

The Beacon Church

Belong together, grow together, reach out together

The Beacon Church Good Practice 5

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Introduction

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Group Practice 5 - Introduction

Next Review Date: July 2022

History of Changes:

2021-07-13 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version

Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

This document has been written with the intention of introducing new team members to the policies and the procedures of the Beacon Church which is part of the United Reformed Church. It should also provide a useful referencing resource to existing members of staff and assist with the searching out of further information.

The following document is a review guide to be read alongside the full URC Good Practice 5 handbook and the associated appendices. This is not and should not be read as an exhaustive policy in itself but should be used as a guide to all Beacon Church activities.

Buildings Management

All buildings are owned and operated by the Beacon Church. As such, oversight is through the Leadership Team and our task is to serve the spiritual, recreational and social needs of people of all ages connected to the Beacon Church – including the wider community of Canford Heath who we allow to use them.

Day to day management of the premises are overseen by the leadership team and Lettings Officer.

Doing something new

Refer to the risk assessment file and if in any doubt about any activities being proposed – seek the advice of a senior leader.

Staffing responsibilities – Minimum workers guide

There are no legal minimal numbers of staff to run a session with over 8's, but there are legal requirements for under 8's. At The Beacon Church we run each session with the following good practice guideline: our evening youth and children's sessions should be staffed by at least 4 leaders, ideally with a mix of male and female leaders. Our Sunday morning sessions will be staffed by at least 2 leaders.

OFSTED suggest the following guidelines to be best practice:

Age	Ratio – Adults:Children
0-2	1:3
2-3	1:4
3-8	1:8
8+	1:10

However, these ratios are a minimum and therefore a higher proportion of adults may be needed depending on the activity.

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Alcohol Policy

The Beacon Church adopts a basic no alcohol on site policy. This covers all areas of the work, including party's and social functions. The policy includes the storage and consumption of alcohol and covers the entire church premises.

Smoking and Vaping Policy

The Beacon Church has adopted a policy of health education and as the effects and dangers of smoking and vaping are well known we have adopted a **NO** smoking policy.

1. There will be no smoking by any worker whilst on duty and engaged in youth work with young people at any venue, inside or outside
2. The entire church premises constitutes a no smoking area at all times.
3. We actively discourage smoking outside of the centre
4. People who are legally allowed to smoke will be requested not to do so during offsite church/group activities.

Useful Telephone numbers

Church named contacts for building issues and fire alarm re-setting etc

Terry Bull:	01202 380728
Keith Gubbins:	07794157133
Bookings (Fiona Woolley):	01202 250971
The Beacon Church Office:	01202 687697
Vicky Piggott-Genge (Youth and Children's Pastor):	07456534338

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Appendix 1

Health and Safety Policy

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Appendix 1 - Health and Safety Policy

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2018-04-04	Keith Gubbins	Initial Review Version
2020-01-29	Keith Gubbins	Reviewed
2021-10-05	Keith Gubbins	Reviewed

Current Version: 2.0

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Introduction

This is the statement of general policy and arrangements for:	The Beacon Church
Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of:	The Beacon Church Trustees (Eldership)
Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to:	The Beacon Church H&S Officer

The Eldership of this church is committed, so far as is reasonably practicable, to providing a safe and healthy environment and conditions for its staff and volunteers, church members, all involved in its activities and all who use its premises. This policy outlines how this can be achieved and incorporates the requirements of the following:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (and the regulations made under it.)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Food Safety Act 1990, and EU food hygiene law (as interpreted by the Food Standards Agency).

However, the policy goes beyond statutory requirements in some areas, as a matter of good practice and care for all people involved in church life (e.g. provision of basic first-aid provision during church activities.)

The policy will of course be most effective if all church staff and volunteers, other church members, and those who participate in church activities or use its premises, do the following:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or not do.
- Cooperate with the church on health and safety.
- Correctly use work items provided by the church (including personal protective equipment) in accordance with training and instructions.
- Not interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety or welfare.

This policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of detailed advice and guidance from sources such as:

- the PLATO Property Handbook, produced by the United Reformed Church's network of Property, Legal and Trust Officer's, available at <http://www.urc.org.uk/plato-property-handbook1.html>

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- the URC Good Practice 5 polices on good practice guidance for Preventing Harm, Promoting safe ways of working and Protecting everyone.
- Health & Safety Executive, <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

1. To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health and provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from church related activities.

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer, Fabric Elder and Activity Overall Leader(s)

Risk assessments

Risk assessments will be completed for the church premises and church activities. Actions arising out of those assessments will be implemented. Risk assessments will be reviewed at least every year, or sooner if changes are made to church premises or church activities.

They will include:

- A general risk assessment completed by the church health & safety officer.
- Specific risk assessments completed by employees and volunteers for the groups / activities and events which they organise. These risk assessments will take account of children's changing needs as they grow and develop and will be mindful of needs resulting from physical and learning disabilities and factors that may make some children and adults more vulnerable than others.
- Specific risk assessments completed for each off-site activity. If transport is organised by the church, then the risk assessment will include travel arrangements and measures will be taken to ensure: qualified and safe drivers; roadworthy vehicles' suitable insurance cover; and use of seat belts or appropriate car seats or booster cushions.

Group / activity leaders should carry out a quick visual inspection of the area being used for their meeting / event / activity before starting, note any concerns, take whatever immediate action is possible to reduce the risk of harm, and report any concerns to the health & safety officer as soon as possible after the event.

Accessibility

The Church premises should be as accessible as possible to all people, recognizing the limitations that that may result from the age and design of some buildings. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating should be addressed and, where necessary, aids and adaptations should be put in place.

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Electrical issues

Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury.

Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- Visually check all electrical equipment before use.
- Report all faults immediately to the responsible person.
- Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
- Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods.
- Electrical equipment which is brought onto the premises and used should be tested by the approved person and entered in the electrical equipment record.
- Flexible cables should be positioned and protected so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

Manual handling

We will eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable.

Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible. The necessary training will be given to all employees and volunteers who are required to undertake manual handling as part of their church work.

Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor.

All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- Provide a copy of their own health and safety policy (where required by law)
- Provide evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place.
- Where plant and machinery are brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation.
- Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with permission from the church. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors.

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- All contractors will be given instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work, the extent of the work they are authorized to undertake, and any safety precautions they must take.

2. To provide adequate information and training to ensure employees and volunteers are competent to do their work

Name of responsible person(s): Beacon Church Leadership team and Booking Officer.

Staff and volunteers will be given necessary health and safety induction and provided with appropriate training.

Other building users (e.g. organisations letting the church premises) will be given necessary health & safety information, including a copy of this policy and a risk assessment for the premises.

3. To engage and consult with employees and volunteers on day-to-day health and safety conditions and provide advice and supervision on occupational health

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer and Beacon Church Leadership team

Staff and volunteers will be routinely consulted on health and safety matters as they arise and formally consulted for annual health and safety review meetings (or sooner if required.)

4. To implement emergency procedures - evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident - to fulfil the obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer and Building Fabric Leader

Fire risk assessment reviewed annually (either separately or as part of the annual health & safety review).

Fire detection, warning and evacuation procedures are tested regularly and updated as necessary.

Appoint designated fire marshals and providing them with appropriate training.

Fire drills will be held regularly for the whole church and particular groups, especially for groups involving children or people with a disability. Evacuation procedures are to be reviewed when there is a change to the building layout and prior to any major event.

Fire/Emergency exits clearly identified with the appropriate signage and emergency lighting systems installed where required.

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Fire alarms, smoke detectors and firefighting equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers) should be in place, regularly tested and properly maintained by a competent technician or electrician.

5. To maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage / use of substances

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer and Building Fabric Leader

Basic provision for employees and volunteers

Adequate heating and lighting, toilets, washing facilities and drinking water will be provided for the use of employees and volunteers.

Regular inspection and maintenance of premises

Quarterly inspections of premises and grounds, to include:

- General cleanliness and tidiness (as a build-up of debris is a fire risk)
- Adequacy and proper functioning of lighting, heating and ventilation (especially checking that light bulbs working well in areas where there is no natural light)
- Ease of access and movement (particularly checking that doors and corridors are free from obstruction, especially any emergency exits and evacuation routes)
- General fabric of building.

Any defects noted are immediately reported to the designated person and the procedures put in hand for repairs. Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to minimise the risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

Regular inspection, testing and maintenance of equipment and machinery

A list should be kept of any equipment or machinery with date and outcome of last inspection. Regular inspection, testing and maintenance of any equipment or machinery (e.g. ladders, scaffolding towers, mowers & other garden equipment, electrical equipment and sockets, heating and cooking appliances, children's play equipment, etc). Prompt action should be taken to address any defects.

The Inspection, testing and maintenance regime should specifically include:

- An annual check of any gas boiler and any other gas equipment is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is registered with the Gas Safe Register.
- An annual check of any oil-fired appliance by an OFTEC registered engineer

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- an annual test of any portable electrical equipment (PAT test) by a competent person
- A five-yearly inspection and test of the fixed electrical system by a competent contractor (Who is NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT certified).

Any necessary work required for safety will be implemented immediately.

Storage and use of hazardous substances

- Where possible, the storage and use of hazardous substances will be avoided.
- A list of all hazardous substances used on the church premises will be kept, including all substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive, oxidizing or dangerous for the environment'.
- For each hazardous substance the following will be recorded: name of substance, hazard type, a safe method of storage, protective clothing required, and procedure in the event of an accident. (Data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage, and action to take in the event of an accident.)
- Chemicals should not be stored in unmarked containers and should not be mixed.

6. Food hygiene regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs will be followed.

Name of responsible person(s): Activity Overall Leader

Registration

The church will register with the local authority if required. This is only likely for a church where a regular activity involves supplying hot food once a month or more frequently. (For more details, see <http://multimedia.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/hall-provision.pdf>)

Training

We will ensure that all food handlers have received adequate instruction and training (e.g. the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate) and are aware of good practice in food preparation, handling, storage, and disposal of waste.

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Risk assessment

We will ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperatures. Extra care will be taken when preparing and serving food for under-fives, expectant mums, people with serious medical conditions and the elderly.

Hygiene

Workers will follow good personal hygiene (e.g. hand-washing and hair-tying) and all surfaces coming into contact with food during preparation will be clean before use.

Terrorism

As we have seen in the UK and across Europe, terrorist attacks can happen at any time and any place without warning. In order to keep everyone as safe as possible, all key personnel should be made aware of the necessary action to take should a place of worship or an event become a target of terrorism.

In the unfortunate event of an attack, the 'Stay Safe' principles should be followed. The principles are:

- • RUN – escape if you can
- • HIDE – if you can't RUN, HIDE
- • TELL – call the Police.

Remember that, as well as looking after your own safety, you must also remain responsible for those in your care.

Methods of attack are not just physical, and some attacks may be through interference with vital information or communication systems. Others may be enabled by someone with specialist knowledge or access to your venue.

The threat of terrorism may also take the form of threats or hoaxes which are designed to frighten and intimidate.

If your place of worship is to be safe and secure, it is essential that all the work you undertake on protective security is in partnership with the Police, other authorities as appropriate, and your neighbours.

It is worth noting that implementing measures for countering terrorism will also work against other forms of criminality, such as theft, burglary, and arson, which remain the greatest threats to places of worship. Where possible, additional security measures should be integrated with the church's existing security.

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Outside Organisations

We will ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.

7. Basic first-aid provision will be available during church events activities whenever this is reasonably possible

Name of responsible person(s): Activity Overall Leader

Designated first-aiders

A team of designated first-aiders will be maintained, who will be trained in administering basic first-aid. A list of designated first-aiders will be kept up to date with expiry date for current training.

First aid kits

First-aid kits will be kept on the premises in easily accessible and well-signed locations:

Use of first-aid equipment will be reported to the responsible person after use and contents replenished as soon as possible to keep it fully stocked.

Reporting accidents

Church staff and volunteers, and leaders of other organisations using the church premises, will be instructed to report accidents so that they may be recorded in the accident book / accident record sheets on an accident form and record of accidents will be regularly reviewed. The accident book / accident record sheets are located: [Church Office](#)

8. Serious accidents and ill health at work are reported under RIDDOR regulations

Name of responsible person(s): The Beacon Church Trustees (Eldership)

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations will be followed. Fatal accidents, major injuries and injuries which involve the injured person being absent from work for more than seven days must be reported to the enforcing authorities. So, must other diseases and certain dangerous occurrences, as defined by the regulations. These can be reported online at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and records kept by the church.

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There are three requirements for reporting, as follows:

- Serious injuries or dangerous occurrences (as defined by the regulations) must be reported immediately. This must be followed by a report in writing within ten days on official form F2508.
- Accidents involving the injured person losing more than seven consecutive days work (excluding the day of the accident but including any days which would not have been working days) but which do not fall into the above category, must be reported in writing within fifteen days on form F2508.
- Reportable diseases must be reported in writing on form F2508A. (This will be required only if the employer receives a written diagnosis of the disease made by a doctor and the person concerned is involved with a work activity as specified in the regulations. (Reportable diseases are defined by regulations but include certain poisonings, infections such as legionellosis and hepatitis, and other conditions such as certain musculo-skeletal disorders.)

See www.hse.gov.uk/riddor for further details about these regulations including detailed definitions of what must be reported.

9. Health and safety law poster is displayed

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer

10. Review and monitoring of this policy

Name of responsible person(s): H&S Officer

This policy will be reviewed, monitored and revised every 12 months (or sooner if church activities change significantly) and will be approved by the Elders Meeting and adopted by the Church Meeting annually

11. Additional Resources

For further information on how to complete a Risk Assessment please refer to "GP5 – Appendix I – A Guide to Risk Assessment.docx"

A template risk assessment is available in "GP5 – Appendix J – Sample Risk Assessment-Form"

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Appendix A Safeguarding Policy Overview

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Appendix A - Safeguarding Policy Overview

Next Review Date: July 2022

History of Changes:

2021-07-13	Martin Woolley	Initial Review Version
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Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

The Beacon Church has adopted the URC.'s Good Practice 5: 'Safeguarding Policy for local churches', as our working protection policy with reference to the URC Good Practice 5 handbook.

Please ensure you are familiar with the contents of the document. This policy contains information on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and what to do if you have a concern regarding an individual's welfare. It clearly states the procedure we should all adopt and our responsibilities towards those who we work with.

If you have a concern, and / or have been confided in, you should contact your group leader. The appropriate link person will then be contact and assess the need for reporting as appropriate and reassure the individual making any disclosure. The link person is responsible for logging the incident and liaising with the reporting officer to confirm all processes have been correctly followed. All disclosures should be notified in this way and no group member should take the decision whether or not to proceed.

This document is supported by the following seven appendices that are attached to it:

- A1 – Safeguarding policy statement
- A2 – The role of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- A3 – Code of conduct for working with children or young people
- A4 – Code of conduct for working with adults at risk
- A5 – Safeguarding incident recording form
- A6 – Signs and symptoms of abuse
- A7 – Guidance on safeguarding for Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Appendix U is also interrelated with this model policy containing useful contacts of organisations and services that can provide information, advice and support. This appendix can be tailored with other organisations and services in your local area and added to the section of key contacts in your local policy.

It is important to note that this is not a 'catch-all' policy. It covers the broad basics of good safeguarding practice in the Beacon Church. It is also important to remember that a safeguarding policy alone is worthless without proper implementation and a church-wide commitment to keeping people safe.

Aim and purpose of this model policy

The aim of this model policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

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Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies to:

- all members of our church
- all those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- our trustees and elders
- paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- volunteers
- organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

The values and safeguarding principles within the United Reformed Church are described in **Appendix A1**. The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with these principles and the most recent URC good practice guidance. Children, parents/carers, adults at risk and those responsible for safeguarding them will be informed of this policy and our procedures.

Definitions

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether adults, children or young people. We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Preventing abuse

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults. A job/role description is attached as **Appendix A2**.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate and accessible consent forms will be used (for children's activities or activities for people with special needs), appropriate records will be kept, and adequate insurance will be in place.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers with emphasis on those in regulated activities. We will treat applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not

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discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed (see **Appendix D** for the church policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders) and ensure that all safer recruitment-related procedures are followed, which include:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- providing workers with job or role descriptions and person specifications
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks for eligible roles and positions
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/agreements.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as **Appendices A3** and **A4** depending on the vulnerable group) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or the termination of people's service.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed or harm children or adults, we will inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or Synod Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and adults.

When any church premises are let to an external, informal group or individual, those hiring the premises should hold and abide by their own safeguarding policy. If a hirer does not have a policy, they must abide by the church's own safeguarding policy, a copy of which should be made available. Each hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults at risk are always protected by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. **Appendix A6: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse** provides definitions of different forms of abuse and further help and guidance. Some signs could be indicators of several different categories of abuse.

It is essential to note that these are only indicators of possible abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for these signs and/or behaviour. There might be domestic abuse that requires a different approach (please see **Appendix R: A Guide to domestic abuse**). The indicators will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

Church workers and members will also pay attention to online safety and their electronic communications with children and adults. Grooming and abuse of any form can occur offline (both physically and verbally) and online. **Appendix C: Model church online safety policy** includes an acceptable

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use policy in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children and provides sample forms which children and workers could be asked to sign.

What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and have been abused, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listen carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- informs the church Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (using the template in **Appendix A5**). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur:

- The concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer **within 24 hours** and a decision needs to be made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory authorities (**NOTE:** Key Contacts of relevant statutory contacts in your local authority should be added in this policy)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at **Appendix A5**. This record will be kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory authorities if a referral is made
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at further risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted beforehand
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns and referrals to police and statutory authorities.

Prior to any referral to children's services, the child's wishes and rights should be considered when determining what action to take. There should also be a verbal consultation with local authority's

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children's services to ensure that making a referral is an appropriate action. The parent/carer will normally be contacted to obtain their consent before a referral is made. However, if the concern involves, for example alleged or suspected child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Honour Based Violence, fabricated or induced illness, or the Synod Safeguarding Officer has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing should be said to the parent/carer ahead of the referral, but a rationale for the decision to progress without consent should be provided with the referral.

In the case of referrals to adult social care or other services for adults at risk, information should be shared with consent if the adult has capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act and if this does not place the referrer, them or others at an increased risk. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others. See section 14 of Good Practice 5 for further advice and guidance.

If the allegation is regarding a church staff member or church volunteer

If someone in the church is alleged or known to harm/have harmed children or adults, it is essential to inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support.

For any concerns relating to children, the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the DO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this advice. As noted, DO contact details, should be included in the Key Contacts section of this model policy.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. Likewise, their contacts details should be included in the Key Contacts section of this model policy.

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS / PVG for consideration of barring to share information about any individual in regulated activity where for safeguarding reasons the organisation has either terminated the employment, failed to appoint, or would have terminated the employment had the individual not moved on through resignation, retirement or re-deployment. In such cases, the synod safeguarding officer needs to be advised/informed.

Depending on the seriousness of incidents or allegations, a report to the Charity Commission will also need to be considered at the elders/trustees' meeting, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and require notification

Managing those who may pose a risk to the welfare of people

The use of rigorous and careful supervision is paramount to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing safeguarding contracts with

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known or alleged offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk. Where it is known that someone has a caution or conviction for committing a sexual offence, the church can play an important role in the prevention of further abuse by helping the offender to live an offence-free life.

If anyone is made aware that a person attending their church has been convicted of an offence against a child or has had an allegation of this nature made against them at any time, we immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim Moderator. Note that in Scotland, the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service should be contacted.

It is important to provide known or alleged offenders with a group of people who will offer support, friendship and supervision. Following advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer, when appropriate, a formal safeguarding contract will be drawn up between the church, the person who is considered to pose a risk to the welfare of people in the church, and any statutory agencies when involved.

Training

Safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role. All relevant staff members and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training delivered by the synod. The Safeguarding Coordinator(s) should ensure that trustees/elders and people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers) have undergone safeguarding training, as recommended by the URC.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact:

Name Church Secretary

Telephone No 01202 687697

Email secretary@churc.co.uk

It would be helpful to have complaints in writing, as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing, complaints will be acted upon.

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

Key Contacts: Sources of advice and support

- The church **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations relating to children, young people or adults should be addressed:

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Name Safeguarding Officer

Telephone No 01202 687697

Email safeguarding@churc.co.uk

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator** can be contacted:

Name

Telephone No

Email

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name Sharon Bar

Telephone No 0776178246

Email safeguarding@urcwessex.org.uk

- **URC Safeguarding Office** (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone No 020 7520 2729

Email safeguarding@urc.org.uk

- **ThirtyOne: Eight** (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact URC)
24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550

- **Designated Officer (DO)** or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales

Name

Telephone No 01202 817600

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Email LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Other useful contacts for reporting safeguarding concerns

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for concerns involving children.

Find our first response team:

01202 123 334 or childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

out of hours' team: 01202 738 256.

Adult social care for concerns relating to vulnerable adults.

Find our: adults social care team:

01202 123 654 or asc.contactcentre@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

out of hours team: 0300 123 9895.

NSPCC Tel: 0808 800 5000

In an emergency, or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, you should call the police via 999.

NOTE: A list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults can be found on *Appendix U* and be used in this section of the local policy.

Review

The Elders will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required, and informing Church Meeting that this has been done.

Date of the most recent review: _____

Date of the next review: _____

Signed: _____

(on behalf of the church Elders)

Appendix A1 Safeguarding Policy Statement

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Appendix A1 – Safeguarding Policy Statement

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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The following statement was agreed by the Church Meeting of **The Beacon Church**.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by **The Beacon Church**. We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing, harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults,
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk,
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected,
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately,
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe,
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults and to ensure the wellbeing and pastoral care of those who are, or may be, at risk.

We will prevent abuse related to extremism or radicalisation and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable, inconsistent with a Christian way of living and it can affect both adults and children.

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a community of Christians we will all work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator (when available) are the persons to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available on our posters, websites, or in other communications with the public.

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We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of trustees and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the Church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained. We will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions.

We will use DBS/PVG checks as part of a wide range of checks on trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect. This applies to **all team** members above the age of 16 who help more than once per calendar month. New appointees and interested parties can be involved in ongoing work, but only under strict supervision, whilst appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are being completed.

Anyone over the age of 18 who's normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in **sole charge** of anyone under the age of 18 is required to be DBS checked. No one may undertake a position of overall leadership prior to a completed DBS check. Any individual who declines to have a DBS check immediately bars themselves from any form of leadership, ministry or work within the whole church and its organisations.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection. All team members will be required to read and abide by the policies of the Beacon Church and sign a declaration to show their willingness to work with the give structures. They are also required to receive regular training in these areas.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, the Designated Officer (DO , formerly known as LADO), Local Safeguarding Boards (in Wales), Children's Partnership Boards (formally Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining the confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to working with those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, offering appropriate pastoral support where possible as well as challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the Church and offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervision, referral to the appropriate agencies, and implementation of safeguarding contracts, when appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside of the denomination.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment are in alignment with *Good Practice 5* – the U RC's policy and guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

Appendix A2

The role of a Church

Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC)

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Appendix A2 – The role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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Context

We believe that children and adults at risk deserve the best possible care that the church can provide and that the church should be a safe place for everyone involved. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

Purpose of the role

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church.
- To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church.

Responsibilities

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church

- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and are fit for purpose.
- To make sure that elders and others in the church are aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, including URC guidelines and Charity Commission responsibilities.
- To collaborate with the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when there is one), the minister, the DBS/PVG signatory people and the Synod Safeguarding Officer on all matters around safeguarding.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in the recruitment of all workers (both volunteers and paid) including, but not exclusively, ensuring that the relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks.
- To review and ensure others' safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place when any church premises are let to an external organisation, informal group or individual.

To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues

- To be a named person that children / adults at risk, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate departments and teams within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales of a concern or incident.

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- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To ensure safe practice is in place for supporting people who pose a risk to children and adults at risk at church.
- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer about any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory authorities.
- To report safeguarding information annually to the Eldership/Church Meeting and the Synod Safeguarding Officer, using the Appendix H1 as part of the annual returns process, to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impact of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and all people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers), as recommended by the synod, and ensure that their training is renewed every three years.
- To attend appropriate training for the role, including refresher training every three years, and keep updated on matters related to safeguarding.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when on leave, and to publicise who the substitute is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

Requirements for the role

- To have knowledge of policy and practice for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk.
- Good communication (written and oral) skills
- Be willing to attend appropriate safeguarding training/refresher training organised by the synod.
- Be willing to be easily contactable – and prepared to make contact details public to enable direct contact when needed.

Appendix A3

Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

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Appendix A3 - Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children and young people. The word 'child' refers to all those under the age of 18 throughout this document

DO

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect
- Respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture
- Act inclusively, seeking to make everyone feel welcome and valued
- Use appropriate language
- Be a good role model
- Treat people with equal care and concern
- Take all reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities and special education needs
- Listen to children and tell the Church Safeguarding Coordinator if you have any concerns about a child's welfare
- Refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning
- Encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact
- Interact with children in a public place. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk
- Make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies. Using church platforms and not private accounts
- Have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with URC good practice guidelines
- Use physical contact wisely; it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child
 - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult
 - respectful of the child's wishes, feelings and dignity
 - Respect children's and young people's privacy
- Ensure that any communication online is done through a work or church account – this may require setting up an account specific for that purpose
- Ensure, where possible, parents or guardians are present in the building or other workers are aware when young people are communicating with you via social media.

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Communication with a child via social media should only ever take place when their parent or guardian and other adult workers are aware of these online interactions.

- Inform your line manager or point of contact of your intention to communicate online with families or young people and keep a record of times and dates when you do this.
- Keep up to date on policies, procedures and training, including safeguarding and health and safety
- Understand that your conduct outside of work including on line can impact on your work with children and young people

DO NOT

- Do not abuse the power and responsibility of your role for example do not belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo)
- Exclude children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason
- Overshare about your own situations
- Show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts)
- Threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed
- Feel you have to deal with every problem on your own
- Use physical restraint unless they are causing harm to themselves or others
- Spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Contact them through private messaging
- Keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences
- Use child/young person's personal data for other purposes than activities consented
- Take photos or videos without consent
- Engage with children or young people through your personal social media or mobile account
- Assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker
- Promise to keep anything a secret, it may be that if a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of harm, that you will need to share that information but only on a need to know basis
- Work in ways that puts your needs and interests before those of the children you work with
- Discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged
- Interact with children you are working with from personal social media accounts

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children and young people

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on behalf of The Beacon Church [church name]

Name of worker: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A4

Code of Conduct for Working with Adults

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Appendix A4 - Code of Conduct for Working with Adults

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

This code describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitude expected of all church workers working with adults, including adults at risk, to ensure that you are providing a compassionate, caring and supportive environment.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect (14.7 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014). The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has care and support needs (whether or not the adult is being provided any services from the local authority or other statutory body to meet their 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.

All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with adults. You are responsible for and have a duty to ensure that your conduct does not fall below the standards detailed in this code, which are also supported and detailed in the Care Act 2014 (14.1.99) and the principles of Adult Support and Protection revised code of practice in Scotland (2008).

Code of Conduct

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.

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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.

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- 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.

Training, policy and procedure

- Attend all necessary training which helps to support you in your role.
- Complete all necessary safeguarding training at least every three years.
- Have a good awareness of URC policy and procedures, including *Good Practice 5*.

Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion

- Respect the individuality and diversity of all people, including those we encounter and work with.
- Treat all adults equally and inclusively and do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, religion/belief, cultural background, sexual orientation and disability.
- Promote equal opportunities and inclusion for the people we encounter and work with.
- Report any concerns regarding equality, diversity and inclusion to a leader/supervisor as soon as possible.

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I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with adults, including adults at risk.

on behalf of The Beacon Church

Name of worker: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A6

Signs and symptoms of abuse

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Appendix A6 - Signs and symptoms of abuse

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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It is important to be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse. Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be a perfectly ordinary explanation. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not 'ring true', should give more cause for concern.

Below is a comprehensive table of definitions, signs and symptoms of some of the types of abuse. The table has been compiled from a number of different sources, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Please note: it is not an exhaustive list, and relates to the abuse of both children and adults.

Physical Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
To inflict pain, physical injury, impairment or suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping and beating. • Shaking, pinching, throwing and pushing. • Kicking, biting, burning, drowning and hair pulling. • Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint. • Parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. • Inappropriate use of restraint techniques or other physical sanctions. • Isolation or confinement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. • Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, welts. • Bruising and discolouration • particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc. • in unusual places (e.g. around the mouth), in unusual patterns (e.g. symmetrical) or in particular shapes (e.g. fingertip bruising or belt marks). • Black eyes, burns, broken bones and skull fractures. • If the person is seen to have injuries that recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without plausible explanation. • Any injury that has not received medical attention or been properly cared for. • Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene. • Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite. • Repeated or unexplained tummy pains. • Person flinches at physical contact and/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather. • Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.

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Emotional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of threats, fear or power gained by another's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes.</p> <p>Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological stress. In children it can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour. • Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation. • The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation. • Making someone feel worthless, a lack of love or affection or ignoring the person. • Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. <p>Emotional abuse may well be indicative of other forms of abuse.</p> <p>All forms of abuse have an emotional component.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour. • Becoming quiet, clingy or withdrawn or conversely becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. • Denial and hesitation to talk openly. • Excessive fear or anxiety • Behaviour such as rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking. • Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness. • Loss of appetite. • Low self-esteem, helplessness or passivity. • Confusion or disorientation. • Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour. • Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults. • Running away, school non-attendance, stealing or lying.
Sexual Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>For a child – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.</p> <p>For an adult - Any non-consenting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not consent or was pressurised into consenting. • Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional distress. • Preoccupation with anything sexual and age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour. • Mood, attitude or behaviour changes. • Expressions of feelings of guilt or shame. • Itching, soreness, bruises or lacerations, particularly around the genital areas. • Difficulty in walking or sitting, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding.

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<p>sexual act or behaviour.</p> <p>No one should enter a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.</p>	<p>another person in a sexual manner without consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing. • Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts. • Filming or photographing a child in sexual poses or acts. • Enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways. • Being spied on while a person is undertaking or receiving personal care activities. • 'Sexting', grooming and using social media to share inappropriate content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections. • A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults. • Disturbed sleep patterns. • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. • Significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook. • A very young girl or a woman who lacks mental capacity to consent to intercourse becomes pregnant. • Underage Pregnancy/Termination. •
Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs (physical and/or psychological) are not met.</p> <p>In a child, neglect is likely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services. • Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment. • Ignoring medical or physical care needs, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene. • Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food. • Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions. • Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment.

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<p>to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.</p> <p>Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.</p>	<p>including not providing adequate food or assistance with eating/drinking, or not providing sufficient or appropriate clothing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving alone or unsupervised. • Failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous (particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess the risks to themselves or to others). • Deliberately withholding medication or aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids. • Denying social, religious or cultural contacts, or denying contact with the family. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental delay in children. • Low self-esteem, socially isolated and poor concentration. • Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example no heating or lighting). • Health and safety hazards in the living environment. • Untreated medical conditions, pressure sores, rashes, lice on the person. • Depression or low mood. • Person and/or carer have inconsistent or reluctant contact with Health and Social Services. • Callers/visitors are refused access to the person. • Prolonged isolation or lack of stimulation. • Person who is not able to look after themselves is left unattended and so put at risk. • Not being helped to the toilet when assistance is requested. • Change leaving alone to 'child/vulnerable person being left alone or unsupervised'.
Self-Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>An unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding or having no possessions at all. • Living in squalor and neglecting self-care and hygiene. • Failure to provide oneself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, healthcare and safety precautions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration, malnutrition or obesity. • Untreated medical conditions and poor personal hygiene. • Unsanitary living conditions. • Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing and lack of necessary medical aids. • Homelessness. • Not adhering to medical advice. • Not taking medication as advised/prescribed.

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Financial Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods. • Exploitation or profiteering. • Applying pressure in connection with Wills, property or inheritance, or financial transactions. • The abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will. • Being charged excessive amounts for services such as minor building works on a property. • Loans made under duress, threat or dishonestly extracted. • Mate-crime – where vulnerable people are befriended by those who go on to exploit them. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained loss of money. • Missing personal belongings such as art, jewellery and silverware. • Deterioration in standard of living, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings. • Unexplained lack of money, inability to pay bills or getting into debt. • Sudden changes in a person's finances or a disparity in assets and living conditions. • Person unable to access their own money or check their own accounts. • Cheques being signed or cashed by other people without someone's consent. • Recent acquaintances expressing sudden or disproportionate interest in the person and their money. • Reluctance on the part of the family, friends or the person controlling the person's funds to pay for necessary food, clothes or other items. • Recent changes of deeds/title of home. • Inappropriate granting and/or use of Power of Attorney. • Sudden change or creation of a will to benefit an individual significantly. • Someone else having possession of money/ bank cards. • Someone else reported making financial decisions. • Fraud.

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Discriminatory Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageist, racist, sexist, or abuse based on a person's disability. • Abuse linked to a person's sexuality. • Harassment, slurs or similar inappropriate use of language and treatment. • Withholding services without proper justification, or lack of disabled access to services and activities. • Lack of respect towards a person's culture, or deliberate exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem. • Withdrawal and social isolation. • Anger. • Person puts themselves down in terms of their age, race, gender identity or sexuality. • Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. • Preference not to receive care from particular individuals. • Feeling as though there is a lack of control based on age, gender, religion. • Signs of substandard service offered (health/education). •
Institutional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The mistreatment of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability of an institution to safeguard people from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. • Having fixed rules and routines by which people are controlled. • People prevented from acting within their rights. • No access to personal possessions or personal allowance. • Inadequate staffing, poorly trained staff and a lack of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or poor care. • Being routinely referred to in a condescending fashion. • Disrespectful language and attitudes. • Adult being spoken to or treated like a child. • A person's privacy and dignity being routinely compromised. • Failure to recognise the individuality of each person and applying a 'one size fits all' approach to support. • No evidence of support services care plans that focus on the individual's needs. • Inadequate staffing levels and the absence of individual care.

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practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	<p>leadership and/or supervision of staff or volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate use of physical interventions and poor practice in the provision of intimate care. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate procedures. • Poor record keeping/missing documents. •
Domestic Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>Any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of age, gender or sexuality or social status.</p> <p>Rarely is domestic abuse a one-off incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse. • Patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour. • Child to parent/carer abuse. • Abuse towards elderly family members. • Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). • Honour based violence, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and community. • Forced marriage. • Children can experience it by seeing and/or hearing the abuse, or seeing the injuries or distress afterwards, as well as being directly targeted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises or injuries. • Unusually quiet or withdrawn. • Fear, anxiety or panic attacks. • Frequent absences from work or other commitments. • Stops talking about their partner/family member. • Is always accompanied by their partner/family member. • Becomes isolated and withdrawn from friends and other family. • Doesn't have control over possessions or money. • Anxious about being away from home and rushes to get back. •
Spiritual Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators

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<p>The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The abuse of trust or misuse of power by someone in a position of spiritual authority (such as a minister).</p> <p>The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcing religious ideas or practices on to people, particular those who may be vulnerable to such practices. • Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters – reducing individual choice and responsibility. • The misuse of scripture or power to control behaviour and pressure to conform. • Oppressive teaching and isolation from others. • The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a “divine” position. • Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in people experiencing emotional, physical or sexual harm. • The denial of the right to have a faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. • Exclusion of people from the full range of church life (no arrangements for gluten-free wafers or non-alcoholic wine at Communion, or promoting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is often difficult for churches to identify spiritual abuse because its definition may be more an issue of personal interpretation of common practices in the church or denomination. • • Pastoral practices that ‘force’ people into accepting religious values or ideas. • A Feeling of confusion and uncertainty as to who, what or why they believe any more. • Deeply scarred – emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. • Feelings of betrayal leading to deep distrust, self-isolation and powerlessness. • A changed and damaged view of church – loss of church as a safe space. •
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	<p>fear of involving those who are HIV positive).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversimplification of forgiveness and healing without regard to pain or suffering. 	
Online Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of the internet (via email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, online games, live-streaming etc) to harm or harass in a deliberate manner.</p> <p>It can happen at any time and is not limited to a specific location – can be experienced even when alone.</p> <p>It can affect anyone at any age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications seeking to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, humiliate. • Threatening earnings, reputation, employment, safety. • Cyberbullying/Harassment – repeated offensive, rude, insulting messages. • Denigration – derogatory information and/or digitally altered photos. • Flaming – posting insults using vulgar/profane language. • Impersonation – hacking accounts and taking on someone else's identity. • Outing/Trickery – sharing someone's secrets or tricking them into revealing embarrassing information. • Cyber stalking – repeated online threats/activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn, time spent alone, exclusion from social events. • Spend a lot more/less time than usual online, texting, gaming, on social media. • Reluctance to let anyone near their phone/tablet/laptop etc. • Change in personality – anger, depression, anxiety etc • Changing appearance, trying to 'fit in' • Staying away from school/work • Nervous behaviour. • Losing self-confidence. • Distressed/withdrawn. •

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	<p>making someone afraid for their safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trolling – online provocations, starting arguments, threats and insults. • Grooming – building emotional connection to gain trust for exploitation/abuse. • Sexting – sharing or coercion into sharing sexual, naked or semi-naked images/videos/ messages. 	
Modern Slavery	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Includes human trafficking, where people are moved from one place to another into a situation of exploitation, using deception, coercion and violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic servitude – forced to work in private houses with restricted freedoms, long hours, no pay. • Criminal exploitation – pick pocketing, shoplifting, drug trafficking. • Forced labour – long hours, no pay, poor conditions, verbal and physical threats. • Sexual exploitation – prostitution and child abuse. • Organ removal, forced begging, forced marriage and illegal adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a dependency situation, under the control and influence of others. • Malnourished or unkempt, wearing the same clothes all the time. • Travel, identity and financial documents held by someone else, or use of false/forged documents. • Living in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation, living and working at same address, few personal possessions. • In debt to others, low or no pay, excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport. • Unfamiliar with the neighbourhood, unsure of home/work address. • Scared, untrusting, withdrawn, anxious, avoiding eye contact. • Showing signs of abuse, having old/untreated injuries and healthcare issues.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and identity documents removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fear of the authorities and in fear of removal or consequences for family.
Radicalisation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The process that moves a person to legitimise their support for or use of violence.</p> <p>The promise of an ideology which gives purpose and belonging.</p> <p>Can take place over a long time period or happen quickly.</p> <p>The person may not understand that they have been radicalised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violent and inappropriate material. • Being recruited in person – online or face-to-face. • Joining extremist organisations. • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. • Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. • • Extremist recruiters speak directly to the vulnerabilities people experience at times in their lives, e.g. sense of not belonging, low self-esteem, issues at home, involvement with gangs/criminal groups or identity crisis with their cultural heritage. • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expression of extremist views • Accessing extremist websites/social networks or possessing extremist, violent literature. • Behavioural changes, anger and use of inappropriate language. • Becoming disrespectful and intolerant of others. • Using words and phrases that sound scripted, talking about 'us' and 'them'. • Sympathies, admiration or associations with known extremists. • Advocating violent actions or means. • Changing name or friends.
Child Sexual Exploitation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators

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<p>A type of sexual abuse. The child is given gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. The tricking or grooming of children to believe they are in a loving and consensual relationship. Can be both in person or online.</p> <p>The child may not understand that they have been abused. They may seem to be condoning or even encouraging the abusive behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of violence, coercion and intimidation to force the child into sexual activity. • Invitations to parties where drugs and alcohol are freely given in exchange for sex. • Deceiving children into producing online indecent images/films of themselves. • Children being used to recruit other children into sexual exploitation. • Children being trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. • Sexual exploitation as part of gang initiation, status, protection or punishment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. they can't or won't explain. • Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour. • Swings and changes in mood or character, being secretive. • Gang-association and/or isolation from friends and social networks. • Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups. • Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area. • Alcohol or drug misuse. • Going missing for periods of time. • Skipping school.
Self-Harm	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is often used as a way of coping with,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting • Burning • Bruising • Scratching • Hair pulling • Poisoning • Overdosing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained cuts, bruises and burns, which are likely to be on wrists, arms, thighs and chest. • Keeping themselves fully covered, even in hot weather.

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<p>expressing or releasing overwhelming emotions and distress.</p> <p>It may also be about converting emotional pain into physical pain, expressing something that is hard to put into words or feeling that they are in control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally putting themselves in risky situations • Overeating or undereating • Inserting objects into their own body • Hitting themselves or walls • Exercising excessively • Self-neglect (adults) • • Some may self-harm to create a reason to physically care for themselves, or to feel something instead of numbness or disconnection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of depression, including low mood, tearfulness and a lack of motivation or interest. • Becoming withdrawn and a reluctance to speak to others. • Weight loss or weight gain due to changes in eating habits, including being secretive about eating. • Low self-esteem, such as an inclination to blame themselves for external problems and expressing that they are not good enough. • Alcohol or drugs misuse. • Bald patches from pulling out hair. •
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Things to note about abuse:

- It is unlikely that just one type of abuse will occur in isolation from another
- There can be an overlap of the signs and symptoms with different types of abuse
- All abuse involves the misuse of power
- There is an emotional abuse aspect to all types of abuse, including the witnessing of abuse
- If a child witnesses (including hearing) domestic abuse, this is considered to be child abuse
- Any type of abuse committed within the church can also have a negative impact on someone's faith and relationship with God
- It is not our role to determine which type of abuse it may be or to investigate.

For more information about specific forms of abuse, useful contacts of relevant organisations and details about those who are vulnerable to abuse, see:

- Appendix R: A Guide to Domestic Abuse
- Appendix V: Safeguarding and Digital Communications
- Appendix X: Responding to Allegations of Bullying and Harassment
- Appendix E: A Guide to Working with People with Disabilities
- Appendix U: Useful Contacts – For All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

Appendix C

Beacon Church Online Safety Policy

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Appendix C -Beacon Church Online Safety Policy

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-10-01 Vicky Piggott-Genge Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

Technology is constantly advancing, bringing with it additional safeguarding considerations. An online safety policy is necessary to safeguard all electronic communications between the church and children/young people (those under 18 years of age) recognising the merging between online and offline worlds and the distinctiveness and difficulties within faith-based organisations of defining clear boundaries for everyone.

This online safety policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and procedures for the acceptable, safe and responsible use of online technologies for adults and children within this church, including the use of mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices.

It explains what will happen in the event of unacceptable use of these technologies and details the support that will be provided to support children, parents and others in the safe and responsible use of these technologies beyond the church.

Why we have a policy

The use of the Internet and mobile devices has become an integral part of church and home life. There are always going to be risks to using any form of communication which lies within the public domain. It is therefore imperative that there are clear rules, procedures and guidelines to minimise these risks and especially when children use these technologies.

It is also important that workers and church members are clear about appropriate procedures so that they are safeguarded from misunderstandings or allegations through a lack of knowledge of potential risks.

This church acknowledges that whilst we will endeavour to safeguard against all risks we may not be able to completely eliminate them. Any incidents that may arise will be dealt with quickly and according to policy to ensure that children are best protected

Policy Aims

- to ensure the safeguarding of children within and beyond church by raising awareness of appropriate and acceptable uses of online technologies
- to outline the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved
- to have clarity about procedures following the misuse of any online technologies
- to work with parents / carers and to maintain a continued awareness of both the benefits and potential issues of online technologies

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Our commitment to online safety

We will equip children with the skills and knowledge that they need to use the technology in this church safely and responsibly, and to manage the possible risks. We will also ensure that they are aware of where they can go to get help, apart from trusted adults, if they are uncomfortable with anything in the digital world.

We will make appropriate use of any photographic images and/or video footage taken during church activities.

Clear guidelines will be operated as follows:

- permission will be sought from parents / carers before any images are taken and/or displayed. Images will only be used for the specific purpose agreed by the person photographed
- written consent will specify what purposes the image will be used for, and how it will be stored. For instance if the intention is to use an image on the church website or other forms of publicity, this will be clearly stated at the time that consent is sought
- further written consent will be sought if images are to be used in ways other than originally specified
- if children object, even if parents / carers have agreed, their wishes will be respected
- photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will not enable individual children to be clearly identified
- children's full names and/or other details will not be used anywhere in association with photographs or other media
- when using photographs of children, group pictures will be used wherever possible
- any use of images will reflect the diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity
- personal mobiles will not be used to take photographs or other digital media
- except in exceptional cases, which will be agreed, and known about, digital media relating to children will be stored on church computers. Should this not be possible for any reason, where the media is to be stored will be recorded

We will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, including the use of filtering software on all computers used within this church.

To ensure that unwanted and unsolicited information, viruses and other malware does not intrude on the use of digital technology, we will ensure all appropriate and reasonable steps are taken to protect computers and the users of them as follows:

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- filtering software will be installed on all computers used at this church or as part of any activities operated by the church.
- on our church website/s, details will be prominently displayed as to where to find help online including having the CEOP button on the website

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to all online safety concerns.

In the event of concern that there may be an online safety incident, this will be reported to the church's designated safeguarding co-ordinator in the same manner as the reporting of any other safeguarding concern. The safeguarding co-ordinator will then determine if the matter should be reported to the statutory authorities or other appropriate agencies, including CEOP or the Internet Watch Foundation. In case of church's designated safeguarding co-ordinator not being available, the matter needs to be reported to the synod safeguarding officer.

We will operate safe email communications with children and young people.

When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers will:

- primarily contact the parent/carer for them to pass on the information to their child/young person
- If we are to use email services to communicate with a child we will cc in their parent/carer, and if possible another leader
- use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation
- ensure that all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and that this policy is explained to children and young people.

We will make appropriate use of mobile phones where they are needed.

Not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want a worker to have the number. Workers will therefore have alternative means of communication and will ensure that communication goes through parents if this is their preference.

Mobile phones should only be used where necessary and will be guided by the following considerations:

- workers will not message – or reply to any messages from a child or young person. If a young person or a child messages a worker, they will not reply, screen shot the message, and talk to their supervisor about the next appropriate action.
- care will be taken with the language used, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with people's name.

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- any texts or conversations that raise concerns will be saved and passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor
- Images will not be taken on mobile phones. All photos will be taken using a designated camera with the church's memory card in, which will then be taken off and stored securely.
- workers will not take or keep images of children on their personal mobile phone.
- workers will not give out their personal mobile number to children
- ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 9pm or before 9am,
- workers will enable a password/lock on all devices to ensure data protection and will prevent unauthorised access being gained

We will consider the appropriate use of Chat & Messenger Services and whether these are necessary.

Instant Messenger Services (IM) are internet programmes that allow people to write and receive messages in real time.

As with other forms of online communication, workers will take care with regard to language and content, as well as when and for how long a communication lasts.

Workers will ensure that all communications using IM services adhere to the following:

- communication will not take place between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am *[or alternatives]*
- workers will ensure that they enable settings when using IM services which allow for significant conversations to be saved as text files and will keep a log of when and with whom they communicated
- children/young people will be made aware that conversations will be recorded and kept (via text files or similar)

We will make safe and appropriate use of social media platforms when communicating with young people.

When using social media platforms we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- workers will not add young people with whom they work to their personal social media platforms if they are under the age of 18.
- workers will set up a Facebook group / page for the church or church group and invite young people (in the appropriate age group) to be members
- workers will only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working

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- workers will ensure that their personal profiles on any social media platforms are set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature
- messages sent to young people regarding youth activities will be posted openly and 'inbox' messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy will be sent to an identified person to assist transparency

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Appendix C1

Beacon Church Online

Safety Policy

Child Agreement

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Appendix C1 - Beacon Church Online Safety Policy Child Agreement

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-10-01 Vicky Piggott-Genge Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

Children and young people agree to the following expectations for responsible use of technology:

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- Where using a social media platform I will use only use my own login and password which will be kept secret
- I will not deliberately browse, download or forward material that could be considered to be offensive or illegal, for instance pornographic, violent, racist or hate-motivated material
- I understand that I must not bring software into the church/organisation without permission
- I understand that I must not violate copyright laws
- I am responsible for email that I send and for contacts I make. I will only send messages which are polite, appropriate and free from unsuitable language.
- I will not send any attachments which are hurtful, abusive or offensive
- If I receive anything, see anything or come across a website which may be unsuitable or makes me feel uncomfortable I will immediately tell a responsible person Vicky Piggott-Genge, or report it to The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) or the Internet Watch Foundation
- I understand that I must never give my home address, phone number, send photos, give out personal information, or arrange to meet someone who contacts me over the Internet
- I will not send anonymous messages and I know that chain letters are not permitted.
- I understand that any youth and children's workers (add if others) are not allowed to accept friend requests via social media platforms
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I will not be allowed to use the Internet at church and that my parents / carers will be informed

Signed

Name [Print]

Dated

Appendix C2

Beacon Church Online Safety Policy Worker Agreement

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Appendix C2 - Beacon Church Online Safety Policy Worker Agreement

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-10-01 Vicky Piggott-Genge Initial Review Version from URC

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To ensure that all adults are aware of their responsibilities when using any online technologies they are asked to sign their agreement to specific Acceptable Use Rules. This is both to provide an example to children regarding safe and responsible use and as a safeguard from any potential allegations or inadvertent personal misuse.

These rules apply to all online usage and to anything that may be downloaded or printed.

General:

- I have been given a copy of the church online safety policy to refer to for all online safety procedures I should follow
- I know who the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator is
- I will only use church equipment in an appropriate manner and for professional uses (nb if portable equipment is taken home I will ensure my home insurance covers this)
- I will adhere to copyright and intellectual property rights
- I will take measures or seek advice to prevent the introduction of viruses to the network.
- I will ensure that all devices, including memory sticks, containing information about children are password protected and that I keep my password secure
- I will report any accidental misuse
- I will report any incidents of concern to the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Photographs & video:

I know that:

- all images should be appropriate and beyond first names not reveal any personal information about children if uploaded to the Internet. Images should only be uploaded with permission from the parent / carer, as well as the child involved
- I should not take images on any personal devices. If in exceptional circumstances such use is felt necessary it should be agreed in advance or reported promptly to the church Safeguarding Coordinator
- Images of children should be stored securely on the church computer, never on personal devices, including memory sticks

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Communication & Social Networking:

- I will ensure all messages are written carefully and politely
- I will not keep communications secret from those in the church to whom I am accountable
- I will not communicate with children online without consent from a parent / carer
- I realise that I am putting myself at risk of misinterpretation and allegation should I contact children via any systems other than those agreed
- I will not accept or request the 'friendship' of children/young people via social media platforms
- I understand the value of setting my 'Privacy' settings appropriately on any social networking site
- I will keep a record of any online communication with a child
- I will not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential by the church, a young person or anyone else

I have read, understood and agree with the online safety policy and the rules specified above and understand my responsibilities regarding safeguarding children when using online technologies.

I also understand that if I fail to follow agreed procedure there will be sanctions that could lead to my being suspended or dismissed, once appropriate procedures have been followed.

Signed

.....

Name [Print]

.....

Dated

.....

Appendix D

Model Church Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

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Appendix D - Model Church Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

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Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

This appendix is applied to local churches in England and Wales with a view to support their local safer recruitment processes.

The DBS [code of practice](#), published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, makes it a requirement that DBS applicants who have a criminal record are treated fairly and are not discriminated against because of a conviction or other information revealed in a DBS check.

The code also obliges bodies that undertake checks to have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders; a copy of which can be given to DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. The sample policy statement below can be used or adapted for this purpose.

Policy statement

The Beacon Church complies fully with the [DBS code of practice](#) when assessing an applicant's suitability for positions within the church which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and to not discriminate against any subject of a criminal record check based on convictions or other information revealed.

The Beacon Church will only request that an individual disclose details of convictions or cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where the position advertised is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order, a DBS certificate at either a basic or enhanced level can legally be requested. Where a position falls within the legal definition of a "regulated" activity, a check against the Barred Lists for Children and Adults will also be undertaken.

The Beacon Church will only ask potential candidates about convictions and cautions that are not protected in law. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records and regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

The Beacon Church will only make an application for a criminal record check through the DBS service where the law indicates that this is proportionate and necessary to the position advertised, such as those roles which involve working with children and adults at risk in a regulated or unregulated activity. Where this is the case, application forms, job adverts and recruitment information will contain explicit reference to the fact that this position requires a criminal record check in the event that the applicant is offered the position.

At interview or during an appropriate discussion, the Beacon Church will ensure that an open conversation takes place with the applicant regarding any offences or other information that may be relevant to the position. Failure of the applicant to share any information that is relevant to the position sought may result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary position.

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The Beacon Church ensures that all those who are involved with the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. The Beacon Church will also ensure that they have received appropriate training and guidance in the relevant legislation and understand the importance of confidentiality throughout the recruitment process.

The Beacon Church will discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before a decision is made whether to continue with the offer of employment. A risk assessment will be conducted with the applicant and only in cases where the disclosure impacts upon the applicant's ability to safely hold the offer of employment will it be withdrawn. This is provided that the information revealed has been brought to [Church name]'s attention prior to disclosure being received.

The Beacon Church makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](#), and makes a copy available on request.

Appendix E

A guide to working with those
with disabilities:
communication and etiquette

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Appendix E - A guide to working with those with disabilities: communication and etiquette

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

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Language

Appropriate use of language is less to do with 'political correctness' but more to do with challenging negative stereotypes and incorrect assumptions about people with disabilities. Often people with disabilities have identified a vocabulary that they feel comfortable with and efforts should be made to accommodate this. People should take care not to address a companion or carer as a conversational go-between or talk in childish language.

Listed below are words and phrases that are not helpful with acceptable alternatives:

Unhelpful words / phrases	Helpful words / phrases
Physically challenged, differently abled, cripple, invalid, handicapped. Handicapped has its origins in 'cap in hand', with implications of charity and begging. Invalid can be interpreted as 'not-valid'.	Person with disability
Mentally retarded, mentally handicapped, intellectually challenged.	Person with a learning disability
Deaf aid	Hearing aid
Deaf and dumb	Profoundly deaf, without speech
Disabled toilet	Accessible toilet, wheelchair-accessible toilet
Victim of disability or 'the disabled' – this is impersonal and implies a group separate from the rest of society.	A person with disability
Suffering from, afflicted by.	A person with...
An arthritic, spastic or epileptic.	A person with arthritis, a person who has cerebral palsy or epilepsy
Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair.	Wheelchair user

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Consider that the use of euphemisms, irony and jokes for some people with disabilities can be misunderstood and the true meaning may not be grasped, or it may be felt to be offensive.

Visual impairment

Below are some guidelines that will help someone with a visual impairment to feel welcome and included:

Identify yourself by name when you meet someone with a visual impairment.

Reserve seats as near to or at the front of any gathering, so the partially sighted person has the option to sit closer to what's going on. Offer to assist someone who is blind to find his or her way around. Don't push – always allow them to take your arm and, if necessary, provide space for a guide dog to lie down.

As far as possible, make sure that all corridors, approaches and circulating areas are free from obstructions.

Ensure large print paper versions are available for songs and other written material as well as audio recordings of talks.

All print for partially sighted people should be in typefaces such as Arial, Univers and New Century Schoolbook. These are all good examples of clear and legible typefaces. Avoid simulated handwriting and ornate typefaces as these can be difficult to read. No single size is suitable for everyone, but most people prefer their large print in the range of 16 to 22 point, but this may need to be checked with the person using the material. Printing should be on contrasting colour paper (black on white, or black on pale yellow is best) and on matt (non-glossy) paper. This also helps people with dyslexia. Don't use pale coloured type on dark colours or print over photographs. Photocopied acetates make excellent large-print song sheets

It is better not to use hand-written OHP acetates, and if this is unavoidable, it is important not to use all capital letters as it's much harder to read. The size of words on the screen will depend on the size of the venue and position of the OHP/digital projector, but all users should prepare acetates/ projector material to an agreed minimum.

For safety reasons, good lighting is essential for partially sighted people (Deaf people benefit too, as lip-reading is only possible in good lighting).

Use colour contrast as much as possible to designate entrances/exits.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate what facilities are provided for blind and partially sighted people:



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Hearing impairments

Below are guidelines that will help those with a hearing impairment feel welcome and included:

Always address the deaf or hard of hearing person direct, not the person who may have accompanied them.

Make sure that your face and mouth can be seen clearly. Look directly at the person and speak at a normal speed and volume with clear lip patterns. Avoid exaggerated lip patterns that are harder to read. Keep your hands away from your face and remember eating whilst talking hinders effective lip reading. Don't speak directly into the person's ear.

A hearing induction loop should be provided for talks, entertainment, etc, whether you are aware of people using hearing aids or not. It is not always obvious someone has a hearing aid and most people do not like to draw attention to the fact.

If possible, someone should be conveying what is said and sung using British Sign Language (BSL). They should stand in a visible, well-lit place (probably the front). Courses are now readily available for training in BSL, including distance learning. As many people as possible should be trained so that this responsibility doesn't rest on one person's shoulders.

Be aware that background noise can make life very difficult for people who use a hearing aid because it often distorts the sounds they are trying to hear.

Be prepared to write things down if necessary, particularly if communication is difficult. The important thing is not to give up.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate facilities are provided for the hard-of-hearing.

Speech impairment

Never finish a sentence or word for a person with speech impairment. It is also important not to get agitated or become impatient when you are waiting for words to be said. In this situation retain your interest in the person, perhaps by nodding affirmingly and/or retaining eye contact.

Impaired mobility

If possible, mark out reserved parking spaces for those with mobility difficulties as near as possible to the building entrance. Reserve seating that is the most accessible and minimises walking, but remember that it is up to the person to decide where they want to sit. Always enquire if they would like assistance before you help.

Wheelchair Users:

- All internal and external access needs to be level or ramped.

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- Don't designate one area for wheelchair users – this unnecessarily draws attention to their disability.
- Make sure that at least one seat is alongside each wheelchair position for a friend to be able to sit with a wheelchair user.
- When talking to a wheelchair user, it is polite to sit down so that you are on the same level, making eye contact easier.
- Remember that a wheelchair is part of the user's personal space, so don't lean on it, hold it or attempt to move it/push it unless asked.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate facilities are provided for people with impaired mobility. Please see: <http://bit.ly/2Tr4sJO>

Learning disabilities

Adults and children with learning disabilities often experience difficulties dealing with life issues and/or adjusting to new situations. The term 'learning disability' is often used in a general way that, because of people's preconceptions, isn't always helpful. For example, it can include people with conditions like Dyslexia or Asperger's syndrome, where intellectual capacity is unhindered or maybe exceeds the general average, but may affect social skills and the ability to communicate effectively.

Equally none of these 'givens' may apply, which underlines the importance of not making assumptions about people that are known to have a learning disability and not treating them in a childish or patronising way. Below are some guidelines that will help those in this situation feel understood, valued and supported:

- adults with learning disabilities may have limited or no reading ability so where possible, signpost facilities and directions (e.g. fire exit) using images as well as words
- read out written material and, if applicable, include songs with repetitive or uncomplicated words
- offer assistance if people are experiencing difficulties understanding or need help with certain instructions. Keep all communication of information in 'bite-size chunks', taking extra time if necessary to explain. Make explanations clear, concise and uncomplicated
- be patient if individuals are noisy or move about when it seems inappropriate and/or don't immediately pick up on the 'norms' of how things are done within the church.

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Appendix I

Risk Assessment Process Guide

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Appendix I - Risk Assessment Process Guide

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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Introduction

Risk management is something we all do, whether managing large projects or simply crossing the road. Performing a risk assessment is a way of formalising the judgements we make day in day out.

A risk assessment is a very useful tool to help think through making activities/buildings safe for children and young people. It is not supposed to be a deterrent to doing things, but rather a proactive way to make things as safe as possible, whilst bearing in mind that a level of acceptable risk is good for children and young people to experience, and is a natural part of their development.

It is not possible to have a uniformed risk assessment as each assessment will be done by different people, who will assess risk differently. The outcome of the level of risk will largely depend on the attitude of the person performing the risk assessment to risk taking - they may be risk adverse, or they may take levels of risk that others would consider unacceptable.

There is much guidance available from the Health & Safety Executive in respect of Health & Safety and risk assessments.

This document aims to assist anyone who is responsible for assessing Children and Youth activities. Obeying only the letter of the law is not always the most important consideration. Good practice dictates that sometimes it is important to go beyond what you have to do and do what you think is right. If in doubt, consult your synod Children's and Youth work Development Officer (CYDO).

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a systematic examination of a building, job or activity in order that you can:

- Identify any hazard that has the potential to cause harm
- Decide if there are already enough controls in place to make the risk at an acceptable level
- Decide what further control measures you need to implement to reduce the risk to an acceptable level

Who should do risk assessments?

Someone who is experienced and competent to do so. Being competent does not mean that you know everything there is to know about what you are assessing, in fact it can mean knowing when you need to call in an expert, for instance where electricity is concerned. Part of your risk assessment for a building for instance could be that equipment has been tested by experts.

Competence can be built up with a combination of experience, knowledge and training. If in doubt, consult your CYDO.

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When should risk assessments be done?

Risk assessments should be completed in respect of buildings annually and in respect of activities, before they start. They should be reviewed if circumstances change, or annually. It may be that if an activity is a one off, it will not be necessary to review it. It is, however, useful to keep copies of any risk assessments done as they could be a useful guide for someone completing a similar risk assessment in future.

Non compliance

If risk assessments are non existent or inadequate, this could have a negative impact in terms of financial and reputational risk, and in extreme cases, could involve liability. They are therefore crucial for a number of reasons, as well as most importantly, ensuring children's safety at church activities.

STEP 1: Identify the hazards

If you are assessing a building, walk around the building to identify a potential hazard, for instance, sockets may become safer if they have socket guards on them.

If you are assessing an activity, think about it step by step so that you know what is going to happen and potential risks are identified.

STEP 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Often in assessing events involving children and young people, it will either be the children or staff that could be harmed, and sometimes both. It could also be members of the public. Give careful thought as to how each risk could affect people. Remember that the risk of harm could be physical and/or emotional.

STEP 3: Evaluate the risk and decide what precautions need to be put in place

Think about what measures are already in place and decide whether additional ones need to be put in place. Involve staff, be they employed or volunteers, and children and young people.

This is a two stage process. Firstly you need to assess the likelihood of harm and secondly the severity of harm.

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Stage 1 – likelihood (a)

It has been found useful to allocate a numerical value to assist in determining levels of risk. So, in terms of likelihood, it will be as follows:

1. Remote – highly unlikely
2. Unlikely – may occur rarely
3. Possible – could occur, but is uncommon
4. Likely – probable it could occur
5. Very likely – frequently occurs, more certain than not

Stage 2 – severity of harm that could be caused (b)

When deciding on a score for the severity of the outcome, try to avoid always choosing the worst-case scenario. For example, if someone tripped on a trailing cable, they could in theory fall and bang their head, experience a blood clot and end up dying, so you might be tempted to record the severity as 'fatal'. Indeed, you may conclude that any injury could in theory be fatal. However, taking this approach will skew your risk assessment findings, and it will be very difficult to prioritise any action needed if everything ends up as a 'high risk'. Instead, a more realistic approach is needed.

It is useful to know something about the people who are going to be involved in an activity. For instance, a young person who has a rare blood disorder that means that any slight bump could lead to clotting and possible death would be a very relevant consideration. It may be that risk assessments should be done in respect of particular individuals with additional needs or disabilities.

A helpful guide is the following in relation to severity:

1. Trivial e.g. scratch, slight bruising
2. Minor injury e.g. small cut, abrasion – first aid needed
3. An injury that would take 3 days to heal/recover from e.g. sprain
4. Major injury e.g. amputation, fracture, hospitalisation over 24 hours
5. Fatal

You then need to multiply the likelihood of harm by the severity. So for instance, if your assessment concludes that it is **possible (3)** some harm would be caused and that the severity of harm being caused would amount to a **major (4)** injury then this would make it 3×4 equalling 12.

You may find the matrix below helpful in arriving at your level of risk.

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Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

If you consult the table below you will see that a score of 9-12 calculates as a medium risk and you should therefore implement additional controls. If, however, your score was 15 or over, you should not proceed with the activity before additional controls have been implemented.

Rating Bands (a x b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 – 12)	HIGH RISK (15 – 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	– STOP THE ACTIVITY– Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to medium or low level

STEP 4: Record your findings

This is a crucial stage as it provides proof that a risk assessment was carried out. Of equal importance, it also helps to crystallise your thoughts and is a way of ensuring accountability for tasks that have been agreed as needing doing.

STEP 5: Review risk assessment and update

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It is important if you have identified action points and dates by which these should be achieved, that this is checked upon and the risk assessment amended and updated. Failure to carry out control measures by the dates specified could obviously have serious ramifications were anything to happen during the identified activity.

Appendix K

Guidance on safer recruitment and criminal record checks

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Appendix K - Guidance on safer recruitment and criminal record checks

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Bobby Wood & Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

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This document can be used to define the nature of DBS checks for the varying works of the church. Its not an exhaustive list but does aim to state the basic requirement for DBS check.

Adult at Risk Definition

Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 defines an 'Adult at Risk' as a person aged 18 or over who:

- has care and support needs
- is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse or neglect and
- as a result of those care and support needs, cannot protect themselves against actual or potential abuse or neglect.

An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is someone who, by nature of their circumstances, physical or mental health, is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. The person must have care and support needs, although they do not have to be receiving help or services from the Local Authority, the NHS, or elsewhere to fall with the definition.

DBS checks policy

Whilst we wait for central URC to release Good Practice 5 Appendix K, which clarifies the activities and or roles that may require DBS checks, we have provided the following interim guidance.

There are three categories of DBS checks. Namely basic, standard and enhanced disclosures.

- **Elders, Leadership Team and all directly employed church staff.**

Given the range of actual, and potential, activities undertaken all of the above will continue to be subject to full enhanced disclosure DBS checks and appropriate safeguarding training.

- **Small group volunteer leaders**

Given the nature of the activities concerned it is likely that most such roles would require standard DBS checks and an appropriate level of safeguarding training. For those roles that do not require either it will be made clear prior to the role commencing.

- **Other volunteering roles**

Depending on the nature of the activities involved there may be instances where no DBS checks or safeguarding checks are required. If however they are required, the particular level of DBS check involved will be specified in the specific role description.

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Further Resource from DDC

[DBS and pre-employment checks - Due Diligence Checking Ltd \(ddc.uk.net\)](http://ddc.uk.net)

DDC our DBS checking service gives the following advice regarding DBS checks

The main aspects of this decision should be centred around the activities, and each organisation should assess this for themselves. The eligibility for Regulated Activity with adults is broadly broken down into 6 categories.

What work with adults are staff members carrying out?

1. Providing Health Care

- This includes health care work undertaken by (or under supervision from) a regulated Health Care Professional e.g. regulated by GMC or HPC.
- Health care includes all forms of health care relating to physical or mental health, including palliative care.

2. Providing Personal Care

- Includes providing an adult with physical assistance with eating, drinking, going to the toilet, washing or bathing, dressing, oral care or care of the skin because of the adults age, illness or disability (this includes someone who prompts and then supervises an adult to undertake the above actions as they are unable to make the decision for themselves)
- Anyone who trains, instructs or provides guidance to an adult on the above actions because of their age, illness or disability is in Regulated Activity.

3. Providing Social Work

- The activities of a regulated Social Worker in relation to adults who are clients or potential clients are a Regulated Activity. This includes assessing the need for health or social care services, and providing ongoing support to clients.

4. Assistance with General Household Matters

- Anyone who provides day-to-day assistance to an adult because of their age, illness or disability, where that assistance includes at least one of the following, is in regulated activity.
 - managing the person's cash
 - paying the persons bills, or
 - shopping on their behalf

5. Assistance in the Conduct of a Person's Own Affairs

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- Regulated Activity includes anyone who provides assistance in the conduct of an adult's own affairs by virtue of:
 - Lasting power of attorney under the Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Enduring power of attorney under the Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Being appointed as the adult's deputy under the Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Being an Independent Mental Health Advocate
 - Being an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate
 - Providing independent advocacy services under the National Health Services Act 2006 or National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006
 - Receiving payments on behalf of that person under the Social Security Administration Act 1992

6. Conveying

- This includes any drivers or assistants who transport an adult because of their age, illness or disability to or from places where they have received, or will be receiving health care, relevant personal care or relevant social work (as above). Hospital Porters, Patient Transport Service drivers and assistants are also included in this group.
- This does not include licensed taxi drivers or licensed private hire drivers unless they are undertaking trips taken for the above listed purposes.

Excluded from this list of roles is any activity carried out in the course of family relationships, and personal, non-commercial relationships, for example a family friend driving a friend to their hospital appointment for petrol money. In the guidance provided an Adult is classed as anyone 18 years old or older.

Management functions – A person whose role includes the day to day management or supervision of any person who is engaging in Regulated Activity with adults, is also in Regulated Activity.

The above activities only need to be done once by an employee, to be classed as Regulated Activity with adults.

What is the different between an 'Adult Workforce' check and the Barred Lists for Adults?

Adult Workforce – this indicates to the Local Police Force(s) that the applicant will be working with vulnerable adults to ensure that they release any 'Approved Additional Information' relating to this group. This information will be checked at Stage 4 of the application process and the Local Police Force are given further guidance about the information they should include when responding to an 'adult workforce' check. [To view the full DBS guidance please click here.](#)

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Vulnerable Adults Barred List – this includes the above information plus a check of the relevant Vetting and Barring Lists controlled and maintained by the DBS. These lists contain the names of all those people who are **barred** from working with Vulnerable Adults. This will be included (if requested) at Stage 3 of the application process with the DBS, and appear on the applicant's Disclosure if they are.

Appendix Q

A Guide for Staff Facing Allegations

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Appendix Q - A Guide for Staff Facing Allegations

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History of Changes:

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This guide is for staff serving the United Reformed Church. The aim of this guide is to explain the processes involved, and the support and guidance available, if it is alleged that you have:

- harmed a child/young person/adult or may have harmed a child, young person or adult.
- committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult.
- behaved in a way which indicates that a risk of harm may be posed to a child/children or an adult/adults.

Initial action

When the allegation is made and it is related to a child or a young person, your manager should consult the Designated Officer (DO) to consider the next steps, taking advice from children's services and the police as needed. The police may advise that you are not told about the allegation immediately. The Synod Safeguarding Officer should also be informed and will be on hand to offer advice and support.

When the allegation is made and it is related to an adult, your manager should consult the Church Safeguarding Coordinator, and if not available the Synod Safeguarding Officer. The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be informed to offer advice and support.

Your manager's decision, in consultation with the DO and Synod Safeguarding Officer, will include one, or a combination, of the following:

- a) immediate referral to children's or adult's services (required if the child/young person/adult at risk is alleged to have suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm, abuse or neglect)
- b) referral to children's or adult's services and the police (required if a criminal offence is alleged)
- c) disciplinary and/or capability procedures, including referral, if appropriate, to any professional body to which you may belong (if the allegation represents poor or inappropriate behaviour)
- d) no further action (if the allegation is clearly and demonstrably without foundation).

If the conclusion of the initial discussions are a) or b), the local authority children's or adult's services or the police will direct the process. A strategy discussion may take place involving the police, social care, your manager, DO and, where possible, a HR representative.

The Synod Safeguarding Officer will attend the strategy meeting if convened, to share information and inform the meeting's decision. You will not be asked to attend such a discussion.

The discussion will focus on the needs of the person who may be at risk, with the priority being to keep them safe from any harm. It will determine what action should be taken regarding further investigation, but it is not part of any disciplinary procedure.

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If the initial discussions conclude that the situation is as outlined in c), the synod safeguarding officer will refer the matter to relevant persons of the Church for an investigation under the disciplinary and/or capability procedures.

If the conclusion is as outlined in d), you should be told orally, and in writing, that the allegation is without foundation and that no further action will be taken.

Types of possible investigation

- Child protection enquiries by the social care team in the local authority.
- Adult safeguarding enquiries carried out by the local authority's adult's services.
- Criminal investigation by the police.
- Disciplinary/capability investigation.

A disciplinary investigation will usually need to wait until external statutory investigations are complete, unless prior agreement is reached with the DO. Whilst these investigations should be conducted as speedily as possible, they should also be balanced against the need to be thorough and fair. Statements taken in external investigations could be used in subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

Suspension

Suspension of a worker, pending the outcome of an investigation, should be carried out in consultation with the statutory authorities. Your manager should consult with the DO and the Synod Safeguarding Officer and consider recommendations from the strategy meeting, if appropriate, before any decision to suspend is taken to protect a child. In the case of adults, your manager should consult with the Synod Safeguarding Officer before any decision to suspend is taken to protect an adult.

Suspension should only occur when the known facts relating to the allegation indicate:

- a child/young person/adult may be at risk;
- the allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible;
- suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.

Alternatives, such as leave of absence, transfer of duties or additional supervision should be considered.

Where suspension is being considered, an interview will normally be arranged. You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, colleague or friend. You are advised to seek the assistance of their union representative, if you have one. You are considered for suspension, one of your roles will be to promote your interests in the interview and raise issues that may be of concern to you. The interview is not an examination of the evidence but is an opportunity to make representations concerning possible suspension.

You will be asked if you undertake any other roles, either paid or voluntary, where you have contact with children or adults at risk. Where this is the case, those employers will also be informed, usually by the DO

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or social care. Depending on the nature of the allegation, social care may also initiate an assessment with your own children, if you have any.

Other people, including your colleagues, should only be told about the allegation on a proportionate and necessary basis. You will be told who will be informed. Notification may be delayed if the police think this could prejudice an investigation.

Those likely to be told of the allegation and likely course of action include yourself, your manager, the Synod Safeguarding Officer, the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Moderator, your minister, the person concerned, their parent/carer where appropriate, the person making the allegation, the DO and the investigating agencies as above.

If you are suspended, the persons appointed to a disciplinary panel, if convened, will also be given the necessary information.

Every measure should be taken to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process, however it may be necessary to issue a brief press statement, which will be agreed by the agencies concerned. If this is considered necessary, you will be informed of what will be said and when this will happen.

Resignation

If you decide to tender your resignation during an investigation, or before one is commenced against them, the investigation will continue regardless. If you apply for another position, then the fact of a disciplinary investigation will be mentioned in any future references that are provided for you. This is unless the allegation was proved to be unfounded.

Referral to DBS/PVG

The law (*The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006* in England and Wales and *The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007* in Scotland) places duties on organisations to refer individuals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclosure Scotland in order to protect vulnerable people from harm in certain situations. The DBS maintain registers of people who are barred from working with children or adults because of their conduct, and there are situations where churches have a duty to make a referral. The DO and the synod safeguarding officer will provide guidance on this matter and will suggest when a referral is appropriate and what further information may be required. Irrespective of whether a referral has been made to DBS, it remains the duty of the employer to decide whether they should be allowed to continue working. They may carry out a risk assessment with the person considered for referral for the DBS/PVG barring lists. The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be informed of the referral or the need for a risk assessment

The full criteria for these referrals is contained in *Good Practice 5*, at pages 81-82.

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Reporting to the Charity Commission/Scottish Charity Regulator(OSCR)

The Charity Commission in England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) advise that where a report to the DBS/PVG is made, this constitutes a threat to the reputation of the charity and should be reported to the Charity Commission or OSCR as a serious incident. Charity trustees, in most local church contexts these will be Elders, are responsible for making this decision and report to the Charity Commission or OSCR. This responsibility may be delegated to the Synod Safeguarding Officer or URC's denominational safeguarding adviser. However, all serving elders as trustees of church's assets bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring their charity makes a report, and does so in a timely manner. You may be informed that this process has happened.

Return to work

If you have been suspended and it is decided that you are able to return to work, your union representative, colleague or friend can assist in negotiating and planning this return.

Appendix R

A guide to supporting those
affected by domestic abuse

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Appendix R - A guide to supporting those affected by domestic abuse

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Introduction

This guide has been produced to develop your understanding of what domestic abuse is, the difficulties and dangers faced by those dealing with abuse, and what steps you can take to offer support in a safer way.

Domestic abuse is alarmingly common. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2018 an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

People who perpetrate domestic abuse do not discriminate. It can happen to people who are married; not married; heterosexual; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender; living together, separated or dating. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.

Whether or not you are aware of it, it is likely that you know someone who has been affected by domestic abuse. The Methodist Church in the UK conducted a survey in 2002 and found that:

- 17% of respondents had experienced domestic abuse.
- The main perpetrators of the violence were husbands and partners.

Christianity Magazine, in conjunction with Restored (An International Christian Alliance whose aim is to transform relationships and end violence against women by working with churches and Christians worldwide) conducted a survey in September 2013 and discovered that:

- 40% had suffered some form of intimidation in their relationship.
- 16% had suffered some form of physical violence.

The Evangelical Alliance UK in its 'How is the Family Report' 2010 found that:

- 10% of women answering the survey had experienced physical abuse in their relationship.
- 7% of men admitted perpetrating physical abuse.

Christian homes are not immune to domestic abuse. The responsibility to offer help and be a voice for the prevention of domestic violence is fundamental to core Christian values – those of love, justice, equality, respect and care for one another.

Defining Domestic Abuse

In 2013 The UK Government defined domestic abuse as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

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Controlling behaviour is defined as:

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.

Coercive behaviour is defined as:

An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

It has been widely understood that coercive control is a core part of domestic abuse and the inclusion of this in the definition highlights the importance of recognising coercive control as a pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), so called Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage are classified as Domestic Abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM), sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting', is recognised internationally as a gross violation of the human rights of girls and women, often taking place whilst girls are still in their childhood or early teenage years. It is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to take abroad a British national or permanent resident for FGM, or to help someone trying to do this.

Performing FGM or helping it to take place, which would include taking girls/women to countries where FGM is still legal, carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison.

Honour Based Violence

There is no specific offence of "honour based crime". It is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation. Honour based violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Forced Marriage

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A forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not).

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Scotland

In Scotland there is no criminal offence of 'domestic abuse' or statutory definition of what constitutes domestic abuse. However, Police Scotland define domestic abuse as:

Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere, including online.

Understanding domestic abuse

How does domestic abuse happen?

It is of course difficult to understand what motivates one human being to abuse another and why someone stays in a relationship that causes them, and those around them, particularly children, so much suffering. Many ask why the victim stays. Nikki Dhillon Keane in her book *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*¹, highlights that this is the wrong question, and a form of victim blaming. Instead we should be asking why the perpetrator abuses.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse, like their victims, come from all walks of life. It is not always easy to recognise perpetrators of domestic abuse, as they can be charming and friendly in public, yet abusive and violent behind closed doors.

Domestic abuse is about one person in a relationship using a pattern of behaviours to intimidate and control the other person. Perpetrators of domestic abuse frequently avoid taking responsibility for their behaviour, by blaming their violence on someone or something else, denying it took place at all or minimising their behaviour. It is therefore important to remember that responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator of that abuse.

¹ Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

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Many people experience abuse within the so-called [cycle of abuse](#) in which periods of comparative calm or peace (known as the 'honeymoon stage') will be followed by a build-up toward an abusive episode. Although it may appear as though these periods of apparent calm are non-abusive, they represent part of a manipulative cycle, in which the abuser feels in control of their partner and situation. They may show repentance for pain caused, or even promise to change. Often it is these periods of apparent calm, which give the victim of abuse the hope that change can be achieved, and that the abuse will stop, which keeps them locked in the abusive relationship.

Not all relationships follow the same cycle, and individual experiences vary, some stages – especially the honeymoon or calm periods, may shorten or be left out completely, especially as the abuse intensifies over a period. Each stage of the cycle can last from a few minutes, to a number of months

There are many myths surrounding domestic abuse. For instance it has been said that domestic abuse can be attributed to a lack of control. However, perpetrators of abuse are often careful about when, where and to whom they are abusive. They can use violence and tactics of coercion as a way of exercising control and getting what they want. So, rather than being out of control, it can be a method to gain control.

The use (or misuse) of substances such as alcohol or drugs has been suggested to be a contributing factor. However, many people who drink too much or take drugs do not abuse their partners or family members. Likewise, perpetrators of abuse may be violent without the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Some suggest that domestic abuse is perpetrated by people who have mental health issues. However, most people with mental health problems do not abuse other people. [Mental health issues](#) are more likely to be the result of experiencing domestic violence than the cause of it. For instance, women who have experienced domestic violence have higher rates of mental illness: 64% experience post-traumatic stress disorder, 48% have depression, and 18% attempt or commit suicide².

A particularly damaging myth is that perpetrators do it because they were a victim of abuse in the past. Some perpetrators of abuse have witnessed or experienced abuse in the past and have normalised that behaviour. However, most victims and survivors of abuse do not go on to abuse anyone. Survivors of childhood abuse are more likely to become victims than perpetrators of abuse in adulthood.³

It can be extremely difficult to leave an abusive partner or family member, and some victims will never leave. There are many practical and psychological barriers to ending a relationship with an abusive partner or family member. The risk of death is also at its highest at the point of separation or just after leaving an abusive partner.

Barriers to leaving an abusive relationship

² From a Department of Health meta-analysis emerging from the VVAPP programme: Itzin, C. (2006).

³ Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

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The reasons why someone experiencing abuse may believe that it is not possible for them to move away from the situation in which they are being abused are complex. Some of these are shown below:

- Fear of death, theirs or their children's.
- Lack of financial resources – no access to money; not able to support themselves and their children independently.
- Safety – the victim may be fearful of what the abuser will do to them and the children if they left or attempted to leave.
- Remembering good times – particularly those at the start of the relationship. There could for instance be long periods between incidents of abuse when the abuser is charming and caring.
- Hope or belief that the abuser will change or that things will get better.
- A belief that staying is better for the children.
- Shame – the embarrassment of people finding out.
- Having nowhere to go.
- Isolation – if emotionally and financially dependent on their partner, they may be very isolated.
- Religious or cultural beliefs – admitting that there is a problem may bring shame on their family or pressure not to leave the marriage.
- Leaving everything behind – having to leave friends, family, neighbours, job, school, clothes, possessions, pets etc.
- Lack of self-confidence / self-esteem – the victim's self-esteem has been steadily worn down and they no longer believe that they can manage on their own, or that they have any options.
- Self-reliance. A belief that they can cope and don't need or want help.
- Pressure – from family and friends to stay and 'make it work'.
- Denial – convincing themselves that "it's not that bad".
- Expectation – having grown up in an abusive household, the belief that this is what relationships look like.
- Guilt – the belief that they deserve the abuse and it is their fault
- A sense of duty.
- Loyalty – devotion to the abuser regardless of their actions.
- Fear of being alone – being with someone, despite their faults, is better than the fear of being lonely.
- Attachment issues/Co dependency.
- Lack of support – doesn't know who to turn to or where to go, particularly if English is not their first language.
- Rescuing – the belief that they can change the abuser.
- Intimidation – the abuser threatens to take the children or pets away.

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- Immigration – the fear of being deported.
- Love – despite the abuse, they still feel that they love the abuser.
- The victim does not realise its abuse.
- Exhaustion. It is easy to underestimate the amount of energy needed for a victim to keep themselves, and possibly their children, alive and relatively safe.

The different kinds of domestic abuse

Below is a list of the main kinds of domestic abuse. However, in most cases more than one form exists.

Psychological abuse

This can include threats, gas lighting (making someone doubt their own reality) and mental torture. It can be used to groom victims for other types of abuse, although by itself it can cause devastating and lasting damage to a victim. It is a way of wearing down the victim to make them easier to control and therefore have power over them.

Isolation

This is a very powerful form of psychological abuse as it is of course much harder to exert power and control over someone that is surrounded by a support network of family and/or friends. Perpetrators might insist on moving to an area far away from their family and friends, sow seeds of doubt about close supportive relationships in a way that damages those relationships or become so aggressive when the victim tries to see family or friends that it is simply easier to stop seeing them. A perpetrator can also prevent someone from working and can monitor and/or block telephone calls.

Physical

This can include any of the following:

- Hitting, biting, slapping and beating.
- Shaking, pinching and pushing.
- Kicking, burning and hair pulling.
- Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint.
- Imprisoning, assault with implements and destroying possessions.

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Perpetrators of physical abuse often carefully cause injuries only where they will not be visible to others. They do not abuse because of losing control of their temper but use physical abuse to gain and then maintain control over their victim.

Sexual

There are a range of abusive acts that are included within this definition

- Any behavior which uses sex or sexual activity in order to gain power and control over another person.
- Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts that the person has not consented to, could not consent to or was pressurised into consenting to.
- punishment for not having sex.
- Forcing the victim/survivor to agree to have sex in order to avoid other abusive behaviour.
- sexual name calling or shaming.
- Being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts.
- Imposition of dress codes upon a partner, enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways.
- Involvement in the sex trade or pornography.
- Knowingly passing on sexually transmitted infections.

Emotional abuse

- Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behavior.
- Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation.
- Shouting, swearing, frightening or blaming behavior.
- Ridiculing, being obsessively and irrationally jealous.
- The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation.
- A lack of love or affection, or ignoring the person leading to feelings of worthlessness.
- Constantly checking where someone is.
- Telling them they are too fat/thin, stupid/useless.
- Telling them they are a bad mother/father, wife/husband/partner.

Economic/Financial abuse

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- Prevent or discourage the victim from working.
- Force the victim to earn money so that they do not have to work.
- Keeping the victim in poverty, controlling all of the money, refusing to allow the victim access to their own money.
- Expect the victim to account for every penny they spend.
- Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods.
- Applying pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- Force the victim to take out a loan or withhold money so that they cannot buy essentials like food for the children.

Economic abuse disproportionately affects women.⁴

Threats

- Making angry gestures.
- Using physical size to intimidate.
- Shouting you down.
- Destroying your possessions.
- Breaking things.
- Punching walls.
- Wielding a knife or a gun.
- Threatening to kill or harm you, the children and/or pets.

Neglect

Adults can be the victim of neglect as one adult might rely on another individual for example if they are elderly or frail, have a learning disability, a physical disability or an illness. They might also have a mental health issue or English might not be their first language.

Neglect is when a person's wellbeing is impaired, and their care needs are not met. It might include:

- Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services.
- Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not giving someone proper food, or assistance with eating or drinking.
- Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment.
- Deliberately withholding aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids.
- Denying social, religious or cultural contacts.

⁴ Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, 'Money matters: research into the extent and nature of financial abuse within intimate relationships in the UK' <https://www.refuge.org.uk/files/Money-Matters.pdf> cited in Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

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- Leaving someone alone or unsupervised.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices, or the coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. In a domestic abuse context, it might include:

- Forcing religious ideas or practices onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices.
- The misuse of scripture to control behaviour and pressure to conform.
- The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a “divine” position.
- The denial of the right to practice their faith.
- Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in emotional, physical or sexual harm.

Stalking, harassment and digital abuse

This is a more common type of abuse once a relationship has ended. With the availability of social media abuse by digital means has become an increasing problem. Stalking and harassment can be a sign that a perpetrator could be extremely dangerous, even if they have not so far been physically violent.

Domestic abuse in different groups

Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. For any victim of domestic abuse, whatever their age, gender, sexuality or culture, the effects of the abuse are likely to be deeply significant. It will also impact friends, family, colleagues and neighbours – in fact whole communities can be affected by abuse that takes place behind closed doors. Below, in alphabetical order, are some groups that are affected. It is not an exhaustive list.

Children

Statistics from the NSPCC show that 1 in 5 children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse. Children are often called the ‘hidden victims’ of domestic abuse – their voices are not heard, and they have no choice whether or not to stay in the abusive environment. Living in a home where domestic abuse is taking place can be hugely distressing and confusing for children.

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It can have a serious effect on their behaviour and overall wellbeing, both in the short and long term and they are likely to experience a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse⁵

Children may witness domestic abuse directly, but they can also witness it indirectly by hearing the abuse from another room, seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards, finding disarray like broken furniture or being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

Witnessing parental conflict may increase the likelihood of a child developing risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, alcohol and drug use and early sexual activity⁶. Domestic abuse can cause confusing relationships with parents. Children may:

- Not be able to develop a strong bond with their parents/carers (poor attachment).
- Worry their parents will divorce.
- Hope an abused parent will leave for safety reasons.
- Be afraid of their parents.

The Psychological effects of witnessing domestic abuse include:

- Aggression and challenging behavior.
- Depression.
- Anxiety – including worrying about a parent's safety.
- Changes in mood.
- Difficulty interacting with others.
- Withdrawal.
- Fearfulness, including fear of conflict.
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings.⁷
- Low self-esteem.
- Nightmares and flashbacks.

Physical effects can include:

- A risk of injury when they try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Self-harming.
- Higher rates of illness and fatigue.
- Reduced physical growth.
- Impact on nervous and hormonal systems (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018).
- Bedwetting.

⁵ Royal College of General Practitioners and NSPCC, 2014; Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008.

⁶ Early Intervention Foundation, 2018.

⁷ Diez, et al 2018; Early Intervention Foundation, 2018.

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- Eating disorders.

Emotional effects can include:

- Guilt that they didn't try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Feeling responsible for everything happening in the family.
- Attempts to be perfect and anxious to please.
- Fear of the abuser and other people who are similar to the abuser.
- Distressed and/or frightened by seeing arguments or violence.
- Afraid of their own emotions, such as anger.
- Difficulty in creating positive relationships.
- Feelings of powerlessness, insecurities, guilt, fear and loneliness.

Exposure to domestic abuse in childhood undermines a child's basic need for safety and security and can have a negative impact on their development, educational outcomes and mental health. It is contained within the definition of emotional abuse (Working Together 2018).

Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a child is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, safeguarding procedures must be followed by referring to Children's Services/Social Work Scotland. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on children, and the increased risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

Child to parent/carer

Child to parent/carer abuse is an aspect of domestic abuse where the child in the relationship seeks to control and coerce the parent, grandparent, foster parent or carer. There can be a number of reasons why a child is violent and/or abusive towards their parent or carer. It can include if they have seen a parent/carer be on the receiving end of abuse and they may believe it is normal behaviour to treat them in that manner.

Child to parent/carer abuse is largely under-reported and parents are often unable to identify or define what they are experiencing as abuse. Instead, they may talk about 'struggling with their child', 'having relationship difficulties with their child' or 'living in fear of their child'. They may not realise that there is specific help available for them, or they may feel ashamed and embarrassed that they cannot control their child, and that they are afraid of them. Additional barriers in seeking help may arise if the parents or carers responsible for the child cannot reach a consensus on the best course of action.

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LGBTQ+

Domestic abuse can happen in lesbian and gay relationships, and between people who are transgender or have non-binary gender identities. Stonewall's research shows that 1 in 4 lesbian and bi women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. Two thirds of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a third a man. Almost half (49%) of all gay and bi men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

There is limited research on how many trans people experience domestic abuse in the UK, and the best studies have small group samples. However, these figures suggest it is a significant issue. A report by the [Scottish Transgender Alliance](#) indicates that 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner⁸

LGBTQ+ people may experience unique forms of coercive control targeted at their sexual orientation or gender identity. For victims who are not 'out' the perpetrator may threaten to expose the victims sexual or gender identity to friends, family, the police, church or employer. Research by Stonewall found that more than one in ten LGBTQ+ people (13%) who had experienced domestic abuse in the past year reported that their partner had threatened to 'out' them. The concept of 'outing' can also apply to HIV status.

Other forms of abuse that are unique to transgender people are their partner deliberately using the wrong pronoun, forcing someone to perform a gender that they do not want to present as, or preventing them from medically transitioning, for instance by hiding hormones or creating barriers such as controlling finances to accessing surgery⁹

The discrimination often faced by LGBTQ+ people in their everyday lives can create huge barriers to accessing domestic abuse support¹⁰ The Government's national survey of LGBTQ+ people found that 40% of respondents had experienced a homophobic, bi phobic or transphobic incident in the previous 12 months, committed by someone they did not live with¹¹.

Someone experiencing domestic abuse in a LGBT relationship may struggle to find the necessary support (Broken Rainbow, the UK organisation that offered support for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse closed in 2016), and they may have to 'out' themselves in order to report the abuse. A perpetrator of domestic abuse may attempt to increase isolation by saying that no-one would believe or help them because the police and support services are all homophobic.

People may feel unable to turn to their church community for support because they don't know what sort of response they will get. Some victims seeking support find rejection and condemnation because of their sexual or gender identity.

⁸ [Stonewall.org.uk](#)

⁹ *Free to be Safe LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse 2018*

¹⁰ *Free to Be Safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse 2018*

¹¹ Government Equalities Committee (2018) *National LGBT Survey: Research Report*

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Misconceptions, homophobia, and simply the lack of suitable and relevant services, can cause LGBT victims of domestic abuse to feel isolated and unable to do anything but suffer in silence

Men

On average one in six men experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. However, male victims of domestic abuse are only half as likely to report their abuse as female victims¹². Shame and embarrassment are common feelings amongst male victims, and unfortunately, there are far fewer support services for them, particularly regarding emergency accommodation like refuges and shelters.

Men can be abused by women or men. It can become complicated when the man tries to ward off or defend himself against an attack by a female perpetrator and some male victims report facing arrest when the police assumed that the female was the victim.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales records (March 2018) that an estimated 4.2% (695,000) men experienced domestic abuse in the previous year. Each year, an average of 30 men are murdered by their partner or ex-partner¹³.

Older people

Elder abuse can happen in any family, or in institutions. In domestic situations the perpetrator can be the person's main carer, such as a spouse or daughter/son or other relative.

For some the abuse may have started earlier in life and persisted into old age. For others they may have entered into a new relationship later in life, only to find that their new spouse is abusive.

There may be a late onset of domestic abuse that begins or is exacerbated at a significant point in life, such as retirement, ill health and frailty, disability or changes in family roles. For people who are limited to their own homes owing to frailty or disability, the abuse may go on for many years without anyone to see what is happening, particularly if the abuser is the victim's key carer.

It may be more difficult for older victims of domestic abuse to seek help, and when they do, the services available are not always suited to their needs. Dementia can cause the victim extreme difficulties in understanding and reporting the abuse, and in being believed if they do report it.

People living with a chronic illness or disability

¹² Office for National Statistics

¹³ Office for National Statistics

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People who have a disability are twice as likely to be a victim of domestic abuse¹⁴, for instance research suggests that one in two deaf women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives¹⁵.

People with either disabilities or suffering with chronic illnesses are likely to have higher dependency upon family/carers meaning that if they are being abused, they could be less able to report it. This is compounded if the person has difficulty communicating owing to a speech impairment or hearing difficulties.

The perpetrator could be the persons main carer and withhold or threaten to withhold medication as a form of coercion and control. They may also withhold aids such as wheelchair or refuse to assist with essential tasks such as washing or eating. They may also always accompany the victim to medical appointments which would severely limit their opportunity to report abuse.

People who have a learning disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse, are less likely to report it and even when they do are less likely to be believed¹⁶.

Women

Statistics show that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. The Office for National Statistics 2018 record that women are four times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault by a partner (including attempts) in the previous year. The Crime Survey for England and Wales records¹⁷ that an estimated 7.9% (1.3 million) women experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

Pregnancy is a particularly vulnerable time for women. Department of Health statistics show that 40%-60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused while pregnant¹⁸

Increasingly perpetrators of domestic abuse use technology and social media to control and instil fear in those they victimise. In a Women's Aid survey¹⁹ 85% of respondents reported online abuse perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner as part of a pattern also experience offline.

Domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and leads to, on average, 2 women being murdered each week²⁰

In findings by Women's Aid 46.2% of women in refuges had spent between 2 and 10 years in the abusive relationship, with 17% of women enduring a violent relationship for more than 10 years. Research by the NSPCC suggests that BME communities continue to live in abusive situations for longer. Women

14 Women's Aid (www.womensaid.org.uk)

15 Dhillon-Keane N 2018

16 Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

17 March 2018

18 DoH 2005

19 The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The economics of abuse

20 Living without abuse

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from BME communities potentially face additional barriers to reporting owing to a fear of discrimination by statutory services or a fear about their children's (mainly daughters) ability or prospect to marry²¹

Young people (aged 16 – 18)

When the government updated their definition of domestic abuse in 2013, they widened it to include young people who are aged 16 and 17 years old. This definition recognises that those in this age group can experience abuse within their relationships.

Teenagers experience high levels of abuse within a relationship, with a 2011/12 government survey finding that the 16-19 age group were more likely to suffer partner abuse than any other age group.

There is often stigma surrounding domestic abuse in teenage relationships, and young people can feel that adults trivialise the abuse experienced. In addition, many domestic abuse support services are not open to young people until they reach 18 years old.

All young people under 18 are children and the definition of emotional abuse in respect of children includes them witnessing Domestic abuse. Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a young person is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, Children's Services/Social Work Scotland should always be notified. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on young people, and the increased risk and impact of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Responding to someone who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse

It takes tremendous courage for someone who is being abused to come forward and disclose that this is happening. They are most likely to tell someone they trust. Pastoral support can make a huge difference to those who are victims of domestic abuse. It is important, however, to highlight that it is crucial for victims of domestic abuse to be signposted to relevant agencies so that they can receive appropriate specialist support from the various organisations who are trained and experienced in these matters.

Below are guidelines for talking to someone who is a victim or survivor of domestic abuse:

Listen and believe what they say. Take time to listen and ensure that you talk in a safe place. It is worth remembering that it is much more likely that a victim will minimise what they are experiencing rather than dramatising it. What they tell you might therefore be the tip of the iceberg. Give them time to talk, but don't push them to talk if they don't want to. Take care not to trivialise, judge, criticise or dismiss what they tell you. Acknowledge that they're in a difficult and frightening situation.

²¹ Women's Aid

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Take care of your reactions. It can be difficult to hear a victim's account of domestic abuse. Think constantly of what a victim might need and be mindful of your body language as well as what you say.

Reassure and support them. It is important that you tell them that it is not their fault and that nothing justifies the abuse that they have suffered. If they have suffered physical injury offer to go with them to a Hospital or GP. You can also offer to support them in reporting to the Police.

Make sure they are safe. If possible, have a prepared plan of action in place within the church, to protect anyone disclosing abuse and to prevent church workers or yourself being put at risk. If you are concerned about someone's immediate safety, contact the police.

Do not investigate. It is not your job to go and speak to the perpetrator about the abuse, even if you know them. By doing so you place the victim, any children involved, and possibly yourself, in danger.

Gently question/Explore. Do not ask direct questions such as "Does your partner beat you?" or "Are you a victim of domestic abuse?" Instead, ask gentle questions such as "How are things at home?" or "What's troubling you?"

Keeping confidentiality. What has been disclosed to you should not become common knowledge within the church community, not even for prayer purposes, unless the victim chooses to share that information themselves. Any records or notes of what has been said should also be kept confidential. However, complete confidentiality cannot be promised, as it may be necessary to contact the safeguarding designated persons of the Church, the police or other statutory authorities, especially if there are children involved.

Record and report appropriately.

Fill in the incident report (*Appendix A5*) and pass it to relevant people with victim's consent. A record can be the first step to enable people affected by domestic abuse to seek appropriate support and access other services.

Talk to an expert. The church can, and should, work in partnership with other agencies and professionals as appropriate, to provide the best possible support for the individual or family. External support should always be sought in situations beyond your experience and expertise.

Empower them to make their own decisions. As far as possible it is vitally important to ensure that a victim/survivor makes the decisions and that you support and respect their choices. In situations where the victim decides to return to the perpetrator and children could be placed at risk it will be necessary to involve Children's Services. If this is necessary you should explain your intention to contact the statutory services and make every attempt to involve the victim in the decision-making process, unless that would mean placing the children at increased risk.

Do not:

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- Suggest or offer couples counselling to those where their partner is the alleged abuser. This is not a helpful or appropriate response to domestic abuse and creates more fear and strain for the person being abused, whilst offering the abuser another opportunity to exercise control.

Church response to the perpetrator

Perpetrators of abuse need support and pastoral care. However, caution should be exercised as many perpetrators are highly skilled at manipulating people into colluding with abuse. If a perpetrator asks for help to change their abusive behaviour the most appropriate course of action is to recommend a perpetrator programme. As detailed above it would be completely inappropriate for anyone from the church to engage in couples counselling or reconciliation/ mediation. The first priority must be for the perpetrator to address their violent behaviour and the church can help find an appropriate treatment program. Do not agree to advocate for the perpetrator or to provide a character witness for them as this could be misinterpreted as the Church condoning domestic abuse.

Sometimes a perpetrator may claim a conversion experience and use this as justification as to why they do not need treatment. It would be dangerous to accept this, on its own, even if the person appears repentant. A person who is genuinely repentant will understand and accept that they need help to address their problems. Anyone who has been supporting a victim should never meet a perpetrator on their own or confront them with anything the victim has told them. Not only is this a breach of confidentiality but it may also place the victim, and yourselves, at risk. It is important to liaise with the statutory authorities where an individual is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) involvement.

It may be necessary to discuss boundaries or restrictions you would need to place on their attendance at Church, such as safeguarding contracts. If an individual is convicted of committing crimes associated with domestic abuse, a contract is required with the support of the synod safeguarding officer. A safeguarding contract is advised to protect the alleged perpetrator, victims and the local congregation. The process of writing a contract is the same as described in Good Practice 5's *Section 13 – Managing and supporting those who pose a risk of harm to children*.

See also *Appendix Z: Guide to managing risk and offenders* for further details.

What should churches do?

There are a number of ways in which your church can act as a place of compassion and caring for those who have experienced, or are currently experiencing, domestic abuse:

Believe it. For many people in church domestic abuse is a taboo subject, with many believing that it does not happen.

Preaching/teaching. Speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching, study groups and prayers within the context of regular worship. Make it clear that domestic abuse is wrong and against Christian

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teaching. Pray for victims and perpetrators of abuse and for the work of specialised agencies that can help both victims and perpetrators. It is common for the Christian faith to put emphasis on the family structure and a positive family image, which may not be helpful for those from an abusive family setting.

Have information available in your church building. Have brochures and posters in places where a victim can take the information without fear of discovery. Telephone numbers of local and national domestic abuse helplines should also be included. Some of this information could be placed in a private location such as the toilets (male and female) to avoid scrutiny by others. Churches can develop good relationships with other statutory and voluntary agencies working in this area to draw on their expertise and refer victims to them.

Have a safe space to talk if possible. Ensure that there is space within the church building for people to talk in confidence and that conversations that warrant privacy are not held over coffee where sensitive information may be overheard.

Youth groups. By allowing young people to discuss and work through how they think and feel about their relationships, you are demonstrating that your church is a place of safety and somewhere where it is possible to be honest about abuse. If you can tackle these important issues within the safety of a youth group, youth fellowship or similar, you are creating a space for young people to talk about what might be happening in their families. It will be useful to be mindful of the fact that the definition of domestic abuse was widened to include the age range 16 to 18. Being mindful will ensure that you do not miss possible signs of domestic abuse between this age range.

Training. It is recommended that particularly relevant people in the church, e.g. ministers, elders, pastoral leaders, church safeguarding coordinators and synod safeguarding officers receive training about domestic abuse, either as part of their ongoing safeguarding training or as a stand-alone session. This training will help individuals within the church to reflect on the damage caused by domestic abuse, and how best to support victims and perpetrators. It is also important to make such training available to anyone who wishes to attend, confirming that it is everyone's responsibility to respond well to domestic abuse. Your Safeguarding Officer can either provide training or arrange suitable training.

Educate the church using local expertise. You may want to invite someone from the local police or a local support agency to talk about their work and to find out more about domestic abuse. Holding a well-publicised event and opening it up to other local churches and the local community, highlights your desire to stop domestic abuse being a taboo subject. Refuges and domestic abuse charities are always in need of extra resources. You could hold a fundraising event for them or agree to regularly offer financial support.

Marriage Preparation. It is a sad fact that getting married is known to be one of the triggers that can lead to the start or escalation of domestic abuse. Marriage preparation is therefore an ideal time to talk with couples about to be married about issues surrounding domestic abuse, such as equality, conflict, communication, control and violence. It will be very important to explain a biblical view of marriage, and to be clear that violence and abuse play no part in the marriage relationship. Those who lead marriage preparation should have received training on the issues of domestic abuse beforehand.

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Personal Reflection. It is important for all to reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes as these can impact how we respond to a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Consider whether your views need challenging and find either books or someone you trust, such as a Spiritual Director, to explore your views. There are many helpful resources online also.

The Domestic Violence disclosure scheme

This is sometimes known as Clare's Law. Under this scheme you can ask the police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. This is called 'right to ask'. If records show that you may be at risk of domestic abuse from a partner, the police will consider disclosing the information. A disclosure can be made if it is legal, proportionate and necessary to do so.

The 'right to ask' also enables a third party, such as a friend or family member, to apply for a disclosure on behalf of someone they know. Again, the police can release information if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

In order to make an application under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme you can contact the police by either visiting a police station, phoning 101 or speaking to a member of the police on the street.

Domestic abuse and The Bible

The Bible has often been misused in domestic abuse situations by the very people whose role and duty it is to help. Victims have been told when disclosing, for instance, to:

- pray harder
- submit to your husband (this is used in the context of heterosexual relationships)
- try to get your partner to church
- lift up the abuse to the Lord

These responses could be unsafe and unhelpful and, in the case of submitting to your husband, can be seen as encouragement to stay in an abusive relationship. It is very clear within the Christian tradition that God does not expect anyone to submit to abuse at the hands of another person.

The church often has much to say about violent crimes in society, but some have regarded abuse in the home as a 'private matter'. We need to acknowledge that biblically this is not acceptable and take an active role in challenging domestic abuse as not being consistent with a Christian life.

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Contacts for help with domestic abuse

Below there is a list of services and organisations that can support people who are victims of domestic abuse. It is not exhaustive.

Action on Elder Abuse

A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support

Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)

A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.

Website: www.avaproject.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse

A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.

Website: www.caada.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 317 8750

ChildLine

for children wanting to talk to someone.

Telephone: 0800 1111

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.

Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Telephone: 020 7008 0151

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Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.

Website: www.ikwro.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Website: www.lawrs.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

ManKind

Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).

Website: <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line

Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.

Website: www.mensadvice.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone: 0808 2000 247

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC

The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child / children)

Police

Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.

Telephone: 999 – in an emergency

Telephone: 101 – in a non-emergency

Refuge

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Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7395 7700

24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Respect

Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Website: www.respect.uk.net

They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.

Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored

Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

Website: www.restoredrelationships.org

Helpline: 020 8943 7706

Southall Black Sisters

For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women

Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Help Line: [0208 571 0800](tel:02085710800) (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)

Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

Website: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

The Hideout

Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.

Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Telephone: 116 123

Women's Aid

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A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Singhealth

A charity that supports deaf people's wellbeing with services focused on domestic abuse

Crisis Text Service: Text DEAF to 85258

Website: <https://signhealth.org.uk/>

Appendix S

A Guide to Supporting Adult Survivors of Abuse

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Appendix S - A Guide to Supporting Adult Survivors of Abuse

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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NOTE: This guide has been developed in collaboration with a group of survivors between November 2018 to April 2019 and will be reviewed on an annual basis. A relevant paper was shared with Mission Council in March 2019.

Introduction

This appendix is prepared to enable those who have experienced abuse in a faith setting or elsewhere, “survivors,” to find a compassionate, respectful environment within the United Reformed Church (URC), where professionals strive to work on the principle of co-production.

Abuse is an umbrella term to describe any form of maltreatment.²² People who have experienced abuse may identify themselves as victims or survivors but for the purpose of this guide, the term “survivor” is used. The resulting emotional trauma of such abuse may impact for many years if not for a lifetime, especially if that abuse has been perpetrated within a faith setting, as the trauma may be felt more acutely and the survivor can lose their faith in God. Church should be a place of love and safety for all those who enter it, but we recognise that this has not always been the case and persons have been further traumatised by the Church's response to their disclosure.

Many survivors reported that they had not been believed, listened to or were actively avoided when they attempted to disclose. This behaviour re-traumatised them and had a significant impact on their physical and mental health as well as the health of their families. Survivors often reported that they do not always need to speak to a specialist. Survivors want someone who is willing to listen²³ and to connect with them on a human level. Survivors want people who can trust them to be the expert in their own life and offer them the chance to say no to help or to withdraw their involvement if their needs change. The principle of empowerment that underpins adult safeguarding work is thus paramount: people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions.

Responding to disclosure of abuse

There is no right way to respond when someone discloses that they have experienced abuse, but survivors have advised that there are wrong ways to respond. The point of disclosure can be a turning point in a person's life. It can be the moment where the survivor learns that they are believed, loved and treated with dignity and respect. Or it can be the moment where the survivor retreats into their protective shell and decides never to disclose their experiences again. Anyone could be the person that a survivor chooses to disclose to, and it is important the response is empathetic and compassionate, with active listening to allow the person the time and space to talk through their experiences. Silencing survivors is a form of abuse in itself, so active listening is vital, as is supporting the individual to feel safe in their environment. Empathetic listening includes paying attention to your reactions and your body language, if the disclosure is upsetting or engenders feelings of disgust. Your inappropriate response can be retraumatising to the individual, while allowing the person to talk or not is empowering, especially if the abuse has been perpetrated in a faith community. It is important to explain the role of the Synod

²² Definitions of different forms of abuse and neglect can be found on pages 14-17 of *Good Practice 5* and more analysis is offered in [Appendix A6 Signs and Symptoms of abuse](#).

²³ Dale, P., *Adults Abused as Children: Experiences of Counselling and Psychotherapy*; NSPCC, East Sussex and Kent

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Safeguarding Officer (SSO), the professional who is trained to support survivors or offer supervision to those who do, and who is aware of all of the resources the individual may need for their pastoral care. Confidentiality of disclosure is important and should not be shared with anyone other than the Church safeguarding Coordinator and SSO.

When to report a disclosure of abuse

It can be incredibly difficult for a survivor to share their experiences. Their identity must be treated with the upmost respect and confidentiality.

However, when a person reports abuse that is currently being committed, or they report abuse against someone who continues to hold a position of trust within the church, this information must be shared with the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours on a safeguarding need-to-know basis, as there is a possibility that further crimes could be committed and other children or adults may be at risk.

It is possible that someone may disclose historical abuse and may wish no further action to be taken against the alleged perpetrator. They may disclose abuse that was perpetrated within their family or by a person known to them but not associated with the Church. In these situations, the person may have come to church with the intention of receiving pastoral care and support, to feel believed and to start the healing process.

Spiritual abuse, forgiveness and healing

Spiritual abuse, as defined by Oakley & Humphries (2019), "is a form of emotional and psychological abuse and is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it".

This report²⁴ from the Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) confirms that trauma "can have a particularly damaging impact on victims and survivors, particularly where their religion provided the foundation to their morality, beliefs, social relationships and the way they lived their daily lives".

Forgiveness and healing are crucial concepts in Christian life, work and teaching but they are not quick fixes. They are long and difficult processes which people must have the choice to work through, if and when it is right for them. Any action of the Church which presents forgiveness and healing as simplistic solutions without regard to people's pain could be experienced as abuse in itself. The overarching aim should be to allow people space to wrestle with God within the Church without use of specific liturgies, resources or theological texts. Furthermore, many survivors find that they need to access specialist counselling services in order to make sense of what has happened and to start the process of healing. Useful resources can be found at the end of this document.

²⁴ May 2019, [A Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions](#).

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Church's responsiveness

Alarming evidence shows that sexual abuse happens within the family environment, with predominant male alleged perpetrators. People have sometimes experienced abuse for years before reaching a point of disclosure. Research findings with 28 adult survivors of child sexual abuse show the average time from the start of abuse to disclosure as 27.5 years, with delayed disclosure resulting in complex issues and mental ill health. Poor experiences of disclosure further acts as barriers to future support services.²⁵

The church needs to be aware that events such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas festivities may accentuate long-hidden memories of childhood abuse perpetrated by parents or carers. It is important to be aware that not everyone experiences pain in the same way, and those who have been abused may present with different behaviours that are not easily understood.

Congregational response to abuse

Congregations may find it incredibly difficult to believe that abuse can happen in a church, their church, or indeed be perpetrated by those who are loved and respected within the faith community. However, there is an overwhelming body of evidence that abuse can happen within a church setting, as in every other organisation.

There is no blueprint for successfully dealing with these situations, and elders may feel ill-equipped to handle them. Pastoral care is one of the responsibilities of the Elders' Meeting, which is exercised jointly by the ministers and elders of the church. Ministers and elders need to respond with compassion and kindness whilst setting appropriate boundaries on confidentiality on a need-to-know basis. Some churches have found that being open and honest, whilst working within parameters of confidentiality, has maintained confidence.

The pastoral care of all is important – individuals who have disclosed abuse, those accused, concerned families and members of the congregation all require support. Balancing these needs is not an easy task and can be distressing for everyone involved. Navigating this area should be done in consultation with the person who has experienced abuse and the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

It may also be helpful for the Synod to offer additional pastoral support to the local leadership team, providing a safe environment in which people can seek help if they wish.

Care for self

Hearing people disclose abuse can be very difficult for the listener as well, and it is important to be mindful of how to look after yourself when you are offering support to someone who has experienced abuse. It may be that a disclosure of abuse is made to someone who also has experiences of being abused, and this can trigger feelings that have not been fully reconciled.

²⁵ *"I'll be a survivor for the rest of my life: Adult survivors of child sexual abuse and their experience of support services"*, Research by the University of Suffolk.

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It is important to utilise the support available in your local church/Synod and local authority, and ensure those who might witness disclosures are aware of this support, such as elders, ministers, Church-Related Community Workers as well as Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers.

Working with adult survivors of abuse in the URC

Church should be a place of love and safety for all those who enter it, but we recognise that this has not always been the case and that people have been further traumatised by the Church's response to their disclosures.

On behalf of the United Reformed Church, Mission Council instructed the Safeguarding Advisory Group to continue promoting pastoral care and support for adult survivors of abuse, and to oversee and support the work of a survivors' group in the URC. The Safeguarding Advisory Group initiated a project with survivors of abuse with the aim to involve them in all safeguarding developments and integrate their recommendations in the delivery of URC's Safeguarding Strategic Plan (2020-2025).

If a survivor or anyone who is interested in this work is willing to work with the safeguarding team on how we can prevent further abuse, please email safeguarding@urc.org.uk.

Appendix T

A guide to confidentiality and data protection

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GP5 - Appendix T A guide to confidentiality and data protection

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2018-04-04	Martin Woolley	Initial Review Version
2019-11-08	Martin Woolley	Addition of Emergency Contacts
2020-03-14	Martin Woolley	Reviewed

Current Version: 1.0

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Confidentiality

Introduction

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applications for positions of trust, The Beacon Church complies fully with the DBS code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

As a church we also collect personal information about our congregation, in the church and in the groups that meet as part of our church. Please see our Data Protection Policy for further information.

Storage and Access

- Information which is gathered for specific purposes, i.e. medical and emergency contact information (youth and children's groups) or people known to the Beacon Church, information will always be stored in a secure, non-portable filing cabinet
- Electronic information will only be stored on a computer agreed by the church eldership, and only accessed by those who are entitled to as part of their work
- Disclosure information will never be kept on an applicant's personal file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties

Handling

- Information gathered will only be seen by those who are entitled to as part of their work
- We will always comply with a legal obligation i.e. allowing a policeman with a search warrant (DPA 1998)
- In accordance with section 1245 of the police act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage:

- The information gathered will only be used for the purpose for which it was gathered.

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- Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicants' full consent has been given.

Retention

- The data will not be kept for longer than stated by our Data Protection policy
- Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep disclosure information for any longer that is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the unusual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

- Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any contact information or Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure methods i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning.
- However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Within all Church Groups

- Participants are reminded that what is said within the group needs to remain confidential within the group.
- The only exception to this is if a disclosure is of a nature where harm is a concern, then the participant will be reminded that the information will need to be passed on to an appropriate person for legal reasons.
- All groups are reminded that the Elders (or their substitute) are an ex-officio member of all church groups and therefore any pastoral information shared openly in the groups may possibly be shared with them, to aid them in their roles within the life of the church.

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Data Protection

General Guidelines

1. This Policy covers all aspects of data protection, whether hardcopy or digital copy.
2. Personal data means anything that can identify a living person and can be a combination of elements from different sources.
3. Types of personal data about an individual include – name, address, any telephone numbers, email addresses, age, date of birth, names of family members and health or pastoral matters
4. Consent must be sort before any personal data can be kept and stored for any individual by using the consent form below.
5. Sharing of personal data to third parties is strictly prohibited unless if legally required to do so, but due process must be followed. Third parties include anyone who is not part of the church's defined data usage group.
6. The church's data usage group consists of the Trustees (Data Controllers) and any defined roles within the charity that need access to personal data (Data Processors). This list is defined below.
7. Previous members of the data usage group should not retain their own copies of any personal data in hardcopy or digit form. Confirmation must be sort by signed response that such data has been returned or deleted. Please use form below.
8. All hardcopy records containing personal data must be kept in a locked cupboard or filing cabinet on church premises.
9. All digitally stored personal data must be kept in the church's electronic data storage platform or must be kept on a church agreed laptop that is encrypted.
10. Data can only be held for the length of time indicated in the data privacy statement, with an annual review required to remove any expired documents
11. Any individual has the right to request a copy of their personal data held by the church.
12. Any individual has the right to request to have their data corrected, removed or transferred to another data controller.
13. All data requests are to be overseen by the church secretary.
14. Personal Data can only be used for church related activities as defined by the data privacy statement or as per the Additional Data Usage Consent form.
15. When contacting groups of people via email always put the email address in the bcc field.
16. For pastoral or prayer matters where individuals need to be identified seek permission that they are happy for this information to be communicated to a wider audience.

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17. Only minute pastoral or prayer concerns where necessary and destroy or store securely details of these matters.
18. Best practice is to minimize what we keep to essential data only.
19. The utmost must be done to respect and keep everyone's privacy at all times.
20. Prayer lists must only be shared within the context of the church and destroyed once read.

Beacon Church Data Usage Roles

- Leadership Team
- Finance Team
- Admin Team
- Youth and Children's Work Leaders
- Midweek small group leaders
- Safe Guarding Team
- URC Safe Guarding Team
- DBS Verifier
- Pastoral Support Coordinator
- Bookings Coordinator

DATA PRIVACY STATEMENT

The Beacon Church – Canford Heath United Reformed Church

1. Personal data

Personal data relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. Identification can be by the information alone or in conjunction with any other information in the data controller's possession or likely to come into such possession. The processing of personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (the 'GDPR').

2. Data Controller

The eldership (serving elders) of Canford Heath United Reformed Church is the data controller (contact details below). This means it decides how your personal data is processed and for what purposes.

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3. How do we process your personal data?

The eldership of Canford Heath United Reformed Church complies with its obligations under the "GDPR" by keeping personal data up to date; by storing and destroying it securely; by not collecting or retaining excessive amounts of data; by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures are in place to protect personal data.

We use personal data for the following purposes: -

- to administer membership records;
- to provide emergency contact information where appropriate;
- to maintain our financial accounts and records (including the processing of gift aid);
- to provide news and information about events, activities and services at the church;
- to fundraise and promote the interests of the church;
- to manage employees and volunteers;
- to enable the church to provide voluntary services for the benefit of the public in our local community;
- to provide contact details of officers and others with specific responsibilities (eg DBS signatories) to the synod office and Church House. This enables the synod and national administration of the United Reformed Church.
- to manage the lettings of Canford Heath United Reformed Church;
- to manage safe guarding requirements;

4. What is the legal basis for processing your personal data?

- Processing is carried out by a not-for-profit body with a political, philosophical, religious or trade union aim provided: -
 - the processing relates only to members or former members (or those who have regular contact with it in connection with those purposes); and
 - there is no disclosure to a third party without consent; or
- Processing is necessary for carrying out obligations under employment, social security or social protection law, or a collective agreement; or
- Explicit consent of the data subject has been given.

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5. Sharing personal data

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other members of the church in order to carry out a service to other church members or for purposes connected with the church. We will only share your data with third parties with your consent.

6. How long do we keep data?

We retain data on the following basis:

Record Type	Retention Period
Membership rolls	Indefinitely
Members, adherents, friends and emergency contact details	24 months after the last contact
Junior Church roll	until the child/young adult reaches the age of 19.
Junior Church contacts	24 months after the last contact
Gift aid declarations and paperwork	6 years after the calendar year to which it relates
Registers of Marriage	As required by the Registrar General (Indefinitely)
Register of Baptisms	Indefinitely
Register of Funerals	Indefinitely
Personal data relating to events for which additional information is gathered eg Church holidays	Disposed of immediately after the event unless anything has occurred which indicates that records should be retained for a longer period.
Records of attendance of children/young people and helpers	Indefinitely for safeguarding purposes

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Photographs and videos of events	24 months after the event – selected items retained for historical records
Insurance Records	Indefinitely
Safeguarding matters	Indefinitely or until advised otherwise by authorities
Accident Books	3 years from the date of the last entry (or, if the accident involves a child/ young adult, then until that person reaches the age of 19)
Complaints (non-safeguarding)	3 years after resolution of complaint (unless further action is anticipated)
Minute Books	Indefinitely
Employee Records	6 years after the date of termination of employment
Pension Records (money purchase)	6 years after transfer or value taken
Job Applicant Records	6 Months
Vulnerable Adult Outreach Helper Records	Indefinitely

7. Your rights and your personal data

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR, you have the following rights with respect to your personal data:

- The right to request a copy of the personal data which Canford Heath United Reformed Church holds about you (a Subject Access Request or 'SAR');
- The right to request that the eldership of Canford Heath United Reformed Church corrects any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date;
- The right to request your personal data is erased where it is no longer necessary for Canford Heath United Reformed Church to retain such data;
- The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time;

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- The right to request that the data controller provide you with your personal data and where possible, to transmit that data directly to another data controller.
- The right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of your personal data, to request a restriction is placed on further processing;
- The right to object to the processing of personal data;
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office.

8. Further processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Data Protection Notice, then we will provide you with a new notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

9. Contact Details

To exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints please in the first instance contact the Church Secretary at secretary@churc.co.uk or 01202 687697.

You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.

Appendix U

Useful Contacts for All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

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Appendix U - Useful Contacts for All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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Some suggested organisations and services who can provide information, advice and support:

General Contacts

Police

www.police.uk

Tel: 999 in an emergency

Tel: 101 – provides a service for non-emergency issues and will connect you to your local Police service, wherever you call from in the UK.

Local Authority

Every Local Authority provides services to the community, including statutory services such as Children's Services, Adult Care Services, housing and environment. Your local council will have a website with contact details for your local services.

www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

NHS

The National Health Service can provide advice, guidance, support and signposting to local services for all health issues.

www.nhs.uk/service-search

Citizens Advice

Providing free general advice and guidance around a range of concerns such as benefits, debt, relationships, housing, law, discrimination, tax, money, healthcare and education.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

DBS/PVG checking

DDC (Due Diligence Checking Ltd)

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DDC is the registered body that will be processing all DBS/PVG applications for the URC.

<https://www.ddc.uk.net/urc>

Tel: 0845 644 3298 or 0116 260 3055

Samaritans

A crisis helpline, providing a listening service for any worries or concerns.

www.samaritans.org

Tel: 116 123

Thirtynine:eight

An independent Christian charity providing help to individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Previously known as CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service).

www.thirtynineeight.org

Tel: 0303 003 1111

Victim Support

Independent charity supporting victims of crime.

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Tel: 0808 168 9111

Children

Action for Children

Action for Children (formerly NCH – National Children's Homes) is a leading children's charity running over 500 projects and working with children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse.

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

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AFRUCA: Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Afruca is an organisation that seeks to address through prevention and early intervention the welfare of African children in the UK. Areas it gives information on include female genital mutilation, witchcraft and trafficking.

www.afruca.org

Barnardo's

Protecting, supporting and nurturing the UK's most vulnerable children, including campaigning to end child sexual exploitation. Provides leaflets in both English and Welsh for parents, children, young people and professionals, showing how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to keep safe.

www.barnardos.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

CEOP is a command of the National Crime Agency, which helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It offers guidance, advice and accepts direct reporting.

www.ceop.police.uk

Childline

A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to 19 years of age.

www.childline.org.uk

Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

Educate Against Hate

A website giving practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

www.educateagainsthate.com

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)

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Resourcing parents, volunteers and workers providing a range of services including 'Positive Boundaries' which focusses on sexual bullying, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and developing positive gender relationships.

www.familylives.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 2222

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. Working with families that have been affected by sexual abuse and includes adult male and female sexual abusers, young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours, victims of abuse and other family members.

www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

NSPCC

Providing support and advice for keeping children safe from harm and abuse. The website has many useful resources, including research studies and fact sheets.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Parents Protect

Helping parents and carers to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

www.parentsprotect.co.uk

Tel: 0808 1000 900

Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! is the Lucy Faithfull child sexual abuse prevention campaign and confidential helpline for any adult concerned about sexual abuse. Providing help, advice and support for people who are displaying or considering sexually harmful behaviour or for those concerned about another's behaviour, either a child or adult.

www.stopitnow.org.uk

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Tel: 0808 1000 900

Young Minds

A UK charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Tel: 0808 802 5544

Adults

Action on Elder Abuse

A charity which campaigns against the abuse of older people. Their website includes information and research.

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.

Tel: 0808 8088 141

Age UK

Support and advice services for the elderly. The website has many useful resources including research studies and fact sheets as well as information on protecting yourself or others from abuse.

www.ageuk.org.uk

Tel: 0800169 6565

Mencap

Supporting and resourcing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The website has specific advice on safeguarding.

www.mencap.org.uk

MOSAC

Supporting non-abusing parents of sexually abused children.

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www.mosac.org.uk

Tel: 0800 980 1958

Domestic Abuse

Action on Elder Abuse

A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support

Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)

A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.

Website: www.avaproject.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

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CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse

A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.

Website: www.caada.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 317 8750

ChildLine

for children wanting to talk to someone.

Telephone: 0800 1111

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.

Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Telephone: 020 7008 0151

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.

Website: www.ikwro.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Website: www.lawrs.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

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ManKind

Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).

Website: <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line

Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.

Website: www.mensadvice.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone: 0808 2000 247

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC

The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child / children)

Police

Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.

Telephone: 999 – in an emergency

Telephone: 101 – in a non-emergency

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Refuge

Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7395 7700

24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Respect

Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Website: www.respect.uk.net

They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.

Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored

Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

Website: www.restoredrelationships.org

Helpline: 020 8943 7706

Southall Black Sisters

For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women

Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Help Line: [0208 571 0800](tel:02085710800) (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)

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Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

Website: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

The Hideout

Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.

Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Telephone: 116 123

This Is Abuse

A Home Office teen relationship abuse website, which educates, resources and supports young people, and those working with them, who are in abusive relationships.

Website: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Women's Aid

A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

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Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Survivors

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

Support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

www.napac.org.uk

Tel: 0808 801 0331

MACSAS (Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)

Supporting women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

www.macsas.org.uk

Tel: 08088 01 03 40

One in Four

Specialises in supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse, particularly survivors of child sexual abuse and trauma.

www.oneinfour.org.uk

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Rape Crisis England & Wales

An organisation supporting the work of Rape Crisis Centres across England and Wales, and raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse in all its forms.

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

The Survivors Trust

A national umbrella organisation for specialist rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse support organisations throughout the UK and Ireland.

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Tel: 0808 801 0818

SurvivorsUK

Helping men who have been sexually abused and raises awareness of their needs.

NOTE: Sexual violation includes both childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault/rape.

www.survivorsuk.org

Tel: 0203 598 3898

Appendix V

Safeguarding & Digital Communications

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Appendix V - Safeguarding & Digital Communications

Next Review Date: Jan 2023

History of Changes:

2021-09-01 Martin Woolley Initial Review Version from URC

Current Version: 1.0

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This section is to be read in conjunction with Appendix W: Social media guidelines for the United Reformed Church.

1.1 Introduction

The digital world has now become part of everyday living, with the ways that we are able to access content online are changing considerably. This presents positive opportunities to support education, aiding creativity and self-expression. Conversely, this also poses a number of risks including cyber bullying, online grooming and identity theft.

When communicating via the internet and mobile phones, people can feel less wary and talk about things far more openly than they might when communicating face to face. Children and adults need to be educated on the safe use of mobile and internet communications.

1.2 Why online safety?

In the past, safeguarding has mainly revolved around the running of children's activities or events within church premises. Today, however, in addition to traditional activities and forms of communication, safeguarding includes online interaction.

Churches should, therefore:

- encourage children to stay safe online and direct them to age appropriate guidance
- ensure access to the internet on their premises is as safe as possible
- provide workers with policies and procedures for safer online communication with children

1.2.1 Myths about the internet

There are many myths surrounding the internet and how children, in particular, use it. In order to increase their own understanding, and to enable them to support children, parents, carers and workers to stay safe when online, it is important that all churches are aware that these myths exist. Myths include:

Myth: Young people are now so 'net savvy' and adults are almost always technologically incompetent in comparison, that adults will never be able to understand e-safety adequately.

Reality: *Adults tend to lead and children tend to follow. 'Facebook' started as an adult social networking site (and is still only officially available for those over the age of 13). It is true that children may be able to grasp technology quickly but it must not be forgotten that:*

- children often lack maturity in understanding the dangers and consequences of their actions online

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- children take risks as a normal part of growing up and this process now takes place online as well as offline

It is vital that children are well supported as they explore the digital environment.

Myth: Online 'stranger danger' is not real

Reality: *Research has shown that in real life (as opposed to virtual), children are most at risk of sexual harm from people already known to them and that 'stranger danger' is less prevalent. However, in the context of the internet this is not the case, particularly when children are befriended online through social networking or gaming sites. A child may believe their new online friend is who they say they are when, in reality, they are an adult posing as a child (known as 'catfishing'). Most concerning is when initial online contact develops into face to face meetings.*

Myth: Online 'friends' are the same as real-life 'friends'

Reality: *In the online environment and social media platforms, the definition of a 'friend' has changed. Offline, we might consider a friend to be a person who is well known to us and someone we regard with liking, affection and loyalty, whom we have got to know through face to face contact. Over time, through regular digital engagement, people may consider themselves just as much friends with those they meet solely online, even though they may never have met in person, as those they regularly meet with face to face.*

Myth: Children don't engage with strangers on social networking sites

Reality: *When a young person is aware that their friends are part of a particular online community, they are likely to want to join in – whether it's sharing particular digital content, engaging with specific topics or communicating in a certain manner. However, as already mentioned, dangers can arise, especially when young people feel under pressure to engage with as many people online as possible or are not able to assess what is appropriate for them to share online.*

1.2.2 Internet safety for children and adults at risk

No matter how great the internet is for children and adults at risk to explore, there are some areas which are not appropriate for them.

Irrespective of which technology or digital space children or adults at risk use, they need to be aware of:

- Protecting their own safety.
- The risks involved in meeting people online and the danger of being groomed.
- The security of their digital footprints, which can lead to a loss of privacy, identity theft, data misuse and fraud.
- Cyber bullying, online fights, making threats and sexting.
- File-sharing, computer security and copyright law.

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- Exposure to dangerous material such as pornography, racist and other hate-focussed materials, self-harm advocacy, drug paraphernalia, suicide and gambling.
- The addictive nature and dangers of overusing technology.

1.3 Potential problems online

1.3.1 Online grooming

Online grooming is when someone uses the internet to trick, force or pressure a child, young person or someone who is vulnerable into doing something sexual – like sending a naked video or image of themselves.

A person who is grooming others online will sometimes build their trust before talking about doing anything sexual. People can be exploited online without any physical contact ever taking place. The abuser, for example, could ask a child to send naked photos of themselves or perform sexual acts transmitted via a webcam.

Online grooming can be faster than grooming in person, due to the anonymity of the internet, resulting in children, in particular, trusting an online 'friend' more quickly than they would in a face to face encounter. People intent on grooming children online often use the same social media platforms which are popular with children and young people. Online grooming is a crime.

Abusers can use a range of techniques to make contact and establish relationships. These include:

- Gathering personal details online from social networking sites, multi-player games and other platforms.
- Offering opportunities for modelling, especially to young girls.
- Promising meetings with celebrities and offering gifts, such as computer games or tickets to concerts.
- Gaining the confidence by offering positive attention or providing a sympathetic response when personal problems are shared.
- Masquerading as a child or assuming another false identity in order to gain the trust
- Bullying, threatening or blackmailing.

Once the abuser has gained trust online, they might suggest meeting up in person.

There are a range of actions which can be taken by parents/carers and workers to prevent the risks of online grooming, including:

- Discuss the potential risks of online grooming with children and adults at risk. Do not wait for something to happen, but instead talk to them now, on a regular basis.

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- Visit the National Crime Agency's Thinkuknow²⁶ website, which has a lot of useful information for parents, children's workers and children of various age groups.
- Highlight that the internet is a public place and that not everyone online is who they say they are.
- Use parental controls and safe-search facilities based on the age and maturity of children or adults at risk concerned. Remember, however, that these may not be 100% effective and are not a substitute for supervision.
- Explain that personal details should never be given out (e.g. Name, address, phone number, school, etc), and personal information should not be shared (including photos and videos) with strangers on any digital platform.
- Strongly encourage people to set their online social media profiles to 'private' so that only friends and family can see them.
- Set rules for the use of webcams, digital cameras and camera phones.
- Remember that people can be vulnerable to online grooming on all digital platforms, including multi-player gaming websites and social networking websites.
- Encourage people to talk about anything which makes them feel uncomfortable online (such as a stranger making contact), and to save emails, messages and any other evidence.
- Look for any unusual signs, such as children hiding their texts or messages, unknown adults contacting them or sending them gifts, or seeing dramatic changes in their behaviour.
- Report any incident of online grooming to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) as well as the police.
- Keep computers in an open room to allow effective supervision, but be aware that most children and adults at risk can access the internet on their phones without easy supervision.

If, as a worker, you are worried about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, you should follow the reporting procedures in *Section 10: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns* in Good Practice 5.

1.3.2 Digital footprints

Digital footprint is the term used to describe the virtual trail which people leave behind as they explore the internet. Every time someone does something as simple as visiting a website, information about the visit is stored on their computer and by the website itself. Anything which is posted on social media websites can be easily accessed by others and could remain there forever – even after you think it has been deleted.

²⁶

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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Children and adults at risk often don't understand that what they do in the digital world could have huge implications to their reputation in real life over a long period of time, with anything posted online being searched for and retained by other people. Examples include:

- A blog or social networking profile containing comments, photos or videos a young person would not want parents, peers or teachers to see. It is not uncommon for university admissions tutors and employers to look up applicants online.
- Content and music downloaded and shared illegally, even unwittingly.
- Footage of an individual doing something silly, embarrassing or reckless being published and shared online.
- Intimate or naked photos shared with people via text or instant messaging (sometimes under pressure from their partner) which is passed around a wider group. This can make children and adults at risk, vulnerable to sexual exploitation.
- Nasty comments (often referred to as 'trolling' or cyber bullying) are made which they might regret later.

It is therefore essential that people are helped to understand the potential consequences of their behaviour in the digital world, so that they can protect their reputation in real life.

1.3.3 Digital reputations

It is important to help people think about the implications of posting images and comments online. Things to consider exploring with children and adults at risk:

- Encourage them to make the most of built-in privacy tools.
- Explain that every time they go online, they leave a trail.
- Encourage them, with supervision, to type their name into a search engine so they can see what comes up about them.
- Encourage them to ask permission before publishing any content involving their friends or family (and to ask their friends and family to do the same).
- Explain why it is important to be honest when registering for access to websites and services. Many social networking websites, video-sharing sites and blogs have a minimum age limit.
- Discuss with them the moral and legal issues surrounding the posting of material involving others (e.g. A negative comment about someone could be considered slanderous).
- Talk to them about the consequences of sharing intimate or naked images in the digital world, including through text messages (called 'sexting').

1.3.4 Misleading content

It is useful to explain to children and adults at risk that not all information on the internet is fact.

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Some of it might be deliberately misleading and/or designed primarily to sell commercial products. Social media Influencers are people with a large number of followers, who make a living from advertising products through their influence and ability to sell their perfect 'lifestyle'. It is not always easy to understand that they are selling products and not simply sharing their favourite brands and products.

Some websites will report 'fake news' or things that aren't completely true. They might do this in order to scare or to make people do something, such as visiting their website – because they make money from people going to their site. In order to spot fake news, check the name of the website and the web address to see if it looks real, and look at the reporting on known and trusted sites to see if they are also reporting it.

1.3.5 Identity Fraud and Phishing

Identity fraud or identity theft is the illegal act of using someone else's personal information without their permission, typically for economic gain.

Phishing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails pretending to be from reputable companies, in order to get individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers. It may not be immediately obvious that identity fraud or phishing is taking place, so it is essential to protect personal financial details at all times (including pin codes and passwords). Look out for the warning signs, too, such as debits on bank statements of which you are unaware.

Some useful tips include:

- Delete suspicious emails without opening them.
- Be aware that offers which seem too good to be true probably are.
- Install security software on all devices and keep it updated.
- Do not use the same password for all websites or services.
- Never respond to any unexpected email requests or callers looking for personal details.
- Do not respond to emails claiming to be from banks asking for personal details (banks never ask clients to submit this type of information by e-mail).
- Refraining from online purchases unless the URL begins with 'https://' and the padlock symbol is displayed beside it.

1.3.6 Cyber stalking

Cyber stalking is the use of electronic communications to stalk, harass or frightening someone. This may include making false accusations, defamation, threats, vandalism, solicitation for sex or gathering information in order to harass, embarrass or threaten.

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1.3.7 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is no different from real life bullying, except that it happens in the digital world – someone being tormented, teased, threatened, harassed, humiliated or embarrassed. Cyberbullying may involve the use of images, text messages, phone calls and social networking profiles, and is just as unacceptable as bullying in real life. The only difference is that it is not restricted by time or physical location, and so it is therefore harder to escape from.

If someone believes they are being cyberbullied or cyberstalked, they should be encouraged to tell a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher or friend. Children should be aware of the Click CEOP button, present on some websites, through which abuse can be reported. Of course, it may also be necessary for the police to be involved.

1.3.8 Sexting

Sexting is the sending of sexually explicit photos, videos or messages. The content depicts someone in a state of nakedness or in sexually provocative or revealing positions. This indecent imagery, which is often self-generated, can be used to bully and blackmail, with the creator not fully understanding the consequences of what they have produced. Once made public, sexts are very difficult to retract and, apart from causing acute embarrassment and distress, such images can have far more serious consequences.

Sexting can occur in a number of scenarios, including:

- Partners exchanging images with each other (either with both partners' consent or with one partner under duress or without their knowledge).
- Partners sharing private images outside of their relationship, such as passing them around school. Ex-partners can be particularly vulnerable to this type of action, which is often referred to as 'revenge-porn'.
- Friends passing on sexting images which they have received.

Young people often start sexting 'for a laugh' but such behaviour could lead to serious consequences for everyone involved. In the digital world, images can be copied, manipulated or sent to other people within seconds – something which starts a private conversation between two people can quickly reach peers and even complete strangers.

Tips to help children understand the dangers of sexting, include:

- Talking to children about sexting, just as you would about any digital safety issue. This is especially important for older teenagers, who might be in a relationship.
- Discussing sexting as part of a wider conversation about relationships.
- Reminding children why it is important to think carefully before they post anything. It is very difficult to retract an image or piece of information once it is uploaded.

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- Encouraging children not to pass on these kinds of images, even if they are being urged to do so by their peers.
- Explain that, under the sexual offences act 2003, it is illegal for anyone to take, hold or share indecent images of anyone under the age of 18 (even if they are also under the age of 18, and/or the content was created with the consent of that young person).

The police must, by law, record all sexting incidents on their crime system, however they can decide not to take further action against the young person if it is deemed not in the public interest. This is at the discretion of the police.

1.3.9 Exposure to inappropriate and harmful material

Another online risk is exposure to potentially harmful, user-generated content, including violent or pornographic images, gambling websites, self-harm websites or forums, radicalisation websites or forums etc. The content in question might not be illegal, but it could be upsetting, disturbing or otherwise generally unsuitable for children.

Children and adults at risk may come across unsuitable or upsetting content inadvertently, as well as actively looking for content, such as pornography, for example, out of curiosity.

What can workers do about inappropriate and harmful material?

Churches can help to avoid children and adults at risk accessing inappropriate and harmful material in the following ways:

- Children and adults at risk are supervised at all times when using church computers.
- Churches run regular sessions to help educate people about safe internet usage (the Synod Safeguarding Officer can offer advice).
- All people using church computers complete consent and behaviour forms, with expectations of use reinforced.
- Church computers and games consoles have appropriate age controls and safety features in operation.
- Filters on video-sharing websites are operational for church computers.
- The importance of age limits for websites and services are understood by children, as these exist to help protect them from unsuitable content.

1.3.10 Abusive/Illegal Images of Children

As the use of, and accessibility to, the internet has increased, so too has the production of abusive/illegal images of children.

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The possession of abusive/illegal images is a form of child exploitation, despite it not necessarily involving direct interaction between the person possessing the images and the child. The terms 'abusive images of children' or 'illegal images of children' are preferred instead of 'child pornography', in order to highlight the seriousness of the offences. It is also important to be aware that pornography is legal (with some exceptions) yet the making, viewing or distributing of sexual images of children is never legal.

1.4 Advice and Support

1.4.1 Church websites

Here are some tips to help when creating, managing and editing your church website:

- Make sure websites are safe and appropriate for all users.
- When designing sites, make clear what is permissible to copy or use in other places.
- Obtain permission from parents, carers or children before using any pictures of children.
- Use group photographs of children, rather than individuals.
- Do not publish the name or location of any child.
- Do not publish personal email addresses, postal addresses or telephone numbers.
- Make web content as accessible as possible to people with disabilities e.g. using fonts which are easier for people with dyslexia to read.
- Appoint a responsible person to monitor the content of the website.
- Placing the CEOP 'report abuse' button on websites along with the link to the 'thinkuknow'²⁷ internet safety website. This offers effective and age appropriate advice for children, parents and carers.
- Complete a risk assessment before hosting message boards, forums or blogs and ensure that they are password protected.

Please note: Churches are responsible for all content contained within websites, blogs, social media or any other platforms maintained by them.

1.4.2 Use of Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms provide a range of opportunities for children and churches, such as:

- An attractive and powerful communications environment, albeit one in which children need close advice and guidance
- A strong sense of community
- A marketing tool for promoting the church and its various activities and groups
- An evangelistic platform

²⁷

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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Social media platforms also carry a number of risks, including the facilitation of trolling, cyberbullying, cyberstalking and boundary drift when workers befriend children online. Direct messages via social media platforms should be avoided, but where they are used a record of the communication should be kept.

Certain social media platforms have age restrictions and no URC worker should support a child accessing a platform they are too young for.

1.4.3 Workers befriending children online

If workers are to engage with children via social network sites, the advice from CEOP is that this should be done through a public page set up by the church, and not a personal social media account. The benefits of only interacting via a public church page are:

- Transparency.
- Ease of information sharing.
- Ease of management and administration by an individual or team.
- Providing an area for children to interact with each other safely, with supervision and no obligation to interact via their own personal pages.
- Clear boundaries for the worker, and a maintained level of privacy.
- Reduced risk of personal information being used against the worker e.g. bullying.
- Reduced risk of accusations of professional misconduct as boundaries are clearly maintained.
- It is easy to monitor what is being said to a child when communication is all via a public platform.

1.4.4 Filming and photography

Organisations should take great care in the ways in which they create and use photographs or film footage involving children. This does not mean that pictures or filming should be prohibited, but in order to safeguard children it is recommended that the following steps are taken:

- Permission should be obtained from parents/carers before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded.
- Parents/carers should be asked NOT to take photographs that include any child who is not their responsibility, unless permission has been granted.
- It must be made clear why images or films are being made, what they will be used for, who might see them and where they will be stored.
- Children and young people should be asked if they want to be filmed or photographed.
- Use group photographs of children where possible and ensure that individuals cannot be identified by any personal details such as their name, school badge, age or address.

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- All photographs should be appropriate and respectful of the subject.
- Photos and other digital media should be stored in a secure location, ideally on a church computer. If this is not possible it is important to record where the photographs and digital media are stored.
- Consent forms should contain a section covering consent for photography and digital media. See Appendix F: Sample Information and Consent Form.

1.4.5 Electronic communication with children and young people

When communicating with children and young people via email, messaging and other forms of electronic communication, it is advised that:

Appendix X

Responding to allegations of bullying or harassment

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Appendix X - Responding to allegations of bullying or harassment

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Current Version: 1.0

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Bullying and Harassment

Introduction

This document is offered to local churches, all people with ministries, or holding office, in the United Reformed Church, including those exercising the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and the Ministry of Church Related Community Work (hereafter, both referred to as ministers) and those who have responsibility for caring for them.

The United Reformed Church acknowledges that bullying and harassment do occur within local churches and the wider councils. It is important that people should know where to find help if they believe themselves to have been bullied, and that those responsible for pastoral care should be vigilant for signs that bullying may be occurring. These guidelines are offered to enable the parties concerned to respond appropriately.

Conflict is a reality in every human organisation. It can be positive when it presses us to confront difficult issues and disagreements that we might prefer to avoid. It can be creative. However, abuse against individuals or groups within the church is unacceptable.

ACAS produces two booklets dealing with Bullying and Harassment and available to download from its website:

- Guide for employees – <http://bit.ly/38dIIIGY>
- Guide for managers and employers – <http://bit.ly/2wf7JE2>

Whilst these guides are primarily intended for workplaces the advice and guidance apply equally well in other non-employment situations.

Harassment and discrimination are also addressed in United Reformed Church Policy documents held in the Church House public folders:

- Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure for Church House Staff – reviewed November 2019
- Equalities Policy and Procedure for Church House Staff – reviewed November 2019

Definitions

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

‘Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that individual.’

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Harassment of a sexual nature is one of the most common forms of harassment and, along with harassment related to any of the protected characteristics listed here, is outlawed by the Equality Act 2010.

- age
- sex
- disability
- gender identity
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation

There is no legal definition, in the same way, of Bullying. However, it is usually characterised as:

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Most people use the terms interchangeably and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.

Bullying is persistent. It exploits imbalances of power, as between stronger and weaker children on a playground – or between a church treasurer and a minister claiming expenses. It includes online and text/telephone bullying. Section 3 below is a list of behaviours which can legitimately be regarded as bullying, and these may be helpful to an individual seeking confirmation that the treatment s/he has been receiving does indeed constitute bullying.

Ministers are sometimes the targets of bullying. They can also be bullies themselves. Elders have a duty of care to both ministers and church members.

Churches may unwittingly bully a minister or member. There may be a situation where one person is singled out for public criticism, as in the case of a fabric committee convener, organist or youth leader being “reviewed” by an elders or church meeting. Individuals may find themselves isolated because they have expressed an unpopular opinion. Where a church is in pain it will sometimes look for a scapegoat and bullying becomes the oppressive tool.

Churches can also be the victims of a bully. It is not uncommon for someone with an aggressive personality to intimidate an entire congregation.

Cases of bullying and harassment create safeguarding concerns about emotional (and often discriminatory) abuse for adults as well as children. Good Practice 5 (the URC’s safeguarding handbook) recognises a broad spectrum of situations that might affect any child or adult ‘who, due to disability, mental function, age, or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation’ (GP-5 Page 16)

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In the context of the United Reformed Church there is accountability and mutual responsibility for leadership especially in the Elders Meeting. This means that Ministers and Church officers should expect healthy debate and sometimes correction about the way they function. Bullying only starts when that proper discussion gets seriously out of hand.

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour

This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment

- a. removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice
- b. isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities
- c. consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing
- d. setting out to make someone appear incompetent
- e. persistently picking on someone in front of others
- f. deliberate sabotage of work or actions
- g. deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
- h. overloading with work/reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest
- i. displays of offensive material
- j. use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties
- k. cyber bullying including on social media such as Facebook
- l. repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private
- m. spreading malicious rumours to third parties
- n. public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and 'putting down'
- o. personal insults and name-calling
- p. aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation
- q. persistent threats about security
- r. making false accusations
- s. aggressive bodily posture or physical contact
- t. talking/shouting directly into someone's face
- u. direct physical intimidation, violence or assault

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Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur over the phone, in written communication including email and texts and through social media.

Theological Reflection

Every person is made in the image of God and reverence should undergird all our relationships. This is an easy thing to say but a lifelong challenge to live. The very fact of our diversity puts us at odds with one another: this has been the human experience from Cain and Abel to the present day.

The domination of the weak by the strong is a dynamic built into the natural world of which we are a part. But we believe that we are called to a better way. In Christ we see a God for whom no one is expendable. Indeed, it is precisely in "the least of these" that we are invited to encounter Christ in our own lives. To follow Christ is to treat each person with respect and to negotiate disagreements honourably.

This challenge is not merely a matter of individual discipleship. It is also the basis for a calling which rests upon the church as a community seeking to follow Jesus command "Love one another as I have loved you". The church must constantly strive to reflect the highest standards in personal and corporate behaviour.

Consequences of Harassment and bullying

A person who is harassed or bullied may experience any number of stress responses: tears, anxiety, low morale, vulnerability, lack of confidence, anger, shame or depression. S/he may want to withdraw in self-protection. S/he may also find it impossible to pray, with a resulting crisis of faith. Destructive behaviours may develop: a victim-like refusal to engage, a loss of sensitivity to others, aggressiveness, self-harming or alcohol or drug misuse, to name a few. There may be physical symptoms such as asthma, hypertension, sleeping or eating disorders, sexual dysfunction or migraine.

Congregations that are bullied may develop a bullying culture with "no-go areas" to avoid discussion of painful issues. They may allow destructive behaviour to continue because they do not have the strength to confront it. A minister or member may find him/herself continually rushing around soothing ruffled feathers and persuading others not to resign in the face of behaviour which goes unchallenged. Where such dynamics operate, church meetings cannot do their work and worship may begin to feel hollow. The church may also acquire a negative reputation in the community.

These effects may be serious and long-lasting. It is essential that cries for help be taken seriously. It is also important to recognise that a person who is the victim of bullying may be reluctant to seek help, either because his/her confidence has been undermined, because s/he feels ashamed or responsible, or because s/he believes that objecting to inappropriate behaviour will cause unacceptable disruption to important relationships. In such cases it may fall to a third party, whether an elder, another minister, a friend, etc. to call the attention of the wider church to what is happening.

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In the United Reformed Church there are distinctions between those who are subject to grievance and disciplinary procedures and those who are not and this has consequences in dealing with bullying

Prevention

Identifying bullying is not always easy, but the best prevention is the church's determination not to tolerate unacceptable behaviour. While all of us have bad days and say or do things that we later regret, a healthy community will be a place where apologies are offered and forgiveness is expressed. However, these are difficult issues and apologies may not bring peace to either party, without support to discuss the pain experienced and space to work through the conflict constructively.

The United Reformed Church has structures in place which offer the foundation for good relationships and mutual understanding:

- Separate Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and elders (General Assembly 2010)
- Role descriptions for ministers and other leaders through LMMR – the Local Mission & Ministry Review – so that expectations are clear
- Terms of settlement for ministers, which should be explicit on such matters as holiday entitlement, working hours and claimable expenses

Given that money and conflicting role expectations, as well as power and position, can be frequent triggers for bullying behaviour, clarity on these matters provides a framework for good relationships. Not everyone is covered by these guidelines, so it is helpful to remind everybody that treating others with respect and dignity is an essential part of life in the church.

Ministers should take responsibility to ensure that they have the pastoral support they need. It is not realistic for the synod moderator to be the sole provider of support. Ministry is demanding, particularly in a time of change and uncertainty, and it is inevitable that ministers will sometimes find themselves at the receiving end of someone's distress or strong disagreement. While intimidating behaviour is always undesirable, a one-off loss of control can be forgiven in the context of a relationship of trust. It is important that every minister has someone to turn to in times of stress and difficulty both for personal and pastoral support and for technical support to help them change the environment by working through the processes available.

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Acting on Bullying and Harassment

Making an allegation

Someone who believes that s/he has been the target of harassment or bullying, or a third party witnessing such behaviour, should not hesitate to seek help. The sooner this is done the better, even if they are not certain that it is bullying, but they feel that someone's conduct displays unwanted behaviour. Such request for help should always be treated seriously. In a local church, the minister, church secretary or chair of the local CRCW committee, would normally be the first port of call. Where that is inappropriate, the synod moderator may be contacted. An allegation against a synod moderator should be directed to the General Secretary.

The following steps will assist others in addressing the problem, and support should always be provided so that an adequate disclosure can be made.

- Assemble the facts. Keep a log with the date of each incident and a description of what happened. Keep a record of emails and letters, as well as notes of conversations and telephone calls.
- Where possible, note the names of witnesses.
- Provide a copy of whatever role description may exist if the bullying or harassment has been about the performance of duties.
- Record consequences as well as actions, including any impact on health, emotional well-being, role performance and/or other relationships.
- If other people have been affected, note this too. Consult them as to whether they would be prepared to disclose their experiences as well.
- Make sure that you have the personal support you need. Put this in place yourself if it is not adequately forthcoming from the church.

Intervening on behalf of someone else

Where bullying is suspected to be occurring, it is important not to remain silent. In the first instance a witness should speak privately with the person(s) perceived to be the victims of bullying. Several questions should be explored:

- Is the behaviour untypical and associated with a contained situation of conflict or is it part of an ongoing pattern? (Remember that each separate incident may appear trivial. The bullying may lie in the persistent nature of the harassment.)
- What action, if any, has the recipient taken to challenge the aggressive behaviour?
- If no action has been taken, what is the reason for this?
- If action has been taken, what effect has it had?

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Following such exploration there will be a judgment to be made. If the person on the receiving end of aggressive behaviour sees it as an isolated incident or otherwise feels in control, it is possible that the situation should simply be monitored over an agreed period to determine whether further action is needed. However, a witness should not hesitate to report the situation to the synod moderator, pastoral committee convener or General Secretary (if the moderator is perceived to be the bully) as an act of intervention if s/he believes that persistent bullying is occurring and that the person being bullied is unable or unwilling to act in his/her own defence.

This decision must be taken with sensitivity as it could be experienced as compounding the bullying. However, the United Reformed Church can only act if those who witness harassing behaviour do not conceal or deny it.

Responding to an allegation of harassment or bullying

Whenever an allegation is made, the person receiving it should take it seriously. Such accusations are often hard to make, but care needs to be taken that the accusation is not malicious. Steps should be taken to ensure that pastoral support is made available to the complainant, the alleged perpetrator (as appropriate), and any others who may be affected, such as the family of the complainant or other people involved in the situation.

Confidentiality should be carefully maintained for the protection of all concerned: the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, innocent bystanders, and the church itself. Where there is any danger of reputational damage to the church, particularly if there is the possibility of media interest, the URC Press Officer, is available to offer guidance (020 7520 2715).

The following strategies are recommended as good practice.

1. An exploration of whether there is anything to investigate further. It is not always easy to tell where the fault lies. It might be with an alleged perpetrator or with a malicious complainant.
2. Informal approach. Sometimes a complainant may want support in an honest discussion with the other person involved about what has happened with the expectation that the person who has acted inappropriately will be prepared to hear and apologise. (See Matthew 18:15-17, which indicates that when one person has been unable to make an offender take notice, two people should then go.)
3. Mediation. After an informal approach and if both parties want to find reconciliation and healing of the relationship, a trained mediator can lead them through a process of listening, extending and accepting apologies, and identifying solutions for the future. Mediation is future-oriented: it is not concerned with past grievances as much as future well-being. This mediation should be exercised by someone other than the synod moderator so that they remain available for oversight of the broader picture and care for all concerned. It may be appropriate to use a

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mediator from another Synod and it is always important that the mediator is well trained and experienced.

4. A complainant should never be pressured to confront an alleged perpetrator.
5. Formal procedure.
 - a. In the case of an allegation against a minister, the caution stage of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process offers a suitable procedure (see The Manual, Section O, AA Caution Stage). Very serious cases might warrant the bypassing of the caution stage and reference to the commission stage of the Disciplinary Process itself.
 - b. In the case of an allegation by a minister against a church member or members, a local church/post, a ministerial colleague, the synod moderator or synod officers, the grievance procedure pertains.
 - c. The right of appeal exists in these procedures.
 - d. It is always essential that those using the procedures should be well trained in using them.
6. Outcomes. Where bullying or harassment has taken place, successful resolution of the situation includes an acknowledgement on the part of the perpetrator, identification of any underlying causes with strategies for addressing them where possible, the offering and receiving of apologies, and the willingness of the perpetrator to accept help in changing his/her behaviour. A formal mechanism to review the situation in an appropriate time frame should be agreed.
7. Legal action. Where there has been physical violence or serious psychological or sexual abuse, it is a police matter. The church should encourage and support contacting the police in this situation.
8. False allegations. Where investigation reveals that an accusation has been made maliciously, this is a disciplinary offence. There may be issues of mental illness or other mitigating circumstances to consider. However, given the damage to the reputation of the person accused, some form of public exoneration may be appropriate.
9. Evaluation. There will always be lessons to be learned from intervention in a situation of bullying or harassment. Time should be set aside for serious consideration of what has been learned and how new insights might be shared, including the suggestion of amendments to URC guidelines and procedures.

If accused of bullying or harassment

- Take the matter seriously. Consider your behaviour and do not be too quick to dismiss an accusation as a sign that the other person has a problem.

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- Where apologies are due, offer them. But recognise that an apology might not be enough to restore right relations.
- Allegations must be proven and there is no automatic assumption that you are guilty. However, denials will not be taken at face value. Bullying and harassment are serious matters and require investigation.
- Do not hesitate to seek help and support from the wider church where you fear that local church processes are not strong enough to address serious accusations. Trained mediators are available to advise and assist: these may be recruited from outside the synod if necessary.
- If formal procedures are instigated, give them your full cooperation.
- Make sure that you have the personal support you need. Put this in place yourself if it is not adequately forthcoming from the church.

URC Assembly Equalities Committee

February 2020

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GP5 Forms

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Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form

Where a person is in imminent danger of harm or a criminal act may have been committed, the police must be notified immediately on 999. Otherwise, call 101 to report a crime or any other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

- Please fill in this form with the information available within 24 hours after becoming aware of a safeguarding incident or concern. You do not have to fill in all sections.
- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible, and do not interpret what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.
- The completed form must be passed on or sent by secure email to the designated safeguarding person, and immediately followed up after sending.

Date on which this form is completed			
Full name of the person reporting the concern/incident			
Relationship to child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk			
Church details, if known	Synod	Church	Number
Contact details of church or organization, if known	Address	Phone numbers	Email
Full name of child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk			
Date of Birth, if known			

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Contact details, if known	Address		Phone numbers	Email
Has the individual given consent to report? (or report as appropriate)	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:
If under 18, have the parents/carers /guardians of the child been informed?	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:
Please give a summary of the safeguarding incident/concern				
Date/time of incident				
What happened? Please provide detailed information about the circumstances and the person experiencing or being at risk of harm, abuse or neglect (preferably as a timeline)				
When did it happen? (date, time)				
Where did it happen? (specific location)				
What action/s were taken, and by whom?				

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Name of anyone involved and in what way, including witnesses	
Other services or agencies involved <u>Note:</u> If referred to statutory authorities, or other services, please include name and contact details	
Next steps or recommendations	
INTERNAL USE	
Date received	
Full name of Designated Person	
Progress	
Conclusion	

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General Information and Consent Form

Details of participant

Full name:

Address:

.....

Gender: Male / Female Date of birth:

Doctor's name, address & telephone number:

.....

Current medical conditions (including asthma, allergies, migraine, diabetes, epilepsy, etc):

.....

Any medication currently being taken:

.....

To request that medication be given: Please complete *Request to Administer Medication* form.

Any additional needs (e.g. special dietary requirements, disability, etc):

.....

National Health Number: Blood Group:

Date of last anti-tetanus injection:

In the last four weeks, has the participant suffered from or been in contact with any disease which may be contagious or infectious? If yes, please give brief details:

.....

.....

Contact details of parent/carer

Name:

Address:

.....

Home phone: Other phone:

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Email address:

If you do not hold parental responsibility for the participant (e.g. if you are a foster carer/ grandparent, etc) please give details of the person with parental responsibility for them:

Name:

Home phone: Other phone:

Address:
.....

Details of alternative emergency contact

Name:

Home phone: Other phone:

Event details

Name of group (or event):

Venue: Date(s) of event:

Do you allow the participant to make their own way home?

If not, who will collect them?

General consent

Please note that these declarations must be signed by the parent/carer of the participant named on this form or by a person with parental responsibility for the participant.

I give consent for to attend and participate in the normal activities of the above group/event. I acknowledge the need for them to behave responsibly and to take note of any safety instructions.

I understand that while involved they will be under the care and supervision of the approved adult workers appointed by the church, though during periods of free time close supervision by workers may not always be possible. While these workers will take all reasonable care of the participants, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered during, or as a result of, the activity.

In the event of illness or accident requiring emergency treatment, I give consent for them to receive emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment as considered necessary by the medical professionals present. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me first.

Signed: Dated:

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Photography and video

From time to time, we may take photographs or videos of the participants to provide a reminder of the event for those involved and to use on church displays, posters and flyers, church website, and occasionally in the local press. Photos or videos used publicly will focus on activities and groups rather than individuals; they will not show the outside of an identifiable building and participants will not be named or linked with any personal details. Photos or videos will not be taken if the participant is themselves unwilling.

Are you happy for photos / videos to be taken of the participant named on this form? Yes / No

Please circle Yes or No to make clear in which ways you are willing for them to be used:

Displays Yes No

Publicity (e.g. posters/flyers) Yes No

Website Yes No

Press Yes No

I give consent for photos/videos of the participant named on this form to be used, as above.

Signed:

Dated:

Electronic communication

It can sometimes be helpful for workers to communicate directly with older children via mobile phone, email and social networking websites. For example, to share information about an event, to find out who is planning to attend, to seek feedback, or to offer encouragement. Communication would be kept within reasonable hours, would be appropriate to the working relationship, a record would be kept, and would be accountable to other workers.

Please circle Yes or No to make clear in which ways workers may contact this participant:

Text messages Yes No

Email Yes No

Social networking websites Yes No

I give consent for workers to contact the participant named on this form, as shown above.

Signed:

Dated:

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Request to Administer Medication

Please complete this form to request that a church worker gives medication to a child or supervises a child's self-administration of medication. Please understand that no worker is obliged to do so, though many will be willing.

Event details

Name of group (or event /activity)

Venue: Date (of event/activity):

Details of participant

Full name:

Address:

.....

Gender: Date of birth:

Medical condition or illness for which medication is required:

.....

Details of medication

Name of medication (as described on the container):

Date medication was dispensed:

Length of time the participant will take this medication:

Directions for use

Dosage - how much and at what time of day?

Method - how should the medication be given?

.....

Any special precautions?

.....

Any known side effects?

Please discuss any emergency procedures with the group leader prior to the event.

Details of parent / guardian / carer

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Name:

Home phone No: Other phone No:

Email address:

If you do not have parental responsibility (e.g. if you are a foster carer / grandparent, etc) please give details of someone with parental responsibility:

Name:

Home phone No: Other phone No:

Email address:

Emergency Contact

Name: Relationship to the child:

Home phone No: Other phone No:

Email address:

Declaration of consent

Please note that these declarations must be signed by the parent of the participant named on this form, or by a person with parental responsibility for the participant.

I request and give consent for an adult worker to administer medication to the participant named on this form, in accordance with the information and instructions provided on this form. If relevant, I have provided written procedures for administering this medication in an emergency and will discuss these with the group leader before the event.

I undertake to give the medication personally to the group leader at the start of the event in a clear plastic bag with the participant name on it.

Name:

Signed: Dated:

OR

I give permission for the participant named on this form to carry the medication and administer it themselves, as necessary.

Name:

Signed: Dated:

Appendix J

Risk Assessment Record

Risk assessment of:

Assessor:

Date:

Overview of activity / location / equipment / conditions being assessed:

Context of the assessment:

Hazard(s) identified	Person/s affected	Existing controls (how the risk is being mitigated)	a	b	a x b	Additional controls required
Signed:				Review date:		

Risk Assessment Record

The assessor can assign values for the 'hazard severity' and 'likelihood of occurrence' on scales of 1 – 5 to aid with rating risks:

Hazard Severity (a)	Likelihood of Occurrence (b)
1 – Trivial (e.g. discomfort, scratch, slight bruising) 2 – Minor (e.g. small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need) 3 – Moderate (e.g. strain, sprain, incapacitation > 3days) 4 – Serious (e.g. fracture, amputation, hospitalisation > 24 hrs) 5 – Fatal	1 – Remote (almost never) 2 – Unlikely (occurs rarely) 3 – Possible (could occur, but uncommon) 4 – Likely (recurrent, but not frequent) 5 – Very likely (occurs frequently)

The risk rating (high, medium or low) indicates the response to be taken for the assessed risks.

	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Fatal
Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

Rating Bands (a x b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 - 12)	HIGH RISK (15 - 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	-STOP THE ACTIVITY- Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to medium or low level

Risk Assessment

Action plan in respect of:

Prepared by:

Ref no.	Action to be taken, including cost	By whom	Target date	Review date	Outcome at review date
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Signed:

Date:

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Volunteer Application Form

to be used only in conjunction with relevant role description

The information of this application form will be kept confidentially by church/the place of worship/group, unless requested by an appropriate authority. If there is insufficient room to fully answer any question, please continue on separate sheet(s).

Name of church/place of worship/group:	
Role applied for, or areas of interest:	Ref:
Surname:	Contact telephone numbers Please indicate convenient times for us to contact you. Discretion will be used when contacting you at work. Home: Work: Mobile:
First name(s):	
Address:	
Email:	
What appeals to you about this role?	
Please give details of previous experience of working with children, young people or adults at risk.	
What skills can you bring to this role? Please include details of relevant qualifications or training.	

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Employment and work experience

Please describe briefly any work (whether paid or unpaid) which you have undertaken.
Highlight (*) the two most relevant and note what you have achieved.

From Month/Year	To	Employer	Job title/responsibilities	Reason for leaving

References

Please give details of two individuals, who will provide character or employment references where appropriate, please note these people should not be related to you, in a relationship with you or reside at your home address. One of these must be your present or most recent employer, or client if you are undertaking consultancy work, or one of your teachers/tutors. The other should be a person who is able to comment on your ability to perform the role for which you are applying.

Name:	Name:
How is the referee known to you?	How is the referee known to you?
Position:	Position:
Address:	Address:
Telephone:	Telephone:
Email:	Email:

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Availability

Are you available for interview on ?

Please give the date from which you are available for employment or voluntary work:

Criminal record checks

If the role you are applying for involves frequent or regular contact with or responsibility for children or adults at risk, you will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or the Scottish equivalent, a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) disclosure record. To proceed with this, you will be asked to complete a self-declaration form, which needs to be placed in a separate envelope, sealed and sent to the appropriate person at the time of application, before the deadline.

The form will not be opened before the decision to interview has taken place.

(Please tick):

To the best of your knowledge, does the role you are applying for require frequent contact with children or adults at risk of abuse or neglect?

Yes

No

Declaration:

1. I declare that the information given on this form is correct and understand that, on appointment, any misleading statements or deliberate omissions will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action if employed.
2. I acknowledge that an appointment, if offered, will be subject to satisfactory references and clear criminal record checks for those who undertake regulated activities and work with children and/or adults at risk.
3. If it applies, I have sent the self-declaration form to the person advised in a separate, sealed envelope.

Signed:

Date:

Name (please print):

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.

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Reference Request Form

Dear _____ has given your name as a referee for the role of _____ at The Beacon Church.

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of the role description and person specification. These will give you an idea of what the role will involve, and provide information about the skills and qualities that we are looking for.

All the information you provide will be kept in a secure place and will only be shared with the designated person for safeguarding children and those responsible for recruitment.

You will see that the role involves working with children and young people, so I am sure you will understand that it is important to respond as fully as you can and to be completely open and honest.

If you have any questions about completing this reference, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss. You can either email vicky@churc.co.uk or you can call 07456534338

The reference should be returned to Vicky Piggott-Genge at The Beacon Church, Mitchell Road, Canford Heath, BH17 8UE

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this reference; it is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Vicky Piggott-Genge

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PROVIDED FOR _____

How long have you known this person? _____ [Years] _____ [Months]

In what capacity do you know them?

1. Please can you confirm the applicant's position within your organisation and how long they have held it.

2. How would you rate the applicant's level of work?

(Outstanding, very good, good, satisfactory or below average. If below average, please state why.)

3. Please can you comment on whether the applicant would be suitable for this type of work, relating your answers to the job description and person specification attached. Please use an extra sheet if required.

4. Is there anything that we should be made aware of that could prevent the applicant from fulfilling the duties of the role?

5. Because the role/job involves work with children and young people do you have any reason to be concerned about this person supporting vulnerable groups and having this responsibility?

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Yes No

If you have answered 'Yes', please either provide details below or indicate your willingness to be contacted for further details.

6. Would you employ the individual again?

Yes No

If no, please state why.

7. Please assess the person on the following:

	Poor	Average	Very Good	N/A
Responsibility				
Reliability				
Punctuality				
Ability to keep appropriate boundaries				
Trustworthiness				
Ability to keep their temper when provoked				
Ability to work as a member of a team				
Understanding children's/vulnerable adults' needs				

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Awareness of risks to young people/vulnerable adults				
Practical application of policy and procedure				

We would be grateful if you could add any additional information to assist us.

Signed:

.....

Date:

.....

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Telephone number:

.....

Email address:

.....

Thank you for providing this information. We will contact you to confirm that you have written this reference. If you have questions on how we are going to use this data you can read our privacy notice here: <http://beacononline.co.uk/policies/>

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Self Declaration Form for a Position Requiring a Disclosure

This confidential Self Declaration Form must be completed by **all those wishing to work with children and/or adults** experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect. It applies to all roles, including ministers, CRCWs, employees, ordinands and volunteers, who may be in a leadership position, or in a role that has contact with children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. This form is strictly confidential and will be stored safely as required by the General Data Protection Regulations. Except under compulsion of law, it will be seen only by those involved in the recruitment/appointment process and the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer or someone acting in a similar role who may need to view the data in order to carry out the United Reformed Church (URC)'s safeguarding duties. In signing this form, you are consenting to the URC storing and processing this information for safer recruitment and safeguarding purposes.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

As a place of worship/organisation we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, and all other relevant legislation, and the expectations of the Information Commissioner's Office relating to the data privacy of individuals.

All applicants who wish to work with children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect are asked to complete this form, detach it from the application form and return it, to the person detailed below, **in a separate, sealed envelope**.

To:

[Insert name of person processing Disclosure and Barring Service checks.]

Address:

.....

Position/Role applied for:

.....

Self Disclosure

If the role you are in or have applied for involves frequent or regular contact with, or responsibility for, children or adults at risk, you will be required to provide a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate in England and Wales, which will provide details of criminal convictions. This may also include a barred list check depending on the nature of the role (see organisational guidance about eligibility for DBS/PVG checks.)

Have you ever been known to any children's services department or police as being a risk or potential risk to children or adults at risk?

Yes / No

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Have you been the subject of any investigation by any organisation or body due to concerns about your behaviour towards children or adults at risk?	Yes / No
Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children or adults at risk?	Yes / No
Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour?	Yes / No
Do you have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) 2013?	Yes / No
If "Yes" to any of the above, please provide details on a separate sheet.	

Declaration

To help us ensure that we are complying with all relevant safeguarding legislation, please read the accompanying notes and tick the boxes below.

I (Full name) of

(Address)
:

<input type="checkbox"/>	agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of appointment may be withdrawn if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently comes to the organisation's attention.
<input type="checkbox"/>	agree, in accordance with the organisation's procedures, if required, to provide a valid DBS certificate or PVG details and consent to the organisation clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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 and young people or adults at risk.
<input type="checkbox"/>	agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing applications if I am convicted of an offence after I take up any role/post within the place of worship/organisation. Should this come to light in another way, I understand that my

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	failure to disclose will lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or adults at risk and/or the termination of my role/employment.
	agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing disclosure applications if I become the subject of a police and/or a social services/ (children's social care or adult social care)/social work department investigation. I understand that failure to do so will lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or adults at risk and/or the termination of my role/employment.
	understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the DBS/PVG 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 children or adults at risk.
	acknowledge that an appointment, if offered, will be subject to satisfactory references and clear criminal record checks for those who undertake regulated activities and work with children and/or adults at risk.
	declare that the information given on this form is correct and understand that on appointment, any misleading statements or deliberate omissions will be regarded as grounds for safeguarding measures aimed at protecting children, young people or adults at risk, or disciplinary action in the case of employers.

Signed:

Date:

Name [Please print]

Legal Information– ATTACHED NOTES

The disclosure of any offence may not prohibit appointment/employment. Please refer to our Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy.

As the position is exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, this check will reveal details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as formal convictions not subject to DBS filtering rules. Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this position is exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Orders as applicable within the UK), and you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are "spent" under the provisions of the Act with the exception²⁸ of those that are subject to the DBS filtering

²⁸ Pursuant to The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013.

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rules.²⁹ In the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children or adults at risk within the church/organisation.

This process is subject to a strict code to ensure confidentiality, fair practice and security of any information disclosed. The DBS and Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice and our own procedures are available on request for you to read. It is stressed that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to appointment, only if the nature of any matters revealed could be considered to place children or adults at risk at risk. As a place of worship/organisation we agree to abide by the Code of Practice on the use of personal data in employee/employer relationships under the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as the expectations of the DBS and Disclosure Scotland Service.

As a condition of employment or voluntary work, we ask that you keep us informed of any other work (either paid or voluntary) which you are undertaking which involves working with children or adults at risk. Should ever we need to refer an individual to any of the lists of people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults at risk then we would also inform them of any knowledge we have of that individual working in any other capacity with children/adults at risk.

Notes for England and Wales

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 it is an offence for any organisation to offer employment to anyone who has been convicted of certain specific offences, or included on either of the two barred lists held by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the post falls within the scope of regulated activity (as defined by the DBS, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). An enhanced with barred list check must be completed. Those working with children and/or adults at risk in posts which fall outside the scope of regulated activity may still be eligible for an enhanced disclosure WITHOUT a barred list check.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The DBS came into existence on 1 December 2012. The DBS offers both an enhanced check and for those engaged in regulated activity an enhanced with a barred list check.

DBS Eligibility Guidance: www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance

²⁹ The filtering rules can be found at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-rules-for-criminal-record-check-certificates and
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance

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Emergency Contact Details Consent Form

By filling in and signing this form you are agreeing to the Trustees of the Beacon Church (Canford Heath United Reformed Church Charity) collecting and processing your personal data in accordance with our Data Privacy Statement which is available in the church office and is displayed on our information board.

Name:	
-------	--

Emergency Contact 1

Name:	
Telephone Number:	
Relationship:	

☐

I confirm that I have consent to use this person's information.

Emergency Contact 2

Name:	
Telephone Number:	
Relationship:	

☐

I confirm that I have consent to use this person's information.

Yours sincerely

Canford Heath United Reformed Church Secretary

On behalf of the Trustees of Canford Heath United Reformed Church

Signature:		Date:	
------------	--	-------	--

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Additional Data Consent Form

Addressee Name

The Trustees of Canford Heath United Reformed Church collect and process data in accordance with our Data Privacy Statement which is available in the church office and is displayed on our information board.

However, the elders now wish to collect and process data which goes beyond the scope of the Data Privacy Notice and we therefore seek your express permission to do so.

The data we will be collecting and processing	
The reason we are collecting it	
Where and how the data will be held	
How long we will be holding the data	

Please indicate your consent to Canford Heath United Reformed Church processing this data by signing and dating below.

We will retain this form as evidence of your agreement to the processing of the data until such time as the data is destroyed. You may withdraw your consent at any time by writing to the Church Secretary.

Yours sincerely

Canford Heath United Reformed Church Secretary

On behalf of the elders of Canford Heath United Reformed Church

I,.....(full name) consent to the processing of my personal data in accordance with the details above.

Signature		Date	
-----------	--	------	--

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Emergency Contact Details Consent Form

By filling in and signing this form you are agreeing to the Trustees of the Beacon Church (Canford Heath United Reformed Church Charity) collecting and processing your personal data in accordance with our Data Privacy Statement which is available in the church office and is displayed on our information board.

Name:	
-------	--

Emergency Contact 1

Name:	
Telephone Number:	
Relationship:	

☐ I confirm that I have consent to use this person's information.

Emergency Contact 2

Name:	
Telephone Number:	
Relationship:	

☐ I confirm that I have consent to use this person's information.

Canford Heath United Reformed Church Secretary

On behalf of the Trustees of Canford Heath United Reformed Church

Signature:		Date:	
------------	--	-------	--

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Lone Working Form

Remember the main reason for someone asking to meet with you will not necessarily be for you to load them with advice. Try to listen to what they are saying, perhaps saying their words back to them.

Name of Leader:	Name of person being met:
Agreed Venue:	Agreed time:
Reason for meeting: (i.e. young person requested a meeting)	
Issues discussed:	
Specific comments made/suggested:	

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Trip & Activity Information

To be completed by leader	
Name of Group:	
Area Visiting:	
Reason for Visit:	
Leader in Charge:	
Emergency Contact No:	
Mode of Transport:	
Location of Activity:	
Time of Activity:	
Leaders attending:	

Completed by:

Date:

Time:

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Trip & Activity Checklist

Item To be checked	Confirmation (Include tick and your initials)
1. Overall leaders competence to deliver activity (includes DBS checks, policies signed etc)	
2. Correct insurance cover in place	
3. Qualified first aider present	
4. Correct Staffing ratios	
5. (children and youth only) Consent forms completed & present inc medical & emergency information for each young person	
6. (Children and youth only) Parents/Carers have been informed of the activity (to be done at least 7 days before date of activity)	
7. Adequate transport (inc insurance) arranged	
8. Risk assessment completed	
9. Register of leaders & young people completed (to be completed on departure and return of the trip)	
10. Mobile phone available for the trip duration	

Completed by: Date: Time: