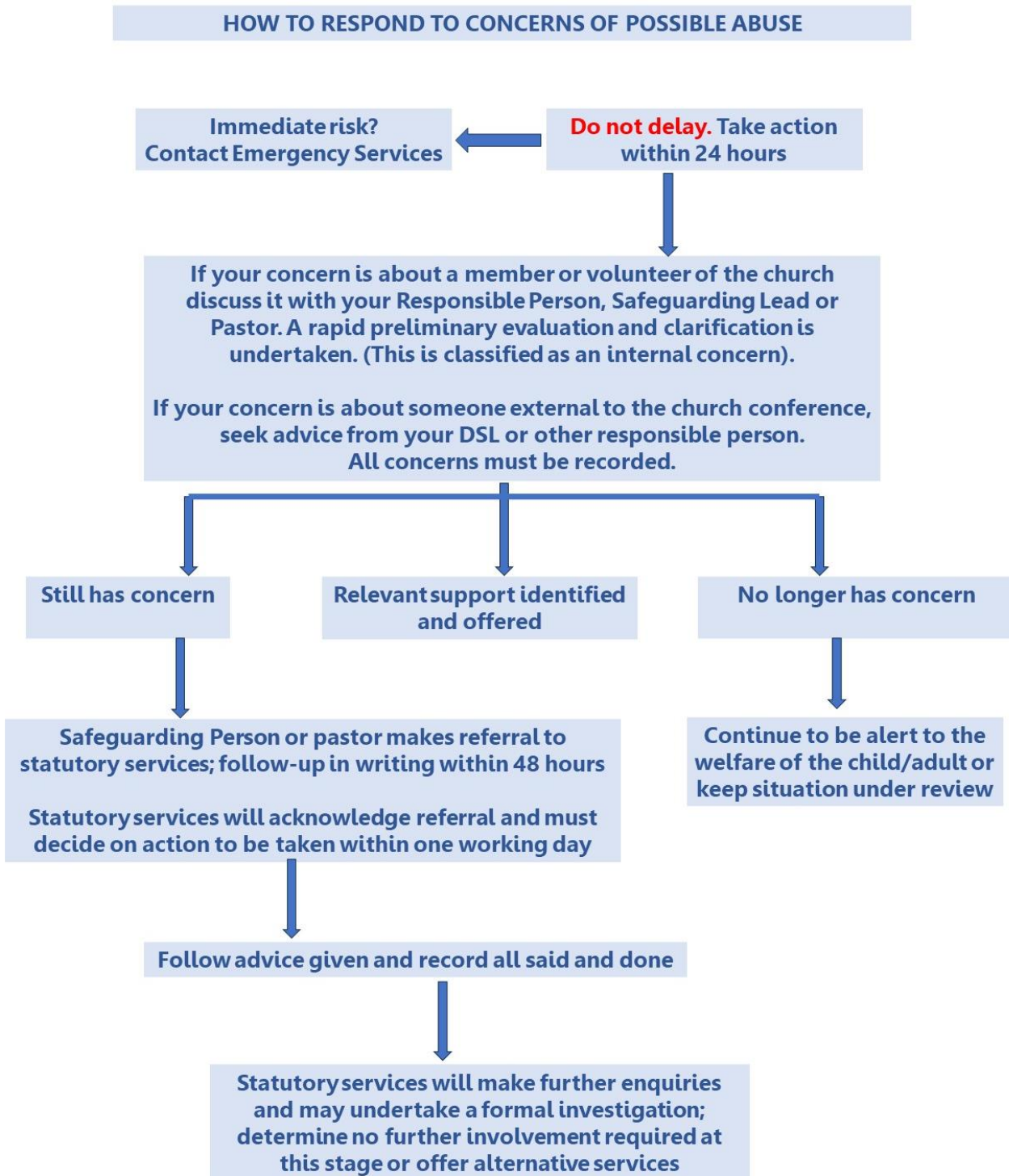
Ref. no.	Date	Outcome (if known)	Service currently involved	Ongoing support offered by church (this can include monitoring)- include dates

Guidance notes:

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form(s)

1. Importance of consent from parents/carer or adults (in the light of mental capacity) – With regards to children, consent of the parents is considered important before a referral is made to external agencies, unless of course doing so will place the child(ren) at greater risk of harm. With regards to adults, it is important to be aware that their consent is crucial before reporting concerns onto statutory agencies. The individual’s mental capacity will also be a significant factor to consider at this stage. You can always seek the advice of local authority social services.
2. Initial assessment- Based on the advice you may have received from relevant individuals/agencies (i.e. this could be school/thirtyone:eight/Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) etc), what are the concerns categorised as?
3. Overview of actions - Includes a summary of the actions taken so far and who holds responsibility for it. You can use this section to add on information gathered when monitoring the situation or offering pastoral care over a defined period of time.

APPENDIX 15: RESPONDING TO CONCERNS - FLOWCHART



APPENDIX 16: HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

While statutory authorities generally prefer that concerns of abuse be reported by individuals designated with safeguarding responsibilities within an organisation, anybody can make a referral.

If you decide to make a referral you should do so as soon as possible with as much information as you can safely gather. Do not delay making a referral if you do not have all the information you might need.

Information you can gather:

- Relevant details of the person you're concerned about.
- Your involvement with the person(s) you're concerned about.
- The nature of the concern, expressed in a clear and concise way.
- If there is an alleged perpetrator (someone accused of being responsible for the abuse or harm), any identifiable information including their name, known location or employment details.
- Whether anyone has spoken to the person, family members or others about the concern.
- Details of other services that are already involved with the person (if known).

Once you have reported the concern, they will decide if the referral meets their criteria to act. You should be informed within 48 hours. You must follow up if you are not informed within 48 hours.

Where the concern is about a child and someone in connection with your organisation is accused of causing the harm or abuse, reporting will involve speaking to your local authority designated officer (LADO). Every local authority has either one person or a whole team in this role. They are expected to give advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisation, liaise with the police and other agencies, and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible. They also have responsibilities to make sure the process is thorough and fair.

Not sure where to report concerns about a child? Visit the [gov.uk postcode finder](#) to find your local authority safeguarding team.

Concerned that a crime has been committed? Follow the this [guidance on criminal incidents](#) on how charities can report crimes to the police. (pdf from the Charity Commission). Concerns can be reported directly on the [Charity Commission](#) website.

Who may get involved?

Social services. Local authorities are the lead organisation for safeguarding children and adults. They have a legal duty to follow up on any complaint or concern about harm or abuse.

Police. The police will take the lead for investigations where criminal offences are suspected. In serious cases, the police can take a child away for 72 hours to keep the child safe. This is called police protection.

NHS bodies, mental health services or private hospitals. Health organisations take the lead when a person needs help or support connected to their physical or mental health, or if a person was harmed in a health setting.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). A local authority led organisation which brings these organisations together to manage concerns. This is the first point of contact for any referrals to the local authority their contact details can be found on the designated local authority's website.

APPENDIX 17: GROOMING

What is grooming?

Grooming occurs when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know. This could be a family member, a friend or someone who has targeted them – like a teacher, faith group leader or sports coach. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

Types of grooming

The relationship a groomer builds can take different forms. This could be:

- a romantic relationship
- as a mentor
- an authority figure
- a dominant and persistent figure.

A groomer can use the same sites, games and apps as young people, spending time learning about a young person's interests and use this to build a relationship with them. Children can be groomed online through:

- social media networks
- text messages and messaging apps
- email
- text, voice and video chats in forums, games and apps.

Whether online or in person, groomers can use tactics like:

- pretending to be younger
- giving advice or showing understanding
- buying gifts
- giving attention – paying compliments
- taking them on trips, outings or holidays.

Groomers might also try and isolate children from their friends and family, making them feel dependent on them and exercising power and control over them. They might use blackmail to make a child feel guilt and shame or introduce the idea of 'secrets' to control, frighten and intimidate.

It's important to remember that children and young people may not understand they've been groomed. They may have complicated feelings, like loyalty, admiration, love, as well as fear, distress and confusion.

Signs of grooming

It can be difficult to tell if a child is being groomed – the signs aren't always obvious and may be hidden. Older children might behave in a way that seems to be "normal" teenage behaviour, masking underlying problems.

Some of the signs you might see include:

- being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online
- having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- underage drinking or drug taking

- spending more or less time online or on their devices
- being upset, withdrawn or distressed
- sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age
- spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

If a child reveals abuse

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- tell them it's not their fault
- say you'll take them seriously
- don't confront the alleged abuser
- explain what you'll do next
- report what the child has told you as soon as possible.

The Impact of grooming

- anxiety and depression
- eating disorders
- post-traumatic stress
- difficulty coping with stress
- self-harm
- suicidal thoughts
- sexually transmitted infections
- pregnancy
- feelings of shame and guilt
- drug and alcohol problems
- relationship problems with family, friends and partners.

How to prevent grooming

There are steps we can all take to keep children and young people safe from grooming.

- Talk to children about staying safe. Teach children and young people about healthy relationships
- Teach children how to stay safe online. Encourage transparency in what your children are doing online. You can keep gaming devices and computers and laptops with webcams in the living room or family spaces. Use parental controls and keep up-to-date on the apps and games children and young people are using. These foundations can be laid from a young age (see the NSPCC [PANTS](#) initiative).
- Make sure children and young people know there are trusted adults, including outside of the home that they can speak to about their worries, such as school or [Childline](#).
- Teach children about good and bad secrets
- Listen, listen, and listen some more.
- Teach children how to be assertive – they need to be able to say “No!”
- Teach children about consent
- Make sure children know what is healthy and unhealthy touch
- Know where children are and who they are with
- Be present physically and emotionally

Report grooming

Share your concerns with the church's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), pastor or responsible person ([see Appendices 14, 15 & 16](#))

[Child Exploitation and Online Protection](#) (CEOP) make reporting online grooming easy. Whether you're a parent, carer, worried adult or young person, you can make a CEOP report online.

You can also contact your local child protection services or the police to report your concerns about any type of grooming - whether it's happening online, in person or both.

Support for parents and carers

Finding out your child has been groomed and exploited can be frightening and distressing. But there's help for you and your family.

[Ivision Trust](#) (formally PACE) works with parents and carers of children who are, or at risk of, sexual exploitation. You can call them for confidential help and advice on 0113 240 5226 or fill in their online form.

APPENDIX 18: CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION AND GANGS

(adapted from the [NSPCC website](#))

Children and young people involved with gangs and criminal exploitation need help and support. They might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations.

What is criminal exploitation?

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

What is a gang?

Street gangs are “Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.”

Organised criminal gangs

“A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation.” NSPCC

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of ‘gang’ and not every ‘gang’ is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

What is County Lines?

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. Children as young as 12 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs. This can include:

- Airbnb and short term private rental properties
- budget hotels
- the home of a drug user, or other vulnerable person, that is taken over by a criminal gang- this may be referred to as cuckooing.

Signs that cuckooing has taken place include:

- signs of drugs use
- more people coming and going from the property
- more cars or bikes outside
- litter outside
- you haven't seen the person who lives there recently or when you have, they've seemed anxious, distracted or not themselves.
- Children living in these properties are at risk of neglect and other types of abuse. If you're worried, it's important to contact the Police or our helpline immediately.

If a child has been trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation then they are a victim of abuse. Find out more about child trafficking and what support is available ([NSPCC Helpline](#)).

How are young people recruited?

A child or young person might be recruited into a gang because of where they live or because of who their family is. They might join because they don't see another option or because they feel like they need protection. Children and young people may become involved in gangs for many reasons, including:

- peer pressure and wanting to fit in with their friends
- they feel respected and important
- they want to feel protected from other gangs, or bullies
- they want to make money, and are promised rewards
- they want to gain status, and feel powerful
- they've been excluded from school and don't feel they have a future

Organised criminal gangs groom children and young people because they're less suspicious and are given lighter sentences than adults.

Studies show that a child is more at risk of being recruited if:

- they've been excluded from school
- they have special education needs
- there are problems at home like neglect, domestic abuse or sexual abuse
- they have problems with their mental health
- they live in existing gang territory
- If you're worried a child or young person is being groomed for criminal exploitation or to join a gang, contact our helpline immediately. Our trained counsellors can signpost you to local services and provide professional advice.

Signs of criminal exploitation

There are some signs to look out for if you're worried a child or young person has joined a gang, or is being criminally exploited. It might be hard to spot at first, but the sooner you're able to talk to the young person the more you'll be able to help them.

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent.
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

Dangers of criminal exploitation

It's important to be aware of the risks of criminal exploitation or being involved with a criminal gang. They can use different tactics to recruit and exploit children and young people, including bribing them with rewards, befriending them, and threatening them, or coercing them.

Dangers of criminal exploitation include:

- being subject to threats, blackmail and violence
- being exploited and forced to commit crimes
- being arrested, including for crimes committed by the gang that they have not directly committed under the law of joint enterprise
- not being able to leave or cut off ties with the gang
- having their safety or the safety of friends and family threatened
- risk of physical harm, rape and sexual abuse
- risk of emotional abuse

- risk of severe injury or being killed
- abusing drugs, alcohol and other substances
- long term impact on education and employment options.

Carrying weapons

It's against the law to carry a weapon – like knives, guns or acid – even if it's meant for protection. If someone is found with a weapon they'll be arrested. The safest thing to do if there's a threat is to contact the police, not to carry weapons for self-defence.

What to do if you're worried

There are things you can do to help stop a child from getting involved in a gang, or to help them once they've joined.

Talk to them and listen

If a child or young person is being groomed to join a gang, there are many factors to consider to protect them and keep them safe. However, it's crucial that they feel they're able to talk to you, or to another trusted adult outside of the gang.

Speak to them honestly about the consequences of violent or illegal behaviour – they might not realise how they could be liable or could have been lied to. However, make sure that they still feel comfortable talking to you about what is worrying them.

Be aware

If you're worried about a child, or know that they're involved with a gang or criminal group, try to be aware where they are when they're out, who they're with and what they're doing on social media. It's important they trust you, but they might also be at risk.

Get to know your child's friends and their families, and work with other parents and schools to keep an eye on their behaviour and who they're with. This will help to know when they might need support or when they might be at risk.

If you're concerned about your child, the sooner you reach out to the Police or other agencies the better.

Ask for support

- contact the NSPCC helpline to speak to trained professionals about what is happening, who can take action and who can signpost you to the right services and support agencies in your area
- contact the police immediately if you're worried the child is in danger
- contact Children's Services – you can find them through your local council
- talk to the safeguarding lead at the child's school and ask for support.

Encourage change

You can encourage them to get involved in positive activities at school or outside your local area – such as sports and clubs. You can also talk to them about what they want to do in the future, and find apprenticeships and school programmes to help. It's important they feel like they have other options.

Talk to them about how to cope with pressure and how to deal with conflicts without using violence. Try to teach by example and look for ways of disciplining a child that don't involve violence, so they feel like they can still talk to you about what's happening.

APPENDIX 19: THE IMPACT OF PORNOGRAPHY ON CHILDREN

In January 2023 the Government's Children's Commissioner published a report entitled, "[A lot of it is actually just abuse](#)", set out findings from a survey of over a thousand 16-21-year-olds and focus groups with teenagers. A further report was published in May 2023 entitled "[Evidence on pornography's influence on harmful sexual behaviour among children](#)." Both reports make very disturbing reading.

The normalisation of sexual violence in online pornography, and the role that this plays in shaping children's understanding of sex and relationships.

- The average age at which children first view pornography is now 13 years old.
- Substantial proportions of young people surveyed who had seen pornography viewed it at a much younger age than 13 – 27% by age 11 and 10% by the age of 9.
- The age of first exposure and frequency of exposure were shown to be closely linked to the likelihood of a young person viewing violent content online.
- There is a significant link between an early age of first exposure to pornography and frequency of exposure in later years.
- Early exposure to pornography impacts upon young people's self-esteem. Young people who had viewed pornography aged 11 or younger were significantly more likely to present lower self-esteem scores than the average young person.
- 38% of 16–21 year-olds said they had accidentally come across pornography online.
- Half of all survey respondents, 58% of boys and 42% of girls, aged 16-21 said that they had intentionally sought out online pornography themselves.
- 43% of children aged 16-21 agreed with the statement 'Young people mainly view online pornography due to peer pressure or to fit in.'
- 51% of girls aged 16-21 had been sent or shown explicit content involving someone they know in real-life, in comparison to 33% of boys.
- Young people are frequently exposed to violent pornography, depicting coercive, degrading or pain-inducing sex acts; 79% had encountered violent pornography before the age of 18.
- Frequent users of pornography were also more likely to have real-life experience of an aggressive or degrading sex act.
- 47% of respondents aged 18-21 had experienced a violent sex act. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to have experienced a violent sex act.
- Pornography is not confined to dedicated adult sites. We found that Twitter was the online platform where young people were most likely to have seen pornography. Fellow mainstream social networking platforms Instagram and Snapchat rank closely after dedicated pornography sites.

What Can Parents and Educators Do?

Parents and teachers should talk to their children in an age-appropriate way about harmful content they or their friends might see online. For age-appropriate tips on starting this conversation, see the CEOP Education resource "[Having a conversation with your child](#)".

Parents should have proactive conversations about pornography before their child gets their own phone. For young people's advice on starting these conversations, see the Children's Commissioner's guide "[The things I wish my parents had known](#)".

Parents should understand how to use parental controls using, for example, the [Set Up Safe checklist](#).

Schools should be encouraged to embed pornography education in the RSE curriculum which challenges peer pressure to view pornography and addresses its harms. Excellent ideas and pornography lesson plans can be found from various organisations including [National Crime Agency Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\)](#), [NSPCC](#) & [PSHE Association](#), [Childnet](#) and [Barnardo's](#).

Parents and schools should use the [Report Remove](#) tool in cases of non-consensual image-sharing.

What Can Churches Do?

The growth of post-modern values regarding sexual freedom of expression and the declining influence of Christian values has weakened societal efforts to oppose pornographic content in the media, especially where consent is implied. This has been coupled with greater and wider availability and access via digital and electronic formats.

Churches can:

- educate congregations about the issue of pornography, especially Internet pornography, and enact strict policies that provide oversight of church-owned computers and sexual ethics education and training; (see [Appendix 12: Online and Digital Safety](#)).
- promote the use of quality sex education materials that help children and youth gain an understanding of and respect for mutually affirming sexuality
- seek strategies to reduce the proliferation of pornography
- work to break the link between sex and violence by encouraging healthy human relationships
- monitor and prevent access by children and youth to pornography and sexually explicit material
- participate in efforts to ban child pornography and protect child victims
- provide educational sessions for parents on minimizing the risk to children from Internet usage. Encourage parents to establish rules for teenagers and children; encourage parents to utilize screening technology

APPENDIX 20: SAFEGUARDING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Children can be looked after by agreement with parents or by order of a court. Most children in care are safe from harm and do well, however for some there are particular risks (see [NSPCC – Looked after children](#)).

Definition of Being Looked After

“Under the [Children Act 1989](#), a child is legally defined as ‘looked after’ by a local authority if he or she:

- gets accommodation from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order (to put the child into the care of the local authority)
- is subject to a placement order (to put the child up for adoption).” [HM Government](#)

Children who are looked after may be living:

- with foster parents;
- at home with their parents under the supervision of Children’s Social Care;
- in a residential children’s home;
- with extended family members (known as kinship placements);
- with friends of the family or other ‘connected persons’ (such as a teacher, youth worker, etc.); or
- other residential settings like residential schools or secure units.

Therefore, even though the child is looked after, they may not be living in what may be traditionally seen as a “care” environment.

There are a variety of reasons why children and young people enter care.

- The child’s parents might have agreed to this – for example, if they are too unwell to look after their child or if their child has a disability and needs respite care.
- The child could be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, with no responsible adult to care for them.
- Children’s services may have intervened because they felt the child was at significant risk of harm. If this is the case the child is usually the subject of a court-made legal order.

Children may enter care for all sorts of reasons. But many enter because they have been abused or neglected. These experiences can leave children with complex emotional and mental health needs, which can increase their vulnerability to abuse.

Placement Instability and Disrupted Relationships with Caregivers

Many children move repeatedly in and out of care, or between placements. Placement breakdowns can have a detrimental impact on a child’s emotional wellbeing and mental health. It can also prevent them forming stable relationships with the adults who could help protect them (Rahilly and Hendry, 2014).

Peer Violence and Abuse

Many looked after children have previous experiences of violence, abuse or neglect. This can lead to them displaying challenging behaviour and having problems forming secure relationships. Some find it hard to develop positive peer relationships.

A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, return home or turn 18. However local authorities in all the nations of the UK are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

Statistics

- Over 400,000 children in England were identified as being children in need in 2022.
- Nearly 51,000 children in England were on child protection plans in 2022 .
- Approximately 81,000 children are in care in England.
- Children in care are 4 times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty due to their experiences both before and during care. Some research suggests that around 45% of looked-after

children have a diagnosable mental health disorder, and up to 70%-80% have recognisable mental health concerns.

- A small proportion of children in care experience further abuse and neglect whilst in care. ([The Safeguarding Network](#)).

Know the Vulnerabilities

Children who are looked after are:

- at greater risk of being [bullied](#) or abused by peers;
- more likely to be the target of [exploitation](#);
- significantly more likely to [run away from home](#);
- at greater risk of misusing substances due to early life experiences;
- more likely to suffer social, emotional and mental health difficulties due to trauma;
- at a higher risk of having some form of developmental delay;
- potentially going to have issues with their identity;
- more likely to have [special educational needs or disabilities](#).

Know the Risks

Children who are looked after often face a number of additional risks:

- risk of offending behaviour;
- risks associated with separation and loss;
- risk of institutional abuse;
- risks regarding lack of suitable placement;
- risk associated with instability in placement / lack of consistent carer;
- risks in transition to adulthood;
- risk of educational failure and exclusion;
- previous experience of abuse can increase the risk of being abused in the future.

How the Church Can Help

Church can settings play a key role in protecting children in care. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that children who are looked after are safeguarded.

- Be aware of signs of abuse and neglect.
- Be aware of vulnerabilities of children in care.
- Focus on the individual needs of the child.
- Know what the specific plans are for any looked after child that you are responsible for.
- Listen to the child's 'voice' (verbal, behavioural or otherwise) and act upon it. Remember, just because they are in care doesn't mean they can't still be abused.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies.
- Report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead and follow your safeguarding procedures ([see Appendices 14, 15 & 16](#)).

Supporting Looked-After Children

Providing a secure, caring environment can help looked after children overcome their early life experiences. [NSPCC research](#) has identified five priorities for change to improve emotional wellbeing and mental health.

- **Embed an emphasis on emotional wellbeing throughout the system.** Professionals working in the care system need the skills and knowledge to understand how they can support
- **Take a proactive and preventative approach.** Support for looked after children should begin with a thorough assessment of their emotional and mental health needs.
- **Give children and young people voice and influence.** Looked after children and young people need more opportunities to identify what is important to them and influence their own care.
- **Support and sustain children's relationships.** Children's carers require training and support to be sensitive, understanding and resilient.

- **Support care leavers' emotional needs.** Help young people identify and strengthen their support networks.

APPENDIX 21: SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Abuse of any type occurs when someone has power over another and uses that power to harm. Spiritual abuse happens when someone with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit another, thus causing spiritual wounds. Spiritual abuse may be perpetrated by abusers who believe they have the best interests of the victim at heart.

Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse and there is no consensus on a definition of the term. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies to be clear that spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse within a religious context. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Spiritual abuse may occur on its own, or alongside other forms of abuse, such as physical, sexual or domestic abuse. The heinous nature of spiritual abuse is that it is often used to 'legitimise' or facilitate other forms of abuse by leveraging "divine authority".

Spiritual abuse shares some of the hallmarks of bullying and harassment, including intimidation, manipulation and inducing fear. However, what makes this distinct are the elements associated with religious belief including coercion through religious position, membership of the religious community, scripture, biblical discourse and spiritual threats.

Jesus spent more time challenging spiritual abuse than any other problem in the church of His day (see Matthew 23). The reality however, is that spiritual abusers do not become so when they walk through the church doors, they bring this destructive mindset from home. Spiritually abusive church leaders tend to be spiritually abusive husbands, wives and parents.

In the context of family life, parents stand in the place of God for their children. Spiritual abuse is so insidious because, "Children literally take the attributes of their parents and stamp them on the face of their higher power" (Lisa Miller, PhD, *The Spiritual Child*, p.91). Spiritually abusive parents distort the image of God in the minds of their children. Protestant reformer Martin Luther once stated, "I have difficulty praying the Lord's Prayer because whenever I say 'Our Father', I think of my own father who was hard, unyielding and relentless. I cannot help but think of God in that way" (Gregorovius, VIIIa, 249).

The subtle power of spiritual abuse is that it presents a false view of God and a false way of serving Him. People are controlled through the misuse and abuse of religious scripture, divine position, spiritual threats and fear of spiritual consequences and the suggestion of God as complicit.

"There are profound consequences to someone who feels unable to comply with abusive behaviour . . . If you believe that to disagree or to fail to comply means that you are letting God down or even, in extreme cases, that you will not enter heaven, the pressure on you is immense"

Jesus was particularly concerned about this issue because of the enormous influence the Pharisees had over the people. While at face value, these leaders were morally upright, highly ethical, radical health reformers, sacrificial tithe returners and totally dedicated to church services, Jesus declared, "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Spiritually abusive people generally lack awareness of their dysfunctional mindset and how much harm they perpetrate. In most cases of spiritual abuse, the control of people is the central issue, and **legalism** is one of the greatest weapons in the arsenal of a spiritual abuser. However, our success in the home is not measured by our ability to control others, but how effectively we model the grace of Christ to our families. As Ken Blue observes that, "We cannot wash feet while standing on a pedestal" (*Healing Spiritual Abuse*, 84).

Spiritual abusers tend to use power, fear and intimidation to control; exhibit hypocrisy by observing the letter but not the spirit of the law; make unfair and unreasonable demands; major in minors; use knowledge and language to control and manipulate, are highly sensitive to, and intolerant of criticism and judge and shame those who 'step out of line.' Legalism has a form of godliness but denies the power of the gospel to transform lives.

C S Lewis commented, "Of all bad men, religious bad men are the worst" (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 31-32). Religious 'bad men' tend to perpetrate harm fully justified in their own minds that they are doing right, often using Scripture reassure themselves. The fifth commandment has been used to justify wielding undue power over children; 'spare the rod, spoil the child' to justify physical abuse, Paul's comments on submission to justify spousal abuse, and many other examples can be cited.

In order to effectively resist abusive spirituality it is vital to understand and experience healthy spirituality. Paul counsels us, "Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Combatting spiritual abuse begins with self-awareness and self-reflection.

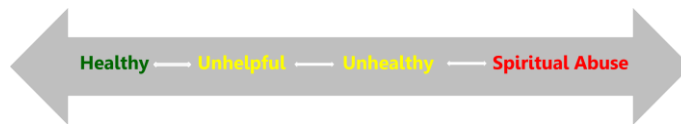
More often than not however, spiritual abusers do not cease to be so by themselves. According to Arterburn & Felton, "We must have the courage to follow Christ's example and overturn the system, be it a marriage or an organization, if that system is wrong" (Toxic Faith, 72).

Ken Blue summarizes that, "The only cure for the abuser, as well as the abused, is a sufficient dose of God's mercy and grace" (Healing Spiritual Abuse, 120). In this regard we must heed the counsel of the apostle, "let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

A SPECTRUM OF BEHAVIOUR

In their excellent book 'Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse', Dr Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphreys suggest that in identifying spiritual abuse, it is important to locate it the spectrum of behaviour we experience within Christian contexts.

These behaviours range from healthy behaviour one end of the spectrum and abusive behaviour on the other.



Healthy - Nurturing behaviour in which people flourish and grow.

Unhelpful behaviour - This is where someone's reaction/behaviour is not harmful but not helpful and we all behave in this way at times.

Unhealthy – we start to see a consistent pattern of behaviour that is negative, where we check ourselves before approaching that person; where they are not open to question etc. It can often be challenged and addressed at this stage.

Spiritual Abuse – The dynamic becomes a persistent pattern of coercive controlling behaviour that reflects the definition of psychological abuse within a religious context.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Misusing scripture to coerce behaviour - Biblical messages of submission, sacrifice, obedience and forgiveness can be used to manipulate, control and coerce. The Bible is weaponised to facilitate abuse.

Coercing through censorship – This may include pressuring people to secrecy and silence. People may feel unable to ask questions, disagree or raise issues in the name of "unity."

Requiring unquestioning obedience – This may include requiring obedience to the abuser, with an implicit or explicit suggestion that this equates to obedience to God. People may feel pressured into providing financial, emotional and psychological support, service or even sexual activity.

Enforced accountability – For example, being required to be accountable to another without consent, and without choice and control over boundary setting in the relationship. It should be noted that there are times when accountability is required (for example, where there is a safeguarding agreement).

Exclusion or isolation of individuals as a punishment for non-compliance – An individual may cut off from the sources of social and emotional support they have come to rely on.

Coercing behaviour through exploitation and manipulation – This may include extreme pressure to conform by a degree of commitment to the Church or the abuser that exceeds what is required of others in the Church.

Publicly shaming and humiliating individuals in order to control their behaviour - Individual/s may experience public shaming and humiliation because of a perceived lack of obedience or conformity.

Threats of spiritual consequences – This may include exercising control through threats of spiritual consequences for non-compliance with personal directives.

Inappropriate mentoring relationships. The misuse of the pastoral relationship in such a way that the mentor does not hold appropriate boundaries, and justifies this by theology, scripture or by claiming special spiritual insight or divine sanction.

THE IMPACT OF SPIRITUAL ABUSE

As with other forms of abuse, spiritual abuse can result in significant harm to a person. It can also seriously impact a person's faith. The impact may include:

Distrust and fear

Distrust is one of the main consequences of spiritual abuse. Coercion and control can leave individuals unsure of who and what they can trust. It can also lead to a distrust of any believed to be connected to the Christian faith.

Crisis of faith

Spiritual abuse can lead to damage to, or a loss of, faith. The role of faith and scripture in the experience of this abuse can lead individuals to questioning what, if anything, they believe.

Feelings of powerlessness

They may have felt compelled to be obedient to their abuser, and to defer to their decisions. They may struggle to regain control over their lives and may be frightened about doing this.

Feelings of anger - People often feel anger and rage about what has happened. The anger can be magnified by the knowledge that it happened in a Christian context and that scripture and teaching has been used to justify it.

Shame, self-blame and humiliation - They may ask questions like, "how did I let this happen to me?" "Why did I end up in this church?" "What's wrong with me?" "Why didn't I see this coming?" They may worry they have unknowingly been complicit in the spiritual abuse of others.

Loss of self and identity

For many, faith is central to a sense of self and identity. A loss of faith, or loss of a Church role and damaged relationships, can result in a direct challenge to this. It may take some time for an individual to build a new positive image of themselves and it should be recognised that not all individuals may be able to do this where trust has been severely damaged. This is another reason why effective response to abuse is so important.

Isolation

Individuals who leave spiritually abusive relationships or environments may find themselves isolated. Other relationships may have diminished due to the effects of the abusive relationship. This may leave the individual with a lack of social support. The distrust experienced can result in deep complexities associated with accessing support and intervention.

Health and/or psychological problems – The trauma of abuse can often compromise a person's mental health and also lead to physical symptoms of ill-health.

HEALING FROM SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Healing from spiritual abuse is often a long and painful journey, but survivors need to be assured that it is possible. Survivors of spiritual abuse need to appreciate that:

- **It's not their fault** – There is nothing a person can do to cause abuse. It is always the choice of the abuser. It is OK to be angry about the abuse and to experience all of the emotions that will come.
- **Abuse is never OK** - Abuse is never justified and must never be excused or the impact diminished.
- **They are not alone** – There are individuals, communities and organisations that can support the survivor's healing journey. Survivors need to proactively seek out supportive people whether inside or outside of the church.
- **They need to practice self-care** – It is vital to carve out time to nurture their emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing.
- **They have inherent value** – Survivors need an accurate portrayal of who God is and the value he has instilled in them through creation and redemption.

Recommended Reading on Abusive Relationships & Trauma

Allender, Dan	1990	The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse
Alsdurf, James, and Phyllis Alsdurf	1998	Battered into Submission: The Tragedy of Wife Abuse in the Christian Home.
Arterburn & Felton	2001	Toxic Faith: Experiencing Healing Over Painful Spiritual Abuse
Blue, Ken	1993	Healing Spiritual Abuse: How to Break Free from Bad Church Experience
Clinton, T. & Straub, J	2010	God Attachment: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel the Way You Do About God
Crippen, Jeff	2015	Unholy Charade: Unmasking the Domestic Abuser in the Church
Henke, David	2021	Spiritual Abuse Recovery Workbook
Herman, Judith	1997	Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror
Johnson, J. & Van Vonderen, J	1991	The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse: Recognizing and Escaping Spiritual Manipulation and False Spiritual Authority Within the Church
Lansberg, Diane	2015	Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores
Nason-Clark, Nancy Kroeger, Catherine Fisher-Townsend, B.	2011	Responding to Abuse in Christian Homes: A Challenge to Churches and the Leaders
Oakley, L. & Humphreys, J.	2019	Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse
Scazzero, Peter	2017	Emotionally Healthy Spirituality
Thompson, Curt	2015	The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves
Tracey, Stephen R.	2005	Mending the Soul: Understanding and Healing Abuse
Tucker, Ruth A.	2016	Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife: My Story of Finding Hope after Domestic Abuse

APPENDIX 22: AGREEMENT OF CARE

Agreement of Care

Between: [Individual's name]

and: [Church's name]

1. I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children or adults at risk.
2. I will attend meetings and house-groups as directed by the church leadership.
3. I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and adults at risk.
4. I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any areas where children's activities are taking place or specified individuals are present
5. I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
6. I accept that and will sit with me during church activities and accompany me when I need to use other facilities. They will know the reasons for this agreement.
7. I accept that there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children and young people they care for.
8. I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with the church leaders as and when necessary.
9. I accept that pastor..... will provide me with pastoral care. This will include:
[Specify the details and nature of the pastoral care referred to in this point]
10. 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 (Probation and Social Services) and any other relevant organisation.

Indicate when and how frequently the above agreement will be reviewed

Signed Date:

Witnessed by Date:

Witnessed by Date:

Copies should be retained by the individual, the Disclosure Clerk, and by the conference/mission secretariat or Designated Safeguarding Lead

Retention period by the Disclosure Clerk

Period of church attendance/membership.....

APPENDIX 23: BUC ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Definition of bullying

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

Objectives of this policy

- All children, workers, parents and carers should be aware of the anti-bullying policy within the organisation and what they should do if bullying arises
- All workers should have an understanding of what bullying is, be aware of possible signs if it is happening and follow the policy when it is reported
- Children and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

Prevention

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

- Report the bullying incident to children's leaders
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken
- In all cases of bullying, the incidents should be recorded by the worker
- Consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of the bully, but this should only be done if workers are satisfied there is no bullying/abuse going on at home that might exacerbate the situation
- If it is thought that an offence has been committed, consideration should be given to contacting the police
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly
- Help should be offered to help the bully address his/her behaviour

Outcomes

- The children's worker involved in dealing with the incident should issue a warning to the child concerned
- An apology should be given by the child who has bullied another
- If possible, those involved will be reconciled
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- After the incident(s) have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken
- All incidents must be recorded in the log book

APPENDIX 24: BUC WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Introduction

The British Union Conference (BUC) seeks to operate all aspects of business to high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that a BUC staff member (lay employees and all ministers who serve in appointments under the control of the BUC) becomes aware of activities which give cause for concern, the BUC has established the following code of practice, which provides a framework, to allow concerns to be raised in confidence and, to allow for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter.

The BUC is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness, so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that it will be appropriately considered and resolved. Any individual who makes a disclosure of wrongdoing or malpractice will be treated with respect and will be protected against victimisation, provided that the worker had reasonable grounds to suspect the wrongdoing; anyone who victimises a whistleblower will be subject to the BUC's disciplinary procedure.

What is whistleblowing?

A disclosure made to someone in authority alleging corruption, malpractice or wrongdoing. The act of blowing the whistle is 'making a disclosure in the public interest.'

The BUC considers that the following types of activity or behaviour should be dealt with under this policy:

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of assets or funds of which the BUC is the managing trustee
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of procedure, which may advantage a particular party or any actions
- likely to bring the reputation of the Church into question.

NB: This is not an exhaustive list.

For allegations where the report is a complaint rather than information of a wrongdoing, or corruption please refer to the BUC's grievance policy.

The Process

What action should the Whistleblower take?

The BUC encourages whistleblowers to inform someone with the ability to address the problem. All staff members should feel confident about taking the steps to disclose information. The following points will provide some guidance in doing this:

- Staff members should inform their line manager immediately
- If the content of the disclosure involves the staff member's line manager, then they should refer the disclosure to their line manager's manager. If the content of the disclosure refers to another manager, then they should refer the disclosure to that manager's line manager. A potential whistleblower can seek legal advice or speak to Public Concern at Work Charity for guidance on the free helpline 0207 404 6609 or from the [Protect](#) site.
- The Government encourages whistleblowers to contact external groups where appropriate. For example, if a staff member has followed the internal procedure to alert the organisation about a health and safety issue and are still concerned about the risk this poses, they can contact the Health and Safety Commission. A full comprehensive list is available on [GOV.UK.](#)
- Elsewhere in exceptionally serious cases; where internal procedures have been exhausted, and the information is substantially true to their knowledge, staff members may seek to disclose information to the police. The law requires the person making the disclosure to believe and understand the information to be true.

- This can be discussed in confidence but information will need to be disclosed for investigatory purposes. The BUC wants to encourage and embed a culture where staff members feel comfortable speaking of problematic situations and thus whistleblowers will not be penalised for talking.
- The whistleblowing policy is treated differently and separately to a grievance policy as the employee making a disclosure may not be directly impacted by the act or behaviour and therefore does not have a personal grievance.

About to blow the whistle?

- Do think about the risks and outcomes before you act. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is there to protect workers from victimisation. However, the law does require individuals to test when making a disclosure that they reasonably believe the information being disclosed is substantially true and is not for personal gain.
- Let the facts speak for themselves do not make ill-considered allegations
- Remember you may be mistaken or there may be an innocent explanation.
- Do not attempt to become a 'private detective'
- Ulterior motives such as personal vendetta remove your protection.
- When disclosing information through the whistleblowing procedures you are preventing the BUC from what could be a problematic situation if not addressed.
- It is important to stay calm, remember you are a witness not a complainant

The following reasons for disclosing information will be protected under the Public Disclosure Act 1998:

- Criminal offence
- Failure to comply with legal obligation
- Miscarriage of justice
- Risk to health or safety
- Environmental damage
- Any of the above is likely to be deliberately concealed

The role of the manager or investigating officer/body

- Concerns raised are taken seriously and there must be a thorough investigation into the root of the problem. This will determine whether the matter should be managed internally or externally.
- Compile a report with recommendations
- Notify the whistleblower in writing the outcome of the investigation
- Follow through to ensure there have been appropriate outcomes. For example, if the outcome required fire safety equipment and a fire drill test within a given timeframe, the investigating officer should ensure this is done.

There will not always be a prescriptive procedure for how each individual case should be investigated. There is a disclosure made to the line manager or assigned to an investigating officer. Guidelines on how to conduct an investigation is outlined in the [Government's Whistleblowing Procedure](#).

Unfounded and malicious reports

- The BUC sets out to protect whistleblowers with reasonable concern to believe that the disclosure is substantially true; details of this have been discussed throughout this policy.
- However, when a disclosure is found to not be made in good faith or in the interest of the public, BUC will take action. This could be as serious as a dismissal.

Conclusion

The BUC is confident that the existing good practice and internal controls will ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur.

The Whistleblowing Policy is provided as a reference document and a commitment that any concerns raised will be taken seriously and action promptly.

APPENDIX 25: BUC COMPLAINTS POLICY

A. INTRODUCTION

Disputes and conflicts are inevitable in any large organisation and it is important to have a procedure for dealing with them. From the outset a clear distinction must be made between general complaints and employment related complaints. General complaints are dealt with according to the procedure outlined below, whereas complaints by an employee relating to their own employment are dealt with according to the grievance procedure in the employee's Employee Handbook.

B. JURISDICTION

Complaints should be dealt with at the level where they arise, recognising the different levels of church organisation. These are: Local Church, Mission or Conference, Union Conference, and Division of the General Conference.

C. PROCESS

Complaints should be dealt with informally in the first instance, following the counsel given in the Church Manual. If this fails to resolve the situation then the following formal process should be followed:

1. The complaint should be submitted in writing to the appropriate responsible person. This could be the pastor in the case of a local church, or the Executive Secretary in the case of a Conference or Union. The letter should state clearly that the complainant is making a formal complaint. Sufficient detail should be included to allow at least a preliminary investigation to be carried out. This might include a timeline of events, relevant correspondence, and other backing materials.
2. The responsible person should respond in writing within a reasonable time period, acknowledging the complaint and outlining what action, if any, will be taken. They may ask for more information or for additional measures to be taken by the complainant. If no action is to be taken, a reasonable explanation should be given.
3. When the matter has been adequately considered the responsible person will communicate the outcome to the complainant.

D. RIGHT OF APPEAL

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they receive, they have the right to appeal to the next level of church organisation. However, this right extends only to the way in which their original complaint has been dealt with, not the substance of the complaint itself. The process is as follows:

1. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary and the letter should state clearly that the individual is exercising their right of appeal. Sufficient detail should be included to indicate how the original complaint process was inadequate.
2. The Executive Secretary should respond in writing within a reasonable time period, acknowledging the appeal and outlining what action will be taken. This action will depend on the nature of the original complaint but may include assigning an individual or small group to manage the process.
3. When the matter has been adequately considered the Executive Secretary will communicate the outcome to the appellant.

E. ARBITRATION

There may be some circumstances in which the above process fails to bring about a resolution. In such cases the parties may wish to request a binding arbitration process, managed by the BUC. For such an approach to succeed the following conditions must be met:

1. Both parties must agree to the process
2. Both parties must agree to the composition of the arbitration team
3. Both parties must agree to withdraw or suspend any legal action during the process

The BUC reserves the right to suspend or terminate the arbitration process at any point, should it feel the need to do so.



British Union Conference

Safeguarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Child and Adult Protection Procedures



British Union Conference

Safeguarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church in England

Child and Adult Protection Procedures

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SAFEGUARDING (Procedures – England)

FOREWORD

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in England is part of the British Union Conference (BUC) of churches that is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities with our safeguarding policy and procedures. These procedures reflect how the church in England will act to protect its children and adults at risk. They fully accord with the law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults within England.

Our safeguarding procedures set out the church's guidelines relating to protecting our church family. These procedures are to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to the children and adults we have contact with through our paid and voluntary activities.



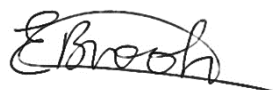
George Kumi

NEC President



Kirk Thomas

SEC President



Eglan Brooks

BUC President

Protecting Children and Adults in England

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in England is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. According to the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) Churches and faith-based groups play a vital role in keeping people safe and responding effectively and compassionately when someone comes forward to share a concerns about abuse.⁴ Churches provide a wide range of activities for children/adults at risk and have an important role in safeguarding and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Church is guided by the country's law and guidance in its commitment to safeguarding children and adults at risk. [See Appendix 20](#) for full details.

The Church is committed to promoting the well-being of all those who are part of its worshipping community. Safeguarding is simply acting to keep our church family safe and is a responsibility we all share. By working together we are able to reduce behaviours that can harm individuals, by removing or minimising their impact on our children and adults at risk.

⁴[Safeguarding People in Faith Communities](#)

J. PROTECTION OF ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM – ENGLAND

Adult at risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability. They may have suffered a bereavement or struggling with the impact of past abuse or trauma. They are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Where it is known or suspected that an 'adult at risk' is being harmed, it must be decided whether or not further action is needed to protect the adult's well-being, property or financial affairs. Harm could occur at the hands of anyone: a relative, spouse or partner, friend, professional, neighbour or stranger. It could happen anywhere – in the family home, in a care setting, at work or in public places. More specific details on safeguarding adults can be found under Chapter 14 of the Department of Health Care Act 2014 guidance⁵.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

Statutory guidance states that safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect ... We must also recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances'.⁶ Safeguarding is promoting their well-being, allowing them to make their own choices as far as they are able.

What are abuse and neglect?

What constitutes abuse or neglect can take many forms and circumstances but exploitation, in particular, is a common theme. The categories below are not an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sorts of behaviours which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one or more persons.

- physical violence
- domestic abuse
- sexual abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial and material abuse
- modern slavery
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- neglect and acts of omission
- self-neglect

⁵[Care and Support Statutory Guidance \(2023\)](#)

⁶[Ibid.](#)

It is most likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and power. Abuse can happen anywhere: for example, in someone's own home, when an adult lives alone or with others, in a care home or other professional setting. Sadly, it can take place in church. Abuse or neglect may be unintentional and may arise from an individual struggling to care for a loved one, or it may arise from a person's deliberate intent to cause harm or exploitation.

K. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM – ENGLAND

Children

The term 'children' herein relates to any persons under the age of 18 with whom the church has contact through any of its activities.

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 disability and age-appropriate assistance.

Why are we concerned about taking action to protect children?

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their life. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. They can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. At any time that it is believed that a child may be in need of services to them or their family, or that a child is being harmed or is likely to be, we should refer immediately to local authority children's social care. Additional guidance can be found in the document *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused*⁷. Therefore, concerns should be immediately reported to your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Church is committed to taking prompt action to protect our young people.

What is safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023⁸ describes safeguarding as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network⁴ through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the [Children's Social Care National Framework](#)

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on, or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to, the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, or another child. The abuse can be perpetrated through physical contact or via the internet. The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Other forms of harm include domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation (FGM). Details of the definitions and possible indicators of abuse can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#).

⁷[What to Do If you Are Worried a Child is Being Abused \(2015\)](#)

⁸[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)

Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, in part because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, cognition and communication needs which may make it difficult for them to understand or to tell others what is happening.

L. PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENGLAND

Public protection encompasses child protection and adult protection. Its aim is to reduce the harm to children and adults at risk within our communities. It is recognised that there are links between child protection and adult and public protection in terms of the joint and separate actions that need to be taken. We have a shared responsibility in recognising and responding to concerns of abuse and its impact on our church family.

Keeping our church family safe means recognising when to be concerned and acting rightly to protect a vulnerable person. Children and adults at risk need us to take the correct action to ensure their safety and well-being.

1. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Concerns about a child's or adult's safety may present themselves in a number of ways:

- hearing a child or adult saying that they are being abused or describing a situation you recognise as abusive;
- recognising signs or indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- observing behaviours in a child or adult that give cause for concern;
- being told by someone about the abuse of another person or their concerns for that person.

Full definitions and possible indicators can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#).

2. How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Concerns should always be shared without delay with your Responsible Person and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a child or adult is considered to be in immediate danger, workers should report this concern directly to the police. Similarly, where a child or adult is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services. See [Appendix 21: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse](#).

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. Individuals should not make decisions about a vulnerable person's needs without feeling confident that they have the necessary information to do so.

In all situations:

- Do not delay. Take Action within 24hrs. Where there is a concern of immediate danger, contact the police on 999.
- Contact your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If this evaluation supports the concerns then, immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be made within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see [Appendix 15: Responding to Abuse](#)).

Where there is a concern about a child or adult, contact your local Social Care Services. Advice can also be taken from the Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 111 and NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk

'NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.'

How should I respond if a child or adult starts to tell me about their abuse?

- Accept what the child or adult tells you. Remain calm and give them your undivided attention.
- Explain that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise them confidentiality.

- Never blame them, even if they have broken a rule or gone against good judgement. Remember they might have been threatened or manipulated.
- Remember you are not conducting an investigation. Never push for more information. Go at their speed.
- Reassure the child or adult that they were right to tell you and that you take what they have said seriously.
- Explain what you are going to do next and what is going to happen.
- Record all you have heard and done (i.e. time, date, people involved; see Appendix 13).

NOTE: is the child or adult safe? Take immediate action and contact the police if the child or adult would be at immediate risk.

3. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

In the interim a plan of action must be put in place to protect children and adults at risk. This may involve removing the accused person from office, suspending them from duties, or placing employees on leave of absence pending the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agencies.

Even where criminal charges are not made, there remains an obligation on the church to review the pastoral consequences and action plan in such a situation. A person known to be a danger to children or young people should not continue to have access to them through holding a position of trust in the church.

NOTE: When the church is made aware of rumours, gossip or allegations concerning any person related to the church the accused person should not be approached at this stage by anyone with a view to discussing the allegation. These should be forwarded immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This is to safeguard the interests of all involved. It ensures that the information is only shared with those who need to know and that the course of any official processes is unimpeded.

Recording and information sharing

Recording and sharing relevant information are key tenets of protecting children and adults. Privacy and confidentiality are governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the Data Protection Act 2018; and organisational codes of conduct. The same legal provisions also provide for sharing of information for purposes such as public protection, crime prevention and crime detection. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. National guidance on information sharing (2018)⁹ provides more detailed advice where needed. Information should be held securely and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

All interactions should be recorded, succinctly and accurately. The distinction should always be made between facts, hearsay and opinions. Records should include note of:

- dates of contact and with whom;
- the views and emotional well-being of the child or adult;
- actions and decisions taken and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of actions taken.

⁹[Information Sharing - Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers \(2018\).pdf](#)

Record storage and retention

Records of matters relating to the protection of children or adults should be stored securely at all times. This should be in a locked metal cabinet within the local church vestry, or with the Safeguarding Person should the church premises not belong to the congregation. Details of the outcome of all matters should be sent to the conference office. Records will be retained for ten (10) years and reviewed prior to destruction.

Child/adult protection conferences

Included in the process may be a child/adult protection conference convened by the Children's Social Care or Adult Services. Church workers/volunteers may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the child/adult at risk, parent or family. Before attending the conference it is important to clarify in what capacity one has been invited and how one wants to be seen by the family, i.e. as a church employee giving information which could very well be used later in any proceedings, or as a church member, providing support to the child/adult at risk, parent or family.

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) procedures

In every local authority area, there are procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult at risk has been abused or is 'at risk'. Local areas should be guided by and follow their LSCB/SAB procedures in responding to safeguarding and protection concerns. These can be obtained online via your local safeguarding board website. Statutory agencies hold the legal responsibility to investigate cases of abuse and exploitation.

4. Allegations Against Staff, Church Members or Volunteers

Allegations against staff, church members or volunteers relate to concerns about abusive or exploitative behaviour between a worker and a child or adult at risk. These allegations must be taken seriously, viewed objectively and dealt with immediately. Local authorities employ a 'Designated Officer' or equivalent who has responsibility for providing oversight and guidance on managing allegations about staff or volunteers within a fair process. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The intention is to determine whether an individual is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Concerns or a complaint about the quality of care or practice are separate and should be dealt with by the leadership.

Individuals should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves, offer confidentiality or alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents. They should:

- Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will conduct a rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification.
- Notify their pastor or senior manager and report criminal offences to the police.
- Determine what support is to be provided for the alleged and the victim.
- Within one day notify the local authority Designated Officer or equivalent and follow their advice.

All involved should be kept informed on the progress of the matter.

Any allegations against the Designated Safeguarding Lead should go straight to the pastor. Likewise any allegation against the pastor should go to the mission/conference Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any paid worker or unpaid volunteer removed from their work (or one who would have been, had he/she not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or an adult at risk must be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason. It is the Conference's responsibility to notify the DBS/BUC of such removals.

APPENDIX 20: LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK – ENGLAND

[Children Act 1989](#)

Places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area. It gives powers for the investigation of child protection concerns and the support of families. It institutes the principle of the child's welfare being our paramount consideration.

[Children Act 2004](#) and [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote cooperation between relevant partners with a view to improving the well-being of children locally. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a number of reforms notably around adoption and the time limit for courts to decide whether or not a child should be taken into care.

[Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

Provides amendments to both the Children Act 1989 and the children Act 2004

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: Statutory Guidance](#)

A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: Statutory Framework](#)

Legislation relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015](#)

Simple and clear guidance on what steps individuals should take when concerned for a child's well-being.

[Care Act 2014](#)

Sets out how people's care and support needs should be met and introduces the right to an assessment for anyone, including carers, in need of support. It introduces a 'well-being principle' which places people's well-being at the centre of care and support services.

Care Act 2014 - [Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014](#)

This is the first time we have had a law telling councils what to do to help keep adults safe from abuse or neglect. It explains what abuse is and what organisations can do to work together to keep people safe.

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006](#)

Introduced to restrict contact between children and persons at risk with those who might do them harm. Principles:

- unsuitable persons should be barred from working with children or persons at risk
- employers should have a straightforward means of checking that a person is not barred from working with children or persons at risk
- suitability checks should not be one-offs: there should be an element of ongoing assessment of suitability to catch those who commit wrongs following a suitability check

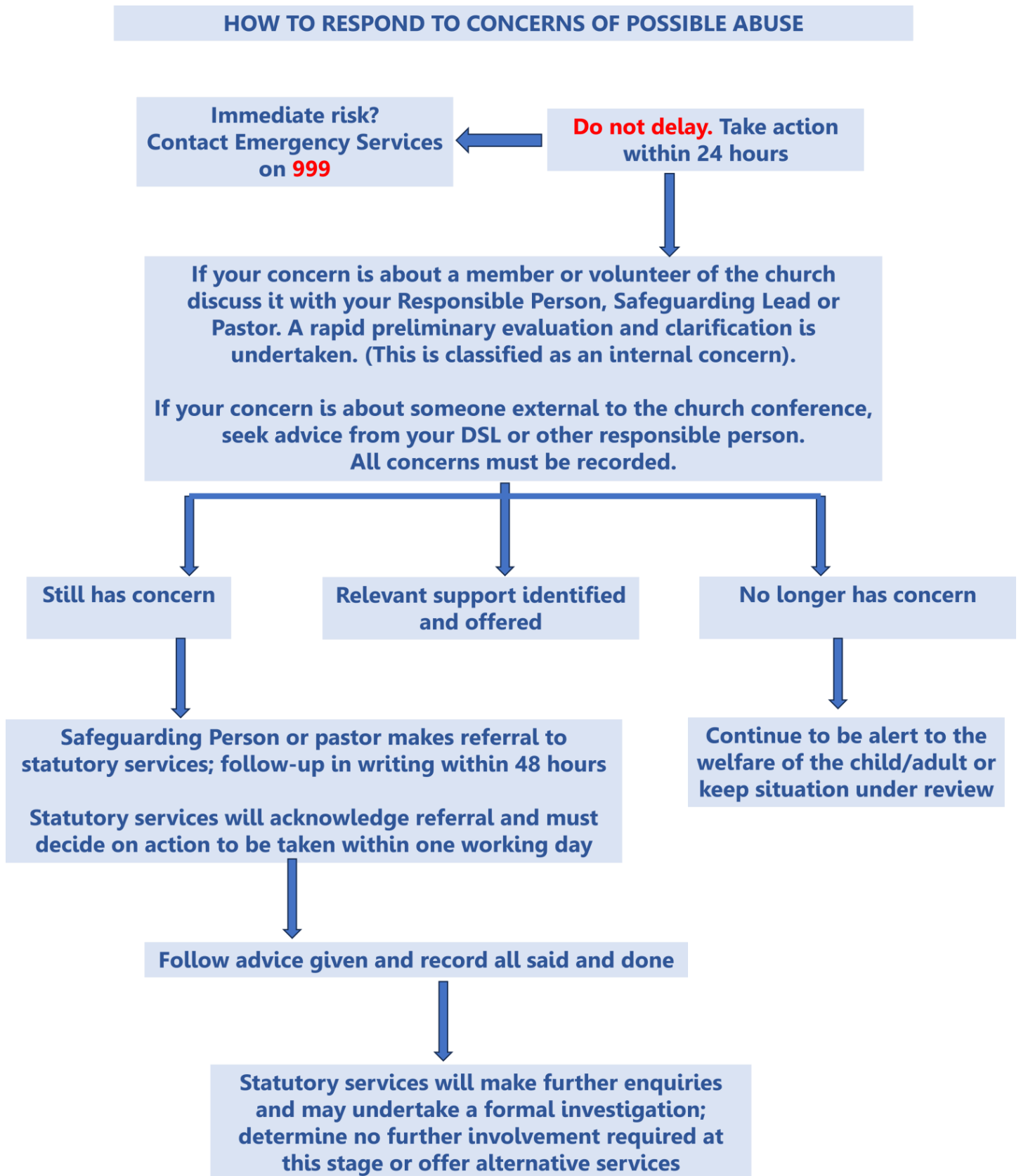
[Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)

There will be circumstances where an individual adult appears not to be able to make a decision about whether to consent to information being shared with others. The Mental Capacity Act and the associated code of practice contain guidance about the consideration of a person's capacity, or lack of capacity, to give consent to sharing information. The starting assumption must be that the person has capacity unless it is established that they do not, and only then after all practical steps to help the person make the relevant decision have been taken but have been unsuccessful. An unwise decision taken by the relevant person does not mean they lack capacity. Where a decision is made on behalf of the person who lacks capacity to share personal information, it must still comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and be in their best interests.

[Age UK Factsheet 78: Safeguarding Older People from Abuse and Neglect](#), December 2023

Explains the new laws on safeguarding adults and helps individuals decide what to do where there are concerns that an older person may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

APPENDIX 21: HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE





British Union Conference

Safeguarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland

Child and Adult Protection Procedures

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SAFEGUARDING (Procedures – Ireland)

FOREWORD

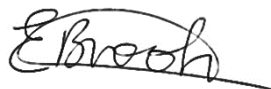
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland is part of the British Union Conference (BUC) of churches and has adopted this safeguarding policy. These procedures reflect how the Church in Ireland will act to safeguard its children and adults at risk.

The Irish Mission is a family of 17 churches across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These procedures fully accord with the law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults across Ireland. They reflect the safeguarding legislation and policy for both Northern and the Republic of Ireland.

These policies and procedures set out the church's guidelines relating to safeguarding our church family and the procedures to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to the children and adults we have contact with through all our church activities.



Dan Serb
Mission President



Eglan Brooks
BUC President

Protecting Children and Adults in Ireland

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm. National guidance *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*¹⁰ and Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland stated 'Organisations which provide services to children or young people must have policies and procedures in place which put child safeguarding at the heart of the organisation's ethos, governance and practice, and which reflect this policy. Policies and procedures must be owned at all levels within the organisation in line with good practice guidelines as set out in Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People and Safer Organisations: Safer Children'.¹¹ The Church is guided by the country's law and guidance in its commitment to protecting children and adults at risk or harm. For full details see [Appendix 20/NI](#) for Northern Ireland and [Appendix 20/Rol](#) for Republic of Ireland.

In Northern Ireland the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is the lead department on child protection and is responsible for policy. Responsibility for children's services and child protection in Ireland rests with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and An Garda Síochána. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) is the lead department in terms of policy development and implementation.

Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety and understanding when and how to share these concerns, how to assess such concerns and, fundamentally, what steps are required to ensure an individual's safety and well-being.

¹⁰ [Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#)

¹¹ [Our Duty of Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People](#)

J. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS/ADULTS AT RISK – IRELAND

Adult at risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability. They are someone who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

'Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur ... All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives ... Faith sectors that come into contact with adults, including those who may be at risk of harm, must be alert to the individual's needs and any risks of harm to which they may be exposed.'¹²

Where it is known or suspected that an 'adult at risk' is being harmed, it must be decided whether or not further action is needed to protect the adult's well-being, property or financial affairs. Harm could occur at the hands of anyone: a relative, spouse or partner, friend, professional, neighbour, stranger or church member. It could happen anywhere – in the family home, in a care setting, at work or in public places.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015) provides the following definitions¹³:

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:

- a) personal characteristics and/or
- b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics 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.

Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

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:

- a) personal characteristics and/or
- b) life circumstances; and
- c) who is **unable to protect** their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and
- d) where the **action or inaction of another person or persons** is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is promoting their well-being, allowing them to make their own choices as far as they are able to without endangering themselves.

What are abuse and neglect?

What constitutes abuse or neglect can take many forms and circumstances but exploitation, in particular, is a common theme. The categories below are not an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sorts of behaviours which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one or more persons. Full definitions can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#).

¹² [Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership, DHSSPS, DoJ July 2015](#)

¹³ Ibid

- physical abuse
- domestic violence
- sexual abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial and material abuse
- modern slavery
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- neglect and acts of omission
- self-neglect

It is most likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and power. Abuse can happen anywhere and be inflicted by anyone; sadly, it can take place in church. Abuse or neglect may be unintentional and may arise from an individual struggling to care for a loved one; or it may arise from a person's deliberate intent to cause harm or exploitation.

What can Health Boards do to protect an adult who is at risk of harm?

Health Boards can make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect an adult is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected. Authorised professionals can enter any place where it knows or suspects that an adult is at risk of harm in order to establish whether any further action is needed to protect the adult. They will work with other agencies to secure the well-being of that adult. This may include:

- ensuring access to suitable advice and support;
- providing practical care and support services for the adult at risk and/or their carer;
- an order or appointment of a proxy to help the person manage their affairs.

Where a criminal offence has been committed against the adult at risk, this should be reported immediately to the police. Any interview or medical examination can only be carried out with the agreement of the adult concerned.

Where necessary the local authority can apply to court for a protection order if specific consent is needed for permission to undertake further assessment on behalf of an individual; to remove them from a situation of potential serious harm; or to ban another person from contact.

K. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM – IRELAND

Children

The term 'children' herein relates to any persons under the age of 18 with whom the church has contact through any of its activities.

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 disability and age-appropriate assistance.

Why are we concerned about taking action to protect children?

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their life. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. They can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. At any time that it is believed that a child may be in need of services to them or their family, or that a child is being harmed or is likely to be, we should refer immediately to the Health Board. Therefore, concerns should be immediately reported to your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Church is committed to taking prompt action to protect our young people.

What is safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children?

Safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children can be described as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on, or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to, the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or another child. The abuse can be perpetrated through physical contact or via the internet. The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Other forms of harm include domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation (FGM). Details of the definitions and possible indicators of abuse can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#).

Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, in part because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, cognition and communication needs which may make it difficult for them to understand or to tell others what is happening.

L. PUBLIC PROTECTION – IRELAND

Public protection encompasses child protection and adult protection. Its aim is to reduce the harm to children and adults at risk within our communities. It is recognised that there are links between child protection and adult and public protection in terms of the joint and separate actions that need to be taken. We have a shared responsibility in recognising and responding to concerns of abuse and its impact on our church family.

Some adults abuse children deliberately, and most often, when abuse does happen, families need support, not punishment or the removal of their children.

1. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Concerns about a child's or adult's safety may present themselves in a number of ways:

- hearing a child or adult saying that they are being abused or describing a situation you recognise as abusive;
- recognising signs or indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- observing behaviours in a child or adult that give cause for concern;
- being told by someone about the abuse of another person or their concerns for that person.

Full definitions and possible indicators can be found under [Section A](#) of this policy.

2. How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Concerns should always be shared without delay with your Responsible Person and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a child or adult is considered to be in immediate danger workers should report this directly to the police. Similarly, where a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services. See [Appendix 21: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse](#). Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support

In all situations:

- Do not delay.
- Contact your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If this evaluation supports the concerns, immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be made within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see [Appendix 15: Responding to Abuse](#)).

A concern about a child or adult should be referred to your local Health and Social Care Trust/Health Board. Advice can also be taken from the Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 1111 and NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk or The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ISPC on 01 6767 960. Where there is a concern about the immediate safety of a child or young person, or where a crime is suspected, a referral should be made directly to the [PSNI](#) or [An Garda Síochána](#).

'NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.'

to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. Individuals should not make decisions about a vulnerable person's needs without feeling confident that they have the necessary information to do so. Additional guidance can be found in the document Our Duty of Care.¹⁴

In all situations:

- Do not delay.
- Contact your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

¹⁴[Our Duty of Care](#)

- If this evaluation supports the concerns, immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be made within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see [Appendix 15: Responding to Abuse – Guidance and Form](#)).

A concern about a child or adult should be referred to your local Health and Social Care Trust/Health Board. Advice can also be taken from the Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 1111 and NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk or The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ISPCC on 01 6767 960. Where there is a concern about the immediate safety of a child or young person, or where a crime is suspected, a referral should be made directly to the PSNI or An Garda Síochána.

‘NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.’

How should I respond if a child or adult starts to tell me about their abuse?

- Accept what the child or adult tells you. Remain calm and give them your undivided attention.
- Explain that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise them confidentiality.
- Never blame them, even if they have broken a rule or gone against good judgement. Remember they might have been threatened or manipulated.
- Remember you are not conducting an investigation. Never push for more information. Go at their speed.
- Reassure the child or adult that they were right to tell you and that you take what they have said seriously.
- Explain what you are going to do next and what is going to happen.
- Record all you have heard and done (i.e. time, date, people involved; see [Appendix 15](#)).

NOTE: is the child or adult safe? Take immediate action and contact the police if the child or adult would be at immediate risk.

3. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

In the interim a plan of action must be put in place to protect children and adults at risk. This may involve removing the accused person from office, suspending them from duties, or placing employees on leave of absence pending the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agencies.

Even where criminal charges are not made, there remains an obligation on the church to review the pastoral consequences and action plan in such a situation. A person known to be a danger to children or young people should not continue to have access to them through holding a position in the church.

NOTE: When the church is made aware of rumours, gossip or allegations concerning any person related to the church the accused person should not be approached at this stage by anyone with a view to discussing the allegation. These concerns should be forwarded immediately to the Safeguarding Person This is to safeguard the interests of all involved and enable the unimpeded course of any official processes.

Recording and information sharing

Recording and sharing relevant information are key tenets of protecting children and adults. Privacy and confidentiality is governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the Data Protection Act 2018; and organisational codes of conduct. The same legal provisions also provide for sharing of information for purposes such as public protection, crime prevention and crime detection. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. Information should be held securely and only shared on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Record storage and retention

Records of matters relating to the protection of children or adults should be stored securely at all times. This should be in a locked metal cabinet within the local church vestry or with the Safeguarding Person on a password protected computer should the church premises not belong to the congregation. Details of the outcome of all matters should be sent to the conference office. Records will be retained for ten (10) years and reviewed prior to destruction.

All interactions should be recorded, succinctly and accurately. The distinction should always be made between facts, hearsay and opinions. Records should include note of:

- dates of contact and with whom;
- the views and emotional well-being of the child or adult;
- actions and decisions taken and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of actions taken.

Child/adult protection conferences

Included in the process may be a child/adult protection conference convened by the Health Board. Church workers/volunteers may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the child/adult at risk, parent or family. Before attending the conference it is important to clarify in what capacity one has been invited and how one wants to be seen by the family, i.e. as a church employee giving information which could very well be used later in any proceedings, or as a church member providing support to the child/adult at risk, parent or family.

Local procedures for protecting children and vulnerable adults/adults at risk

In every Health Area, there are procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult at risk has been abused or is 'at risk'. These can be obtained online via your local safeguarding board website. Statutory agencies hold the legal responsibility to investigate cases of abuse and exploitation.

4. Allegations Against Staff, Church Members or Volunteers

Allegations against staff, church members or volunteers relate to concerns about abusive or exploitative behaviour between a worker and a child or adult at risk. These allegations must be taken seriously, viewed objectively and dealt with immediately. Advice and guidance should be sought from your local statutory agencies on managing allegations about staff, volunteers or church members within a fair process. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully.¹⁵ An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The intention is to determine whether an individual is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Concerns or a complaint about the quality of care or practice are separate and should be dealt with by the leadership.

Individuals should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves, offer confidentiality or alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents. They should:

- Report concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Person who will conduct a rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification.
- Notify their pastor or senior manager and report criminal offences to the police.

¹⁵**Republic of Ireland:** Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the Health Board and An Garda Síochána.

- Determine what support is to be provided for the alleged and the victim.
- Notify AccessNI/National Vetting Bureau as guided.

All involved should be kept informed on the progress of the matter.

Any paid worker or unpaid volunteer removed from their work (or one who would have been, had he/she not left first) because they pose a risk of harm to children or an adult at risk must be referred to the AccessNI/National Vetting Bureau.

APPENDIX 20/NI: LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS/ADULTS AT RISK – NORTHERN IRELAND

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership – July 2015](#)

Adult safeguarding policy to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect, for the purpose of reducing the prevalence of harm.

[Criminal Law Act \(NI\) 1967](#)

In Northern Ireland, whilst there are clauses, under the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 Sec 5 it is an offence not to report an arrestable crime to the police, which by definition, includes most crimes against children and adults.

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2007](#) and [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

These set out measures to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children.

[The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)

Provides the legislative framework for Northern Ireland's child protection system. It sets out: parental responsibilities and rights, and duties and powers public authorities have to support children and intervene if there are concerns about a child.

[Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland \(SBNI\)](#)

Provide coordination and guidance to organisations in their work to safeguard children.

[UNOCINI \(Understanding the needs of Children in Northern Ireland\)](#)

Provides a framework and language to understand and express the needs of children and their families.

Criminal records disclosure checks are carried out by [AccessNI](#)

APPENDIX 20/ROI: LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS/ADULTS AT RISK– REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures](#)

Addresses the issue of safeguarding all vulnerable persons across the Social Care Division, encompassing older people and persons with a disability.

[Open Your Eyes to Elder Abuse](#)

There's no Excuse for Elder Abuse: provides answers to common questions about elder abuse and gives information on seeking help; and resources to view and listen to.

[Child Care Act 1991](#)

Sets out the obligations and responsibilities for the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused or who are at risk in Ireland. [Child Care \(Amendment\) Act 2007](#)

[Children First Act 2015](#)

Provides a statutory basis for the Children First Guidelines. [Download pdf.](#)

[National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children \(2011\)](#)

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/cf2011.pdf>Children First: Provides the strategic direction of child protection policy in Ireland and stresses that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. It states what the general public should do if they are concerned about a child's safety and welfare.

[Our Duty to Care](#) – The Principles of good Practice for the protection of Children and Young People

Guidance aimed at community and voluntary organisations that provide services for children. It offers guidance on the promotion of child welfare, the development of safe practices in work with children and how to recognise and respond to concerns of child abuse.

[Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998](#)

Provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of health boards or any member of An Garda Síochána.

[Domestic Violence Act 1996](#)

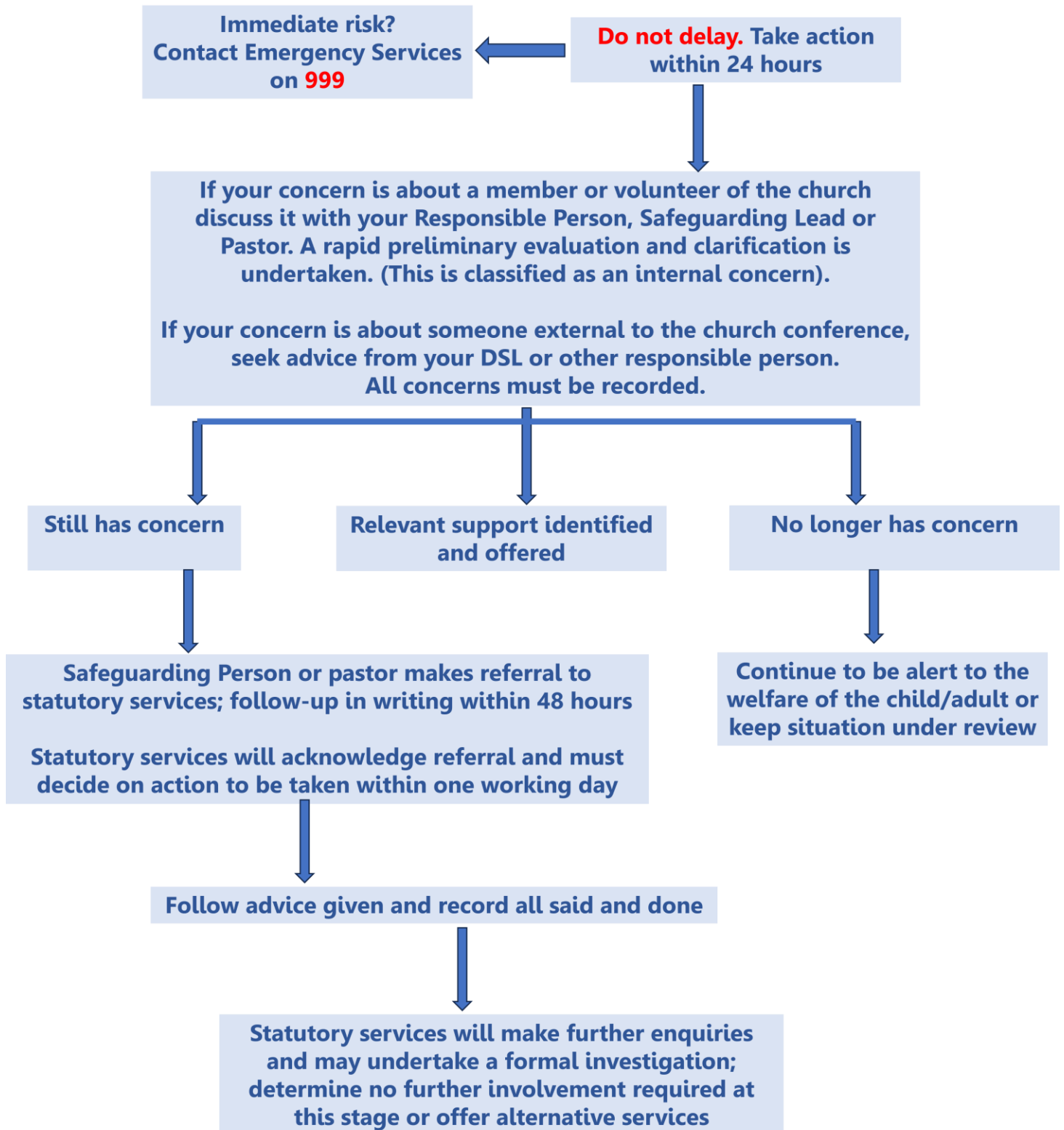
Gives health boards power to intervene to protect individuals and their children from violence.

[The National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Bill 2012](#)

Provides a statutory framework for the vetting but not the barring of persons applying to work with children in Ireland.

APPENDIX 21: HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE





British Union Conference

Safeguarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Scotland

Child and Adult Protection Procedures

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SAFEGUARDING (Procedures – Scotland)

FOREWORD

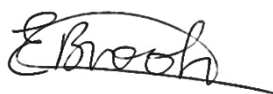
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in England is part of the British Union Conference (BUC) of churches that is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities with our safeguarding policy and procedures. These procedures reflect how the Church in Scotland will act to protect its children and adults at risk.

They fully accord with the law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults at risk in Scotland.

Our safeguarding procedures set out the church's guidelines relating to protecting our church family. These procedures are to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to the children and adults we have contact with through our paid and voluntary activities.



James Botha
Mission President



Eglan Brooks
BUC President

Protecting Children and Adults in Scotland

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Scotland is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. The *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2023* states 'Religious leaders, staff and volunteers have an important role in protecting children and supporting children and families. Churches and faith communities provide carefully planned activities for children and young people, supporting families under stress, caring for those hurt by abuse in the past, and ministering to and managing those who have caused harm. It is because of these varied ministries that all reasonable steps are taken to provide a safe environment that promotes and supports the well-being of children and young people. This will include carefully selecting and appointing those who work with children and responding robustly where concerns arise'.¹⁶ The Church is guided by the country's law and guidance in its commitment to protecting children and adults at risk. See [Appendix 20](#) for full details.

Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety and understanding when and how to share these concerns, how to investigate and assess such concerns and, fundamentally, what steps are required to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

¹⁶[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\) – updated 2023](#)

J. PROTECTION OF ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM – SCOTLAND

ADULT AT RISK

Scottish legislation defines 'adults at risk' as adults over 16 years who:

1. are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
2. are at risk of harm; and
3. 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 so affected ([The Adult Support and Protection Act 2007](#)).

Life circumstances as well as illness can contribute to placing an adult at risk of harm. In those situations the Church is committed to working together across its departments and with external organisations, to support and protect adults who are unable to safeguard themselves, their property and their rights. Full details on adult support and protection can be found on the Scottish government site: [The Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

Where it is known or suspected that an 'adult at risk' is being harmed, it must be decided whether or not further action is needed to protect the adult's well-being, property or financial affairs. Harm could occur at the hands of anyone: a relative, spouse or partner, friend, professional, neighbour or stranger. It could happen anywhere – in the family home, in a care setting, at work or in public places.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

An 'adult at risk' is someone aged 16 or over as mentioned above whose circumstances make them **unable to look after their own well-being and possessions** so are more vulnerable to being harmed than other adults.

The presence of a particular condition or disability does not automatically mean that an adult is an adult at risk. A person can have a disability but be perfectly able to look after their own well-being etc. Their circumstances as a whole should be considered and all three elements of the definition must be met in order for them to be classed as an adult at risk.

What is meant by 'risk of harm'?

The legislation makes clear that an adult is 'at risk of harm' if:

- another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed; or
- the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.

What is 'harm'?

The term harm covers all harmful behaviour, for example:

- physical harm;
- psychological harm causing fear, alarm or distress;
- behaviour which adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example, theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion);
- self-harm;
- neglect.

What can be done to protect an adult at risk of harm?

Where there is a concern that someone is at risk of harm, this should be reported to the local authority social work department and/or the police.

The local authority should take these referrals seriously and must make enquiries. It has a number of options available to it to help protect an adult at risk of harm. These might include:

- a visit to interview the adult, to explain what support services may be available to them or to offer them a medical examination if appropriate;
- requiring health, financial or other records to be produced;
- an application to court for a protection order.

Any intervention in an adult's affairs must provide benefit to them and should restrict their freedom as little as possible. The local authority must consider the wishes and views of the adult at risk and efforts must be made to help them communicate their views.

What can the local authority do to protect an adult who is at risk of harm?

The local authority can enter any place where it knows or suspects that an adult is at risk of harm in order to establish whether any further action is needed to protect the adult. They will work with other agencies to secure the well-being of that adult. This may include:

- ensuring access to suitable advice and support;
- providing practical care and support services for the adult at risk and/or their carer;
- an order or appointment of a proxy to help the person manage their affairs.

Where a criminal offence has been committed against the adult at risk, this should be reported immediately to the police. Any interview or medical examination can only be carried out with the agreement of the adult concerned.

Where necessary the local authority can apply to court for a protection order if specific consent is needed for permission to undertake further assessment on behalf of an individual; to remove them from a situation of potential serious harm; or to ban another person from contact.

K. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM – SCOTLAND

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts:

Statutory guidance which supports the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Where a young person between the age of 16 and 18 requires support and protection, services will need to consider which legal framework best fits each persons' needs and circumstances. The National guidance for child protection in Scotland gives more detail about this and explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances (Scottish Government, 2023).

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 disability and age-appropriate assistance.

[Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) is the Scottish national approach to improving the well-being of children and young people in Scotland.

GIRFEC is a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people and the bedrock for all children's services and for professionals in adult services who work with parents or carers. It has three key components for children and their families:

Every child in Scotland has a **Named Person** (typically a health visitor or teacher) who will be a point of contact that children and families can go to for advice or support if they need it. They will be available to listen, advise and help a child or young person and their family, providing direct support or helping them to access other services. They can help families address their concerns early and prevent them becoming more serious. The Named Person deals with all welfare concerns; child protection concerns go directly to the local social work team.

When two or more agencies need to work together to help a child or young person and family, there will be a **Lead Professional** to coordinate that help.

The **well-being** of children and young people is at the heart of [Getting It Right For Every Child](#). The approach uses eight areas to describe well-being, in which children and young people need to progress in order to do well now and in the future. Our church too can positively play its part in making sure that young people are healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and, above all, safe. Where there are concerns of abuse or neglect of our children we are committed to acting to protect our children.

What are child abuse and child neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on, or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to, the child. Children may be abused in a family or institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

What is child protection?

'Child protection' means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. This also includes instances where a child may have been abused or neglected but the risk of future abuse has not been identified. Criminal investigation, and support and recovery services may still be necessary but a Child Protection Plan is not required.

What is harm and significant harm in a child protection context?

Child protection is closely linked to the risk of 'significant harm'. 'Significant harm' is a complex matter and subject to professional judgement drawing on a number of factors. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, introduces a legal duty for a wide range of public bodies and those commissioned or contracted to them to share

such concerns with a child's Named Person. Through early and effective intervention and the sharing of well-being concerns it is hoped that crisis can be avoided in many cases.

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the suspected or reported abusive behaviour. In these circumstances, an immediate referral should be made directly to social work or the police.

The below definitions¹⁷ are helpful to understand the concept of significant harm.

'Harm' means the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child, including, for example, impairment suffered as a result of seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In this context:

'development' can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; and 'health' can mean physical or mental health. Whether the harm suffered, or likely to be suffered, by a child or young person is 'significant' is determined by comparing the child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.

¹⁷[Working Together to Safeguard Children, \(2023\)](#)

L. PUBLIC PROTECTION – SCOTLAND

Public protection in Scotland encompasses child protection and adult support and protection. Its aim is to reduce the harm to children and adults at risk within our communities. It is recognised that there are links between child protection and adult and public protection in terms of the joint and separate actions that need to be taken. We have a shared responsibility in recognising and responding to concerns of abuse and its impact on our church family.

1. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Concerns about a child's or adult's safety may present themselves in a number of ways:

- hearing a child or adult saying that they are being abused or describing a situation you recognise as abusive;
- recognising signs or indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- observing behaviours in a child or adult that give cause for concern;
- being told by someone about the abuse of another person or their concerns for that person.

Full definitions and possible indicators can be found under in Section A of this policy.

2. How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Concerns should always be shared without delay with your Responsible Person and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a child or adult is felt to be in immediate danger workers should report this directly to the police. Similarly, where a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services. See [Appendix 21: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse](#).

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. Individuals should not make decisions about a vulnerable person's needs without feeling confident that they have the necessary information to do so.

In all situations:

- Do not delay. Take Action within 24hrs. Where there is a concern of immediate danger, contact the police on 999.
- Contact your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If this evaluation supports the concerns, immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be made within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see [Appendix 15: Responding to Abuse](#)).

Where there is a concern about a child or adult, contact your local Social Work Service. Advice can also be taken from the Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 111 and Children 1st Helpline 08000 28 22 33 www.children1st.org.uk.

'NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.'

SHANARRI

The Scottish Government guidelines Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) recommends that all practitioners should be familiar with the SHANARRI indicators that aim to help those working with children and young people assess how a child is doing at any point in time and identify what support is needed.

The indicators state that every child and young person should be:

- Safe

- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

(Getting it Right for Every Child - Scottish Government, 2021a).

How should I respond if a child or adult starts to tell me about their abuse?

- Accept what the child or adult tells you. Remain calm and give them your undivided attention.
- Explain that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise them confidentiality.
- Never blame them, even if they have broken a rule. Remember they might have been threatened or manipulated.
- Remember you are not conducting an investigation. Never push for more information. Go at their speed.
- Reassure the child or adult that they were right to tell you and that you take what they have said seriously.
- Explain what you are going to do next and what is going to happen.
- Record all you have heard and done (i.e. time, date, people involved; see [Appendix 13](#)).

NOTE: is the child or adult safe? Take immediate action and contact the police if the child or adult would be at immediate risk.

Are you worried about an adult who may be at risk of harm?

Visit the [Act Against Harm](#) website which is a public site with details of who to contact when you think you know someone who is at risk of harm. The website has lots of information, including how to recognise when an adult may be at risk of harm and examples of the type of support that can be provided once a concern has been reported.

3. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

In the interim a plan of action must be put in place to protect children and adults at risk. This may involve removing the accused person from office, suspending them from duties, or placing employees on leave of absence pending the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agencies.

Even where criminal charges are not made, there remains an obligation on the church to review the pastoral consequences and action plan in such a situation. A person known to be a danger to children or young people should not continue to have access to them through holding a position in the church.

NOTE: When the church is made aware of rumours, gossip or allegations concerning any person related to the church the accused person should not be approached at this stage by anyone with a view to discussing the allegation. These should be forwarded immediately to the Safeguarding Person. This is to safeguard the interests of all involved and enable the unimpeded course of any official processes.

Recording and information sharing

Recording and sharing relevant information are key tenets of protecting children and adults. Privacy and confidentiality is governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the Data Protection Act 1998; and organisational codes of conduct. The same legal provisions also provide for sharing of information for purposes such as public protection, crime prevention and crime detection. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. Information should be held securely and only shared on a 'need to know' basis. A 'golden rule' to remember here is to share information that is necessary, relevant and proportionate.

All interactions should be recorded, succinctly and accurately. The distinction should always be made between facts, hearsay and opinions. Records should include note of:

- dates of contact and with whom;
- the views and emotional well-being of the child or adult;
- actions and decisions taken and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of actions taken.

Appropriate sharing of relevant information is a vital part of the early intervention approach that is at the heart of [Getting It Right for Every Child](#). Sharing appropriate information at the right time improves outcomes for children and their families and can help prevent situations escalating into tragedies.

Record storage and retention

Records of matters relating to the protection of children or adults should be stored securely at all times. This should be in a locked metal cabinet within the local church vestry or with the Safeguarding Person should the church premises not belong to the congregation. Details of the outcome of all matters should be sent to the conference office. Records will be retained for ten (10) years and reviewed prior to destruction.

Child/adult protection conferences

Included in the process may be a child/adult protection conference convened by the Social Services. Church workers/volunteers may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the child/adult at risk, parent or family. Before attending the conference it is important to clarify in what capacity one has been invited and how one wants to be seen by the family, i.e. as a church employee giving information which could very well be used later in any proceedings, or as a church member providing support to the child/adult at risk, parent or family.

Child Protection Committee procedures for children and adults

In every local authority area, there are procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult at risk has been abused or is 'at risk'. These can be obtained online via your local Child Protection Committee website. Statutory agencies hold the legal responsibility to investigate cases of abuse and exploitation.

4. Allegations Against Staff, Church Members or Volunteers

Allegations against staff, church members or volunteers relate to concerns about abusive or exploitative behaviour between a worker and a child or adult at risk. These allegations must be taken seriously and objectively and dealt with immediately. Local authorities employ a 'Designated Officer' or equivalent who has responsibility for providing oversight and guidance on managing allegations about staff or volunteers within a fair process. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has caused or may have caused harm to a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or related to a child.

The intention is to determine whether an individual is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Concerns or a complaint about the quality of care or practice are separate and should be dealt with by the leadership.

Individuals should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves, offer confidentiality or alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents. They should:

- Report concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Person who will conduct a rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification.
- Notify their pastor or senior manager and report criminal offences to the police.
- Determine what support is to be provided for the alleged and the victim.

All involved should be kept informed on the progress of the matter.

Any paid worker or unpaid volunteer removed from their work (or one who would have been, had he/she not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or an adult at risk must be referred to the Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) Scheme. **It is a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment and/or a financial penalty, to fail to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland, when the referral grounds are met.**

APPENDIX 20: LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK – SCOTLAND

Any action towards protecting an adult at risk should be undertaken in accordance with your area Adult Protection Committee procedures or your area Child Protection Committee procedures. See also: Scottish government: [Adult Support and Protection](#) for further information.

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

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 provides the framework to enable all those working with children to recognise the role they can play in remaining vigilant and providing robust support for child protection. Churches and faith organisations are included in the third sector and are recognised as having a significant role to play. The guidance serves as a practical reference point for practitioners and agencies. Appendix A provides a list of other relevant legislation.

[The Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#)

This outlines the legislative framework for Scotland's child protection system. It covers parental responsibilities and rights, and the duties and powers local public authorities have for supporting and promoting the safety and welfare of children.

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

This amends the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to ensure children's rights are upheld. This non-statutory guidance is for frontline practitioners, managers and strategic leaders who work with children and families facing adversities. It gives an overview of the legal framework for providing support services where there is a risk a child may become looked after, and describes who relevant services must be provided for.

[Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

This legislation introduced the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme to replace the former system of disclosure for people working with vulnerable groups. It identifies categories of employment or contact (regulated work) where there is the expectation that a PVG check will be required. The measures are intended to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children.

[Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

The Act makes new provisions intended to protect those adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests, such as those affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, and who are at risk of harm or self-harm, including neglect. The fundamental principles underpinning the Act are that any intervention must provide benefit to the adult, that this benefit could not have been reasonably achieved without intervention and that any intervention is the least restrictive option to the adult's freedom.

[Protection of Children \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) and [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

The Children and Young People Act sets the legal framework in Scotland and this is supported by national and local guidance. It provides measures to further improve outcomes for children and young people.

[Getting It Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

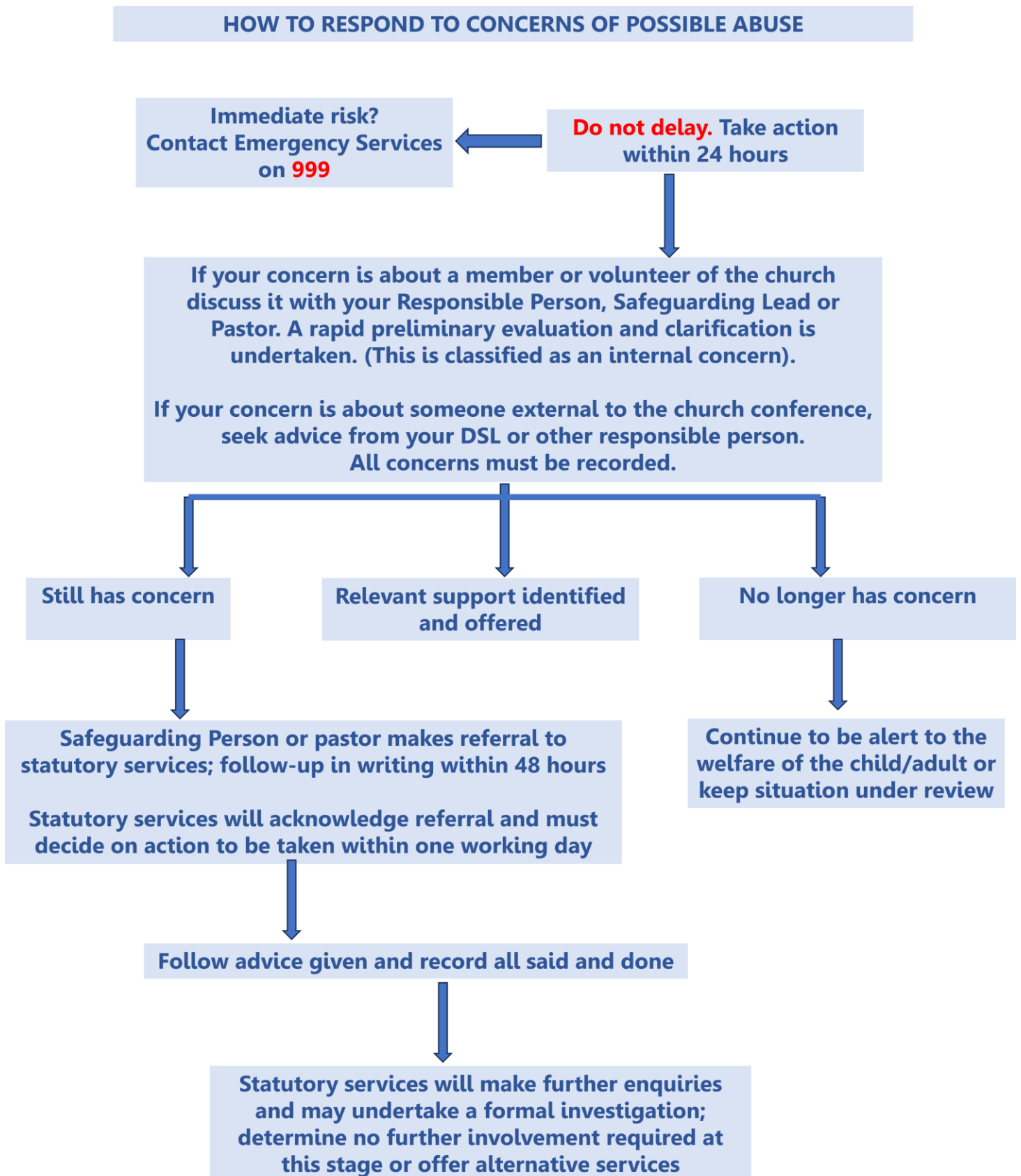
The practical implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection takes place within the wider framework of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC aims to build a network of support and early intervention promoting the well-being of every child in Scotland. Key components of GIRFEC include establishing a shared understanding of well-being; appropriately involving children and families in assessment, planning and intervention; and agreeing actions and outcomes that result in families getting the right help at the right time.

FOR FURTHER HELP:

[Action on Elder Abuse](#) runs a telephone helpline to give confidential advice and information to older people who are being physically, mentally or financially abused. A relative or friend of the person being abused can contact the helpline on their behalf. The helpline can be used by older people who live at home, in care homes or who are in hospital.

[Age Scotland](#) runs the helpline, Silver Line Scotland, on 0800 4 70 80 90, to help older people in Scotland with a wide variety of issues. It is a 24-hour, free and confidential service that you can phone for advice. Telephone interpretation is available. Textphone: 0845 226 5851

APPENDIX 21: FLOWCHART: HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE





British Union Conference

Safeguarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales

Child and Adult Protection Procedures

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SAFEGUARDING (Procedures – Wales)

FOREWORD

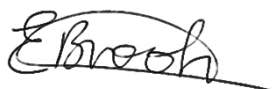
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in England is part of the British Union Conference (BUC) of churches that is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities with our safeguarding policy and procedures. These procedures reflect how the Church in Wales will act to safeguard its children and adults at risk.

They fully accord with the law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults within Wales, in particular, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. This document provides a single set of procedures for the whole country. The well-being of children and young people is at the heart of the Welsh Assembly Government's policy for children and their families¹⁸.

Our safeguarding procedures set out the church's guidelines relating to safeguarding our church family and the procedures to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to the children and adults we have contact with through all our church activities.



Graham Allcock
Mission President



Eglan Brooks
BUC President

Protecting Children and Adults in Wales

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. National guidance in the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#) states that the fundamental principle in the protection of children from harm is the responsibility of all individuals and agencies working with children and families, and with adults who may pose a risk to children. Our work with adults is based on the central principle that everyone has the right to live their lives free from coercion, intimidation, oppression and physical, sexual, emotional or mental harm. The Church is guided by the country's law and guidance in its commitment to safeguarding children and adults at risk. See Appendix 14 for full details.

Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety and understanding when and how to share these concerns, how to assess such concerns and, fundamentally, what steps are required to ensure an individual's safety and well-being.

¹⁸[Welsh Government – Children and Families](#)

J. PROTECTION OF ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM – WALES

Adult at risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability. They are someone who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Life circumstances as well as illness can contribute to placing an adult at risk of harm. In those situations the Church is committed to working together across its departments and with external organisations, to support and protect adults who are unable to safeguard themselves, their property and their rights. Full details on safeguarding adults can be found under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019).

Where it is known or suspected that an 'adult at risk' is being harmed, it must be decided whether or not further action is needed to protect the adult's well-being, property or financial affairs. Harm could occur at the hands of anyone: a relative, spouse or partner, friend, professional, neighbour or stranger. It could happen anywhere, in the family home, in a care setting, at work or in public places.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

Statutory guidance states that safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs);
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. It involves allowing adults to make their own choices as far as they are able to without endangering themselves. Vulnerable adults have the right to be fully involved throughout the adult protection process and to make decisions about their safety and welfare, unless it has been assessed that they do not have the mental capacity to make any particular decision.

What are abuse and neglect?

What constitutes abuse or neglect can take many forms and circumstances but exploitation, in particular, is a common theme. The categories below are drawn from the [Working Together to Safeguard People \(2014\)](#). It is not an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sorts of behaviours which could give rise to a safeguarding concern:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional and psychological abuse
- financial
- neglect

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one or more persons. Full definitions can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#). It is most likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and power. Abuse can happen anywhere: for example, in someone's own home, where an adult lives alone or with others, in a care home or other professional setting. Sadly, it can take place in church. Abuse or neglect may be unintentional and may arise from an individual struggling to care for a loved one, or it may arise from a person's deliberate intent to cause harm or exploitation.

What can the local authority do to protect an adult who is at risk of harm?

Local authorities must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect that an adult, as described above, is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected. The local authority can enter any place where it knows or suspects that an adult is at risk of harm in order to establish whether any further action is needed to protect the adult. They will work with other agencies to secure the well-being of that adult. This may include:

- ensuring access to suitable advice and support;
- providing practical care and support services for the adult at risk and/or their carer;
- an order or appointment of a proxy to help the person manage their affairs.

Where a criminal offence has been committed against the adult at risk, this should be reported immediately to the police. Any interview or medical examination can only be carried out with the agreement of the adult concerned.

Where necessary the local authority can apply to court for a protection order if specific consent is needed for permission to undertake further assessment on behalf of an individual; to remove them from a situation of potential serious harm; or to ban another person from contact.

K. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM – WALES

Children

The term 'children' herein relates to any person under the age of 18 with whom the church has contact through any of its activities.

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 disability and age-appropriate assistance.

Why are we concerned about taking action to protect children?

An abused child may experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their life. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. Child abuse and neglect can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. At any time that it is believed that a child may be in need of services to them or their family, or that a child is being harmed or is likely to be, you should refer immediately to local authority children's social care. Therefore, concerns should be immediately reported to your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Church is committed to taking prompt action to protect our young people.

What is safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children?

[Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#) describes **safeguarding** as:

- protecting children from abuse and neglect;
- preventing impairment of their health or development; and
- ensuring they receive safe and effective care;

... so as to enable them to have optimum life chances.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on, or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to, the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, or another child. The abuse can be perpetrated through physical contact or via the internet. The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Other forms of harm include domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation (FGM). Details of the definitions and possible indicators of abuse can be found under [A. Policy Statement](#).

Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, in part because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, cognition and communication needs which may make it difficult for them to understand or to tell others what is happening.

L. PUBLIC PROTECTION – WALES

Public protection encompasses child protection and adult protection. Its aim is to reduce the harm to children and adults at risk within our communities. It is recognised that there are links between child protection and adult and public protection in terms of the joint and separate actions that need to be taken. We have a shared responsibility in recognising and responding to concerns of abuse and its impact on our church family.

1. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Concerns about a child's or adult's safety may present themselves in a number of ways:

- hearing a child or adult saying that they are being abused or describing a situation you recognise as abusive;
- recognising signs or indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- observing behaviours in a child or adult that give cause for concern;
- being told by someone about the abuse of another person or their concerns for that person.

Full definitions and possible indicators can be found under [Section A](#) of this policy.

2. How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Concerns should always be shared without delay with your Responsible Person and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a child or adult is felt to be in immediate danger workers should report this directly to the police. Similarly, where a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services. See [Appendix 21: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse](#).

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. Individuals should not make decisions about a vulnerable person's needs without feeling confident that they have the necessary information to do so. Additional guidance can be found in [Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#), and the Welsh [Working Together to Safeguard People](#) guidance on safeguarding.

In all situations:

- Do not delay. Take Action within 24hrs. Where there is a concern of immediate danger, contact the police on 999
- Contact your Responsible Person or Safeguarding Person (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Safeguarding Person.
- If this evaluation supports the concerns immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see [Appendix 15: Responding to Abuse](#)).

Where there is a concern about a child or adult, contact your local Social Services. Advice can also be taken from the Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 111 and NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk.

'NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.'

How should I respond if a child or adult starts to tell me about their abuse?

- Accept what the child or adult tells you. Remain calm and give them your undivided attention.
- Explain that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise them confidentiality.
- Never blame them, even if they have broken a rule or gone against good judgement. Remember they might have been threatened or manipulated.
- Remember you are not conducting an investigation. Never push for more information. Go at their speed.
- Reassure the child or adult that they were right to tell you and that you take what they have said seriously.

- Explain what you are going to do next and what is going to happen.
- Record all you have heard and done (i.e. time, date, people involved; (see [Appendix 15: Recording Guidance and form](#)).

NOTE: is the child or adult safe? Take immediate action and contact the police if the child or adult would be at immediate risk.

3. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

In the interim a plan of action must be put in place to protect children and adults at risk. This may involve removing the accused person from office, suspending them from duties, or placing employees on leave of absence pending the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agencies.

Even where criminal charges are not made, there remains an obligation on the church to review the pastoral consequences and action plan in such a situation. A person known to be a danger to children or young people should not continue to have access to them through holding a position in the church.

NOTE: When the church is made aware of rumours, gossip or allegations concerning any person related to the church the accused person should not be approached at this stage by anyone with a view to discussing the allegation. These should be forwarded immediately to the Safeguarding Person. This is to safeguard the interests of all involved and enable the unimpeded course of any official processes.

Recording and information sharing

Recording and sharing relevant information are key tenets of protecting children and adults. Privacy and confidentiality are governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the Data Protection Act 1998; and organisational codes of conduct. The same legal provisions also provide for sharing of information for purposes such as public protection, crime prevention and crime detection. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. National guidance on [Information Sharing](#) (2018) provides more detailed advice where needed. Information should be held securely and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Record storage and retention

Records of matters relating to the protection of children or adults should be stored securely at all times. This should be in a locked metal cabinet within the local church vestry or with the Safeguarding Person should the church premises not belong to the congregation. Details of the outcome of all matters should be sent to the conference office. Records will be retained for ten (10) years and reviewed prior to destruction.

All interactions should be recorded, succinctly and accurately. The distinction should always be made between facts, hearsay and opinions. Records should include note of:

- dates of contact and with whom;
- the views and emotional well-being of the child or adult;
- actions and decisions taken and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of actions taken.

Child/adult protection conferences

Included in the process may be a child/adult protection conference convened by the Children's or Adult's Services. Church workers/volunteers may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the child/adult at risk, parent or family. Before attending the conference it is important to clarify in what capacity one has been invited and how one wants to be seen by the family, i.e. as a church employee giving information which could very well be used later in any proceedings, or as a church member providing support to the child/adult at risk, parent or family.

[Local Safeguarding Children Board \(LSCB\)](#) and [Safeguarding Adults Board \(SAB\)](#) procedures

In every local authority area, there are procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult at risk has been abused or is 'at risk'. These can be obtained online via your local safeguarding board website. Statutory agencies hold the legal responsibility to investigate cases of abuse and exploitation.

4. Allegations against Staff, Church Members or Volunteers

Allegations against staff, church members or volunteers relate to concerns about abusive or exploitative behaviour between a worker and a child or adult at risk. These allegations must be taken seriously, viewed objectively and dealt with immediately and in line with local procedures. The local authority has responsibility for providing a level of oversight and guidance on managing allegations about staff or volunteers within a fair process. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The intention is to determine whether an individual is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Concerns or complaints about the quality of care or practice are separate and should be dealt with by the leadership.

Individuals should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves, offer confidentiality or alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents. They should:

- Report concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Person who will conduct a rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification.
- Notify their pastor or senior manager and report criminal offences to the police.
- Determine what support is to be provided for the alleged and the victim.
- Within one day notify the local authority Designated Officer or equivalent and follow their advice.

All involved should be kept informed on the progress of the matter.

Any paid worker or unpaid volunteer removed from their work (or one who would have been, had he/she not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or an adult at risk must be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

APPENDIX 20: LEGISLATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK – WALES

The Welsh Assembly has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guide to all its work. Local authorities are responsible for investigating and intervening to protect children from abuse and neglect.

[Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#)

for Adult and Child Protection guide and inform child protection practice in each of the Local and Regional Safeguarding Children Boards across Wales. They outline the framework for determining how individual child protection referrals, actions and plans are made and carried out. They are based on the principle that the protection of children and adults from harm is the responsibility of all individuals and agencies working with children and families, and with adults who may be at risk. Partnership working and communication between agencies is identified as key in order to identify vulnerable children and to help keep them safe from harm and abuse.

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) 2014 [in effect from April 2016] introduced a new statutory framework to strengthen safeguarding. It introduces a new structure for Safeguarding Boards (both adults and children) and a National Independent Safeguarding Board. It also introduces a new duty on statutory agencies (i.e. police, providers of probation services, local health boards) to report concerns of abuse. Follow this link for an NSPCC summary.

[Children Act 1989](#)

Places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area. It gives powers for the investigation of child protection concerns and the support of families. It institutes the principle of the child's welfare being our paramount consideration.

[Children Act 2004](#)

Requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote cooperation between relevant partners with a view to improving the well-being of children locally. Part three of the Children Act 2004 applies solely to Wales.

[Children and Young People: Rights to Action](#)

The wider context for the implementation of child protection in Wales is informed by the Welsh Government's commitment to children's rights.

[Social Services and Well-being Act \(Wales\) 2014](#)

Strengthening powers for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Act provides Wales with its own framework for social services by:

- giving individuals a stronger voice and more control over the care and support they receive
- encouraging a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) and [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

Legislative basis for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) which checks criminal records and makes decisions about individuals who should be barred from working with children and adults.

[Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)

There will be circumstances where an individual adult appears not to be able to make a decision about whether to consent to information being shared with others. The Mental Capacity Act and the associated code of practice contain guidance about the consideration of a person's capacity, or lack of capacity, to give consent to sharing information. The starting assumption must be that the person has capacity unless it is established that they do not, and only then after all practical steps to help the person make the relevant decision have been taken but have been unsuccessful. An unwise decision taken by the relevant person does not mean they lack capacity. Where a decision is made on behalf of the person who lacks capacity to share personal information, it must still comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and be in their best interests.

References and Resources

[Children's Commissioner for Wales \(2021\) The right way: a children's rights approach for social care in Wales \(PDF\)](#). Swansea: Children's Commissioner for Wales.

[Home Office \(2016\) Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation – procedural information \(PDF\)](#). London: Home Office.

[Home Office \(2023\) Response to the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.](#)

[IICSA \(2022\) IICSA: report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.](#)

[Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\) \(1989\) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Geneva: OHCHR.](#)

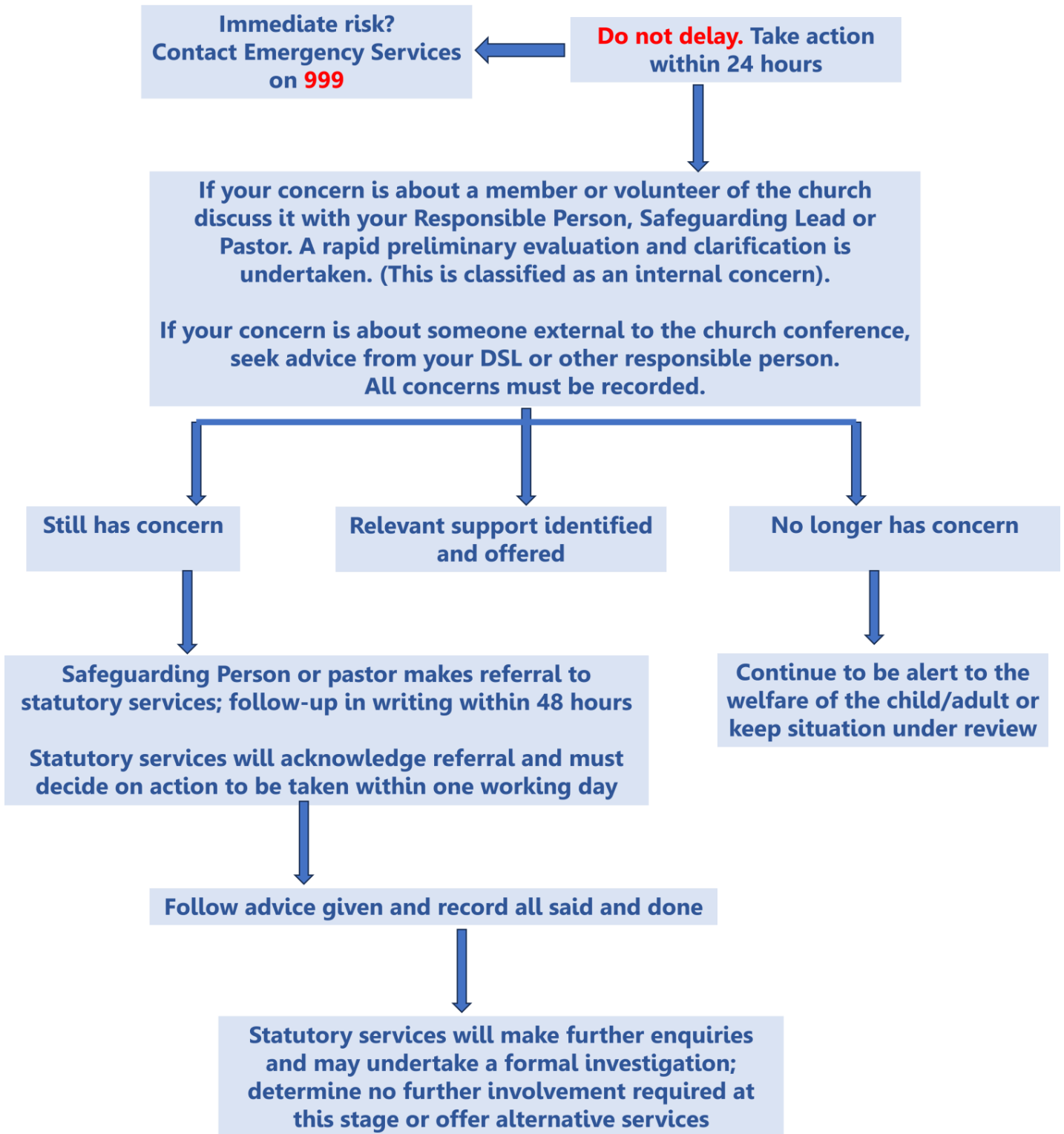
[Welsh Government \(2021\) Safeguarding guidance.](#)

[Welsh Government \(2019\) Children's rights in Wales.](#)

[Welsh Government \(2023\) Welsh Government response to the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse.](#)

APPENDIX 21: FLOWCHART: HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE





Seventh-day
Adventist® Church
BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE

Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom



Executive Summary

British Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 9JZ.

adventist.org.uk

March 2024

SUMMARY OF THE CHURCH'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (BUC) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm 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. Safeguarding covers the specific actions we take to protect these vulnerable individuals. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to being to be an organisation that is as diverse, equal and inclusive as we can make it within the biblical values of love, compassion, truth and justice.

- (i) 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.
- (j) 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.
- (k) The church will demonstrate senior management commitment to safeguarding and maintain arrangements to reflect this, with clear lines of accountability.
- (l) 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.
- (m) 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.
- (n) 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.
- (o) 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.
- (p) 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. SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

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:

4. 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
5. 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.
6. 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 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.

2. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse is form of maltreatment of a child/adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child/adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may take place 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.

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.

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 is the most frequent form of abuse and may involve:

- ignoring medical, physical or emotional care needs
- failing to provide access to health, care and support or educational services
- withholding necessities of life, such as food, medication and heating
- self-neglect (this can cover a wide range of behaviour such as neglecting your personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and can include behaviours such as hoarding).

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.

Spiritual Abuse – Emotional/psychological abuse in a religious context.

Financial Abuse – one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources, which diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend on the perpetrator financially.

Domestic Abuse – A pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence.

3. PROMOTING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

The Seventh-day Adventist Church commits to safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the Church. The Church will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the Church, in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. It will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care for and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by providing consistent and accessible safeguarding training.

Safeguarding policies throughout the Church are active statements underpinning safeguarding work.

Creating Safe Environments

Creating safe environments for our church family is a matter of applying good working practices across all our activities. The means we should:

- (j) Arrange, as far as possible, that no adult is left alone with a child or young person without the activity being observed by others. This may mean that doors will have to be left open or that small groups work simultaneously in the same room.
- (k) Organise and monitor activities so as not to allow individuals to create relationships or arrangements that exploit or abuse a worker's position of trust in relation to an individual, e.g., an elderly person feeling obliged to pay the debts held by someone helping them.
- (l) In a one-to-one situation with a child or adult at risk, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building, and the child or adult at risk should know they are there.
- (m) As far as possible, ensure that there are always at least two adults working with a group of children or vulnerable persons, especially when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. Consideration must

be given to matching the gender of the workers with that of the group. The two-adult provision applies in changing areas and toilets, even if only one or two children are present.

- (n) Never do anything of a personal nature for children or adults that they can do for themselves. Be mindful of how and where one touches minors and adults at risk. Always seek consent before any physical touching.
- (o) Arrange when transporting children or young people by car or minibus to have more than one passenger in the vehicle. Vehicles must have appropriate seating for children (to keep them physically safe), drivers must be fully insured and age-appropriately authorised to drive the vehicle. Require leaders/workers to keep others informed if they have to drive a minor home on his/her own.
- (p) Provide an adequate number/ratio of adults to supervise events for children/young people according to the activity and especially where overnight activities are involved. There should always be more than one adult for any group and they should reflect the gender of the group. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in the ratios below. For further guidance see the OFSTED Guidelines www.ofsted.gov.uk or its equivalent within your country. An example of a minimum ratio is provided below.

For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every three children (1:3)
For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every four children (1:4) (1:5 in Scotland)
For 3 to 8 years – one adult to every eight children (1:8)
For over-8s – one adult for the first eight children, then one for every additional ten children.

- (q) Any activities involving children or vulnerable adults outside of church, or taking place online should be risk assessed and accordingly managed.
- (r) In the event of any injury to a person, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded on an Accident Form and that the record is witnessed by another adult. Ensure that any necessary health and safety actions are undertaken.

Who Requires a Criminal Records Check?

A safer recruitment process will be followed in all cases which involves a number of steps and measures including, but not solely reliant on, relevant vetting and barring checks.

Vetting and barring checks helps churches make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. Any individual working or intending to work with children and/or adults at risk, must have a criminal record check. Staff and volunteers who wish to work with children or adults at risk of harm within the Seventh-day Adventist Church require an enhanced disclosure which shows details of spent convictions, unspent convictions and cautions that have not been filtered. This includes a check of local police records.

In deciding who requires a criminal records check the following question should be considered:

Does the role mean that the relevant individual either supervised/unsupervised on a frequent/infrequent basis, teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children/adults at risk or provides advice/guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being to children?

Regulated Activities with Children

In simple terms, regulated activity is work that a barred person must not do.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, regulated activity with children means carrying out any of the below activities frequently or with intensity (more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight).

Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; providing advice or guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children.

Working for a limited range of specified places with the opportunity for contact with children and young people, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises (excluding work done by supervised volunteers).

Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of how often they take place and whether or not they are supervised. These include:

- engaging in intimate or personal care of children.
- health care by, or under the supervision of, a registered health care professional.

In Scotland, regulated work with children can be paid or voluntary. It usually involves:

- working directly with children
- teaching or supervising children
- providing personal services to children
- caring responsibilities

The frequency and intensity requirement does not apply.

Regulated work can also apply to certain positions of trust within organisations, for example being a trustee of a children's charity.

For more information about the definitions of regulated activity and regulated work, please see Appendix 20: Legislation for the Protection of Children and Adults at Risk in your respective countries.

Regulated Activity – Adults

The new legal definition of regulated activity for adults no longer uses the term 'vulnerable adults' and no longer requires the activity to meet a minimum frequency threshold. The definition now focuses on the nature of activities, which, if required by an adult, will define them to be vulnerable. The following activities fall under the category of regulated activity:

- Health care – any health care professional providing health care to an adult or anyone who provides health care to an adult under the supervision of a health care professional.
- Personal care – providing assistance, supervision, or advice in relation to activities including eating and washing.
- Social care
- Assistance with cash, bills, or shopping
- Assistance in the conduct of a person's own affairs
- Transporting an adult because of their age, disability, or illness to or from their home and a place where they will receive health care, personal care, or social care.

Any staff or volunteer who wish to engage in any of the above activities is required to have a DBS check.

4. WORKING SAFELY

Good Working Practices

To safeguard keep our church family, we need to adopt working practices that lessen the opportunity for harm to our children and adults. This involves:

- Planning the work of the department to prevent abuse.
- Using supervision to prevent abuse.
- Teaching children to be appropriately aware of how to remain safe and who to approach to report abuse or concerns.
- Recognising and responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse.
- Undertaking risk assessments and implementing risk mitigation measures for all church activities.

The Church also promotes best practice in the taking of photographs and filming and the use of digital technology and social media across all its activities.

BUC Behaviour Code for Working With Adults At Risk Of Harm

The BUC believes that Christians are called to represent Christ in all aspects of their behaviour. 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.

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The Role of Staff and Volunteers

In your role at [name of organisation] you are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model by young people and are expected to act appropriately.

We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers Working with Children

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
 - ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures
 - including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing and online safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to [insert name/role of person to report to]
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures
 - this includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting Children & Young People

You Should:

- Listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible o if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.
- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid showing favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
- if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible
- unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Engaging in behaviour that is in any way abusive (e.g., patting, pinching, hugging, repeated brushing against another person's body, etc.) including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- Developing inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- Acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Patronising or belittling children and young people

- Making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people
- Making inappropriate promises to children and young people
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches Seventh-day Adventist's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers working with adults at risk of harm

Be Accountable

- Be honest with yourself and others about what you can do, whether or not the adult is being provided with any services.
- Recognise your abilities and limitations.
- Only carry out or delegate tasks agreed in your role description.
- Be able to justify and be accountable for your actions
- Ask your leader/supervisor for guidance if you feel inadequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your role.
- Tell your leader/supervisor about any issues that might affect your ability to perform your role.
- Always establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your relationships with people.
- Never accept any offers of loans, gifts or benefits from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them.
- Comply with United Reformed Church (URC) policies and procedures.
- Tell your leader/supervisor or person in charge of safeguarding if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.

Promote the Privacy, Dignity, Rights and Wellbeing Of People

- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Ensure that a vulnerable adult is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than the way in which a person who is not an "adult at risk" would be treated in a comparable situation.
- Always act in the best interest of people, with their present and past wishes and feelings being considered.
- Put the needs, views and wishes of people first, helping them to control and choose the help and support they receive.
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent.
- Always maintain the privacy and dignity of people who have help and support, and their carers.
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts.
- Always make sure that your actions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing.
- You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit anyone.
- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour.
- Always take comments and complaints seriously; respond to them in accordance with Good Practice 5 and inform your leader/supervisor/safeguarding designated person.

Work Effectively with Other Volunteers/Colleagues

- Understand and value your contribution and the vital part you play in the church.
- Recognise and respect the roles of other church workers/colleagues and those from other denominations and agencies; work in partnership with them.
- Work openly and co-operatively with other church workers/colleagues, including those from other denominations and agencies, and treat them with respect.
- Work openly and co-operatively with people who have help and support, including their families or carers, and treat them with respect.
- Honour your commitment to the church and be reliable, dependable and trustworthy.

Effective Communication

- Make efforts to assist and facilitate communication, using whatever method is appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- Always explain and discuss any help and support you are offering/providing with the person; only continue if they give consent.
- Communicate respectfully with people in an open, accurate, effective and straightforward way.

- Communicate effectively with other church workers/colleagues as appropriate.
- Maintain clear and accurate records of the help and support the church provides, as appropriate.
- Recognise both the extent and the limits of your role, knowledge and ability when communicating with people who have help and support.

Respect People's Right to Confidentiality and Decision-Making

- Treat all information about people who need help and support, and their carers, as confidential.
- Ensure people participate as fully as possible in any decisions being made, with support in place to help that participation in a way understood by the adults.
- Only discuss or disclose information in accordance with legislation and URC policy.
- Always seek guidance from your leader/supervisor regarding any information or issues that you are concerned about.

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Engaging in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with adults at risk
- Developing inappropriate relationships with children and adults at risk
- Acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Patronising or belittling adults at risk
- Making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of adults at risk
- Making inappropriate promises to adults at risk
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches Seventh-day Adventist's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

To fulfil our mission, we must reflect Christian care and compassion treating all with dignity and respect as individuals created in the image of God. Christians should always ensure that their behaviour properly reflects their high calling.

Any behaviour that falls contrary to the Church's code of conduct will be addressed in accordance with the directions within the Church Manual.

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave [name of group/organisation]. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

5. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Life circumstances as well as illness can contribute to placing an adult at risk of harm. In those situations, the Church is committed to working together across its departments and with external organisations, to support and protect adults who are unable to safeguard themselves, their property and their rights. Similarly, children rely on adults for their protection and well-being. Their age and developmental stage can make them dependent and therefore vulnerable to forms of treatment that are abusive or neglectful. The Church is committed to early action in the recognition and response to concerns where individuals may be at risk of, or experiencing, any form of maltreatment.

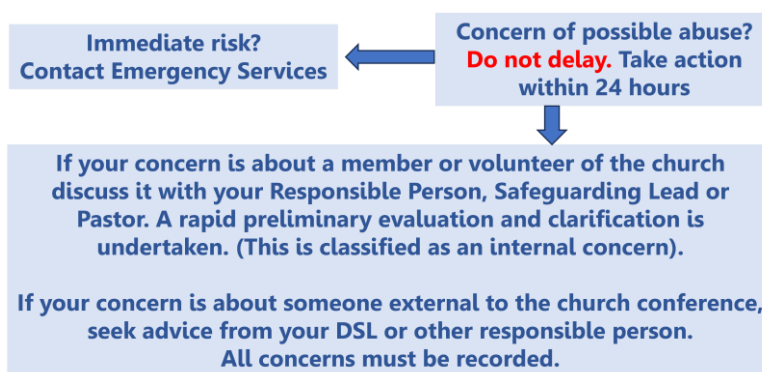
The church is not an investigative agency and therefore employees/volunteers must understand their role when working in child or adult-centred programmes of the church. **Under no circumstances should any person attempt to carry out any 'investigation' into the allegation or suspicions of abuse.** This is the responsibility of local statutory services, whose task it is to investigate the matter, under specific legislation and statutory guidance. Our role is to recognise concerns; undertake a rapid preliminary evaluation solely for the purpose of clarification and refer child or adult protection matters to our local statutory agencies.

What can the church do to safeguard children and adults at risk?

By 'safeguarding' and 'protection' we simply mean acting to safeguard our church family and this is a responsibility we all share. To meet this means each of us must undertake our roles to the highest standards of Christian conduct. Within our mission there already exist the commands to care for those in need. We must make ourselves aware of the protection procedures so we know how to respond and where to turn for advice or guidance where there are safeguarding concerns. We should then report any concerns without delay so that the appropriate support or protection is made available. Early help and support can prevent situations becoming or continuing to be harmful or exploitative.

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. In all situations, informed and timely action should be taken. Do not delay; follow your country procedures and the flowchart therein on how to respond to concerns. If you happen to witness and incident of abuse or conduct by a third party or any other behaviour that warrants concern, and you wish to remain anonymous, the flowchart outlines how you can report your concerns; or you may use a listening line, e.g. [Cornerstone Counselling Services](#) (SEC Listening Line) - 020 7423 8050 or [Thirtyone:eight](#) - 0303 003 11 11

The Union/Conference/Mission will not tolerate Malicious reporting and will implement sanctions to deal with individuals who engage in such conduct.



The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with the pastor will evaluate all concerns and refer these on where needed. The above process should also be used for the reporting of complaints and grievances. Where the allegation or concern involves the DSL or the pastor the person who is the subject of the allegation will be excluded from the evaluation process. Under no circumstances should the person who is the subject of the allegation be informed until after any allegation has been discussed and agreement reached with the statutory authorities. Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies.

Listening to Those Who Raise Concerns

- Don't promise confidentiality
- Find a suitable place
- Proceed at the individual's pace
- Listen and accept what the person is telling you
- Reflect back what you hear or observe
- Ask open questions
- Summarize what the person has told you
- Clarify what will happen next

Recording

Safeguarding records are needed in order to:

- ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers
- promote the exercise of accountability
- provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity or formal proceedings
- allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel.

All records must be kept in a secure place and only shared in accordance with legislation, government guidance, Methodist Church policy, procedure and guidelines.

- When making records the following practice should be followed:
- Wherever possible, take notes during any conversation (or immediately after if more appropriate).
- Ask consent to make notes, taking age and understanding into account.
- Explain why you want to take notes, and that they can have access to the information they have shared with you.

Allegations Against Children and Young People

Children and young people have always been curious about the opposite sex and/or experimented sexually. However, where a child in a position of power has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through engaging in sexual activity, this is likely to be regarded as abusive. The same applies where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child. This is not mutual exploration. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great.

6. CARING FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

Pastoral Care for the Victim/Survivor and their Family

Abuse is traumatic for those who are victims and their family members. It destroys the essential basis of trust and safety, especially where the perpetrator is a parent or a trusted church member. Abuse all too commonly breaks up families, and shatters beliefs about Christian conduct and human behaviour. These situations are never without pain and suffering by a child or adult at risk. They significantly challenge our church family in coming to terms with the fact that a professed Christian, and church member, has the capacity to abuse a child or vulnerable adult.

Children may be abused by children or adults who are not family members, but who are known by the child and often the child's family. The abuse inflicted is varied but often sexual or exploitative of a vulnerable person. Whatever has happened to a child or adult, their basic needs as an individual or family remain and they should continue to receive support from our church family.

Victims or witness of abuse can report to their local church DSL, pastor, or other trusted/responsible person. Pastoral care for the victim/survivor and his/her family may include continued contact, prayer support, help to find legal advice, and accompaniment to court hearings. The church should ensure that:

- It does not become involved with possible inter-family disputes but should always focus on the needs of the victim as a priority.
- It works hard to maintain those links that the child or adult at risk has with the church so that their life within the church remains as normal as possible.

Recognising the confidential nature of the information available to the members of a child/adult protection conference, the pastor should seek an interview with the identified social worker to establish what risk the alleged perpetrator poses to the victim and others when they attend church-based activities.

Pastoral Care for the Alleged Perpetrator

During the difficult period of investigation following an allegation of sexual or other form of abuse, the church should arrange appropriate support for the alleged perpetrator, who is a church member, without compromising the position of the victim/survivor, their family or the church.

- Pastoral care for alleged perpetrators may include continued contact, prayer support, help to find legal advice, and accompaniment to court hearings. It is unlikely that the same person would be able to provide support to meet the conflicting needs of the various parties, i.e. victim/survivor, victim's family, alleged perpetrator. The church may find it helpful if one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, while another offers support to the victim and his/her family, and a further person gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator.
- Pastoral care for an alleged perpetrator must not be given at the expense of the victim, the victim's family, or justice. The victim/survivor should not sense that the church is in collusion with or taking the side of the alleged perpetrator.

Agreement of Care

For individuals whose history or behaviour pose a risk to children or adults at risk, an Agreement of Care must be completed. This would serve as a measure of protection for others from further or future concern.

Pastoral Care of Known Abusers

The local pastor and/or elder should:

- Talk to the offender's Probation Officer who should know the person and be able to advise on management.
- Meet with the offender and the church elders and lay out the boundaries that the offender will be expected to keep. Explain what support the church will give. Get the offender to sign an Agreement of Care form. While this sounds formal it helps in dealing with the potential manipulative ways of the sex offender, which might pose a risk
- Inform key people, (elders, the Sabbath School leader, Youth leader, Adventurer and Pathfinder leaders, etc.) for the events that the offender is attending, that the individual should have no contact with children or young people. This is always on a 'need to know' basis. Offenders must never be on their own with children or adults at risk, to whom they pose a threat.
- Inform the offender that a failure to keep to these conditions may lead to him/her being barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the church leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (Probation and Social Services) and any other relevant organisation.
- Provide the Conference/Mission DSL with the details of the offender along with a copy of the completed Agreement of Care.

Pastoral Care for Employed Workers

Pastoral work with children, young people and adults in the aftermath of an incident of child or adult abuse will be extremely stressful. As the main burden of this work will inevitably fall upon the shoulders of the employee, they should be provided with a counsellor while they are working in this specialised area. The employee should not feel guilty in accepting the services of a counsellor but should see it as a necessary support for them to remain objective while working in a highly emotional and stressful situation.

HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

