



# **Safeguarding Adults at Risk**

**May 2021**

# INDEX

Contacts and information	2
Policy Statement	3
Part 1 Responding to concern	5
Part 2 Safe recruitment, support and supervision	9
Part 3 Safe behaviour	11
Part 4 Safe practice and premises	13

## **Contact Details**

### **Designated Persons for Safeguarding**

Fay Hanniker 07729038008

Gary Tuttle 07810 868066

### **Safeguarding Trustee**

Frances Jeffrey

### **Southern Counties Baptist Association – Association Safeguarding Contact**

Joy Cheung 07712 508779

<http://www.scba.org.uk/Groups/349113/safeguarding.aspx>

**Police:** 101

### **Wokingham Adult Social Care – 0118 9746772**

Reporting a Concern – 0118 974 6800 or out of normal working hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team 01344 786 543

# Policy Statement

Safeguarding is the protection of adults and children from harm, abuse or neglect. This policy relates specifically to Adults at Risk. The Church also has a safeguarding policy for children and young people which is displayed on the church website.

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

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

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

## **Prevention and reporting abuse**

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

## **Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers**

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

## **Safe behaviour: a code of behaviour for workers**

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with Adults at Risk so that they are all shown the respect that is due to them.

## **Safe working practice and safe premises**

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for Adults at Risk and will adopt ways of working with adults that promote their sense of inclusion and well-being.

## **A safe community**

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of Adults at Risk. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

## **Safeguarding Team**

The church has appointed **Frances Jeffrey** as the Safeguarding Trustee to oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

The church has appointed **Fay Hanniker and Gary Tuttle** as the Designated Persons for Safeguarding to:

- receive all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and Adults at Risk
- listen, observe and act on those concerns, having taken advice from the relevant people
- act as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding

### **Policy and procedures**

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboard in the foyer.

Each worker with Adults at Risk, whether paid or voluntary, will be given a job description/ volunteer agreement which requires them to confirm they have read and will follow the Church's policy and procedures.

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

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

The policy statement will be read annually at the church meeting in May together with a report on the outcomes of the annual review.

## Part 1 - Responding to Concern

### Understanding Abuse

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

It comes from the misuse of power and control that someone has over another. Harm is the result of this mistreatment or abuse.

Abuse may consist of one single act or many repeated acts, and it can occur in any relationship at any time of life. It can take many forms, not just physical or violent acts, but it may also be verbal, sexual, psychological, spiritual or financial. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act. Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or a group of any age and can take place anywhere.

When a concern is raised about an adult it should be treated in the same way as a concern about a child i.e. the church worker (paid or voluntary) should:

- 1) **Recognise** that abuse may be taking place
- 2) **Respond** to the concern
- 3) **Record** all the information they have received
- 4) **Report** the concern to the DPS who may, in turn, report it to the statutory authorities

### Recognising abuse

It is often not easy to recognise abuse or harm. Therefore it is important to act if you suspect abuse – don't wait until you are absolutely sure. This doesn't mean that you are jumping to conclusions or making judgements about the situation, it simply means that there is a safeguarding concern. Everyone has the right to live free from abuse of any kind, and there is help and support available to put a stop to it.

You may suspect abuse because:

- You have a general concern about someone's wellbeing.
- You see or hear something which could be abusive.
- Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them, or to an Adult at Risk, which could be abusive

It is not your role to decide whether someone has the mental capacity to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand (Care Act 2014). Always share your concerns with the DPS even if you do not have the consent of the adult to do so – in this instance, make sure the DPS knows that the person concerned has not given consent for the information to be passed on.

## Responding and recording - What to do when an Adult at Risk talks about harm or abuse.

If someone discloses abuse directly to you, then remember to:

- Listen: Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure: Tell them that they have done the right thing by telling you, and that you believe them;
- Remain calm: No matter how difficult it is to listen to what is being disclosed, stay calm. You have been chosen because the person feels able to talk to you. Be honest - do not promise full confidentiality or offer false reassurance;
- Be open: Ask them to tell you what is happening for them. Do not ask leading or closed questions, such as "Did she hit you?" It is not your role to investigate. As soon as you have enough information to concern you, stop probing. Request their consent to share information and seek help;
- Explain: Tell them that you are going to tell the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) (Fay Hanniker or Gary Tuttle) (or an appropriate alternative if necessary – see below) and give them a timescale. Never leave an Adult at Risk to wait to hear from someone without any idea of when or how that may be.
- Write: Document everything the Adult at Risk has told you, in their own words. You will need to record the questions you asked as well as the answers or information given. This should be done as soon as possible after the disclosure and should include the time and date. Please see below in ' Responding to Concerns' for details as to how to fill in the Safeguarding Incident Form
- Report: Contact the Designated Persons for Safeguarding (DPS) (or Frances Jeffrey as the Safeguarding Trustee if the concern involves either DPS **within 24 hours** and report the disclosure;
- Maintain confidentiality: The concerns you have should be kept confidential between you, the adult concerned, the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the church safeguarding team

**NOTE: Communication difficulties:** Be aware that the person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, language, communication skills and disability. You may need to ask the person to repeat themselves or to check that you have understood what they said.

## Reporting concern for an Adult at Risk or an allegation of abuse

If an Adult at Risk discloses abuse or there are concerns for the safety of an Adult at Risk, the Safeguarding Incident Form should be completed as accurately as possible, and within 24 hours after the disclosure or suspicions of abuse. Where possible use the person's own words, sticking to the facts and avoiding opinion. A record of the questions asked as well as the answers or information given will be needed.

Please remember that it is not your role to verify or prove that the information given is true. It is simply your role to listen, record and report any concerns, allegations or disclosures to the appropriate people. This is true no matter who the alleged abuser is. If the allegation is against the Minister or anyone involved in the safeguarding team, you must contact the Association Safeguarding Contact directly. Otherwise please share your concern with the Designated Persons for Safeguarding (Fay Hanniker or Gary Tuttle) only.

As soon as you have enough information, you should pass your concerns to one of the Designated Persons for Safeguarding (Fay Hanniker or Gary Tuttle) within 24 hours. If they are not available, speak to another member of our church safeguarding team or get in touch with our Association Safeguarding Contact.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding may need to inform the Association Safeguarding Contact and the statutory authorities. If an adult is in imminent danger of harm, contact the police or emergency services on 999 without delay.

### **Third Party Allegations and Referrals**

Where a third party alleges abuse towards an Adult at Risk, your role is to gather as much information as possible from this person. The third party will be advised that the information they have provided will be shared with the Designated Person for Safeguarding and may result in a referral to Wokingham Adult Social Care with their details. This is so Wokingham Adult Social Care can contact them if necessary.

### **Allegations against Workers**

If you see another worker acting in ways which concern you or might be misconstrued, speak to the DPS about your concerns as soon as you can. This includes the actions or behaviours of those in leadership positions in the church.

Church workers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual accountability, holding each other to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. The following procedure should be followed:

- 1) When an allegation of abuse has been made, do not approach the alleged perpetrator about it
- 2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**
- 3) Once the allegation has been reported to the DPS they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority
- 4) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion
- 5) Once the statutory authorities are involved, the church will follow their advice with regard to the next steps to take (for example, suspension of worker, putting a contract in place)
- 6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DPS and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (DPS, Safeguarding Trustee, Minister) can access them.
- 7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; not even for prayer purposes.

The suspension of a worker following an allegation is, by definition, a neutral act. Our priority as a church is to protect Adults at Risk from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

It may be necessary, for the sake of the Adult at Risk or to satisfy the needs of an investigation, for the alleged perpetrator to worship elsewhere. In such cases the new church DPS will be informed of the reasons for this happening.

#### When concerns are expressed about the Minister

Any safeguarding concerns involving the minister should always be reported to the Association Safeguarding Contact in addition to following the church's usual procedures. Do not tell the Minister that a concern has been raised about them

#### When concerns are expressed about the church DPS/Safeguarding Trustee

Any safeguarding concerns involving the DPS or Safeguarding Trustee should be raised with the minister. Do not tell the DPS / Safeguarding Trustee that a concern has been raised about them.

If the police or Wokingham Adult Social Care are contacted, then the Association Safeguarding Contact will be informed as soon as possible afterwards. This will be done by the DPS, even if they weren't the person to whom the disclosure was made.

- No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; not even for prayer purposes.
- Never go and talk to the alleged abuser or try to investigate the allegations yourself.
- If the adult doesn't want any further help, the disclosure should still be reported to the DPS and monitored.

Support will be offered to all parties affected by safeguarding issues.

The Safeguarding Incident Form can be downloaded as a separate form from the Church website.

#### **Pastoral Care**

It is common for those who have been abused to lose their trust in those around them. This is likely to affect their faith as well as their relationships with others. There is no quick-fix to heal the damage caused by abuse, and it is crucial that those who have been abused are given space and time to go through their own healing process.

One of the most important things to remember is that survivors need someone to listen to them; to believe them. They may need to repeat their story time and again, needing it to be heard in different contexts at different times over the years, in order for them to process their experience.

It is often necessary for the survivor of abuse to seek professional counselling as they work through their experiences. Contact details for national organisations can be found in Appendix 4

## **Part 2 - Safe Recruitment, Support and Supervision**

### **Safe Recruitment**

Safe recruitment applies to all roles within the church where there is work with or for Adults at Risk. It doesn't matter whether the role is paid or voluntary and applies however long the potential worker has been known in the church.

As recruiting safely is a key element in safeguarding Adults at Risk, it is seen as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and procedures rather than simply an administrative human resources process. Recruitment to positions of trust is carried out carefully to ensure that those who work with Adults at Risk are carefully chosen, supported and supervised.

### **The seven step recruitment process for volunteers and paid workers**

#### **Step 1 A simple role/job profile**

- This will help prospective volunteers / employees to clarify what it is that needs doing and the kind of person needed to do it.

#### **Step 2 Prospective employees / volunteers will be asked to complete an application form**

- This will give an opportunity to prospective volunteers/ employees to share more about their life and experience outside of the church.

There won't be any assumption that someone is known just because they have been coming to the church for years.

#### **Step 3 References are taken up**

- This is to find out more about the candidate(s) from those who know them well and have worked with them in a similar area of work. At least one reference should be from someone outside of the church community.

There won't be any assumption of knowledge of what someone is like outside of the church environment.

#### **Step 4 Interview**

- This will provide a further opportunity to get to know potential volunteers, as well as explaining the role in more detail and giving them the chance to ask any questions.

#### **Step 5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be carried out, where applicable**

- This is a standard procedure to check the candidate's criminal background, and to discover whether or not they are allowed to work with Adults at Risk. This is assuming the role that they are applying for requires a DBS check.

**Step 6 An employment contract or volunteer agreement is signed when it's been agreed the role will be taken on.**

- This will clarify exactly what the person is expected to do by setting out the roles and responsibilities of the job (whether paid or voluntary) and the name of the person who will supervise them. This also includes a self-disclosure statement for them to sign.

### Step 7 Ongoing training and supervision is offered

Training covers the protection of Adults at Risk as well as any other skills necessary for the job. This training will first and foremost protect the Adults at Risk, and in doing so will also protect the workers themselves. The Association Safeguarding Contact can give you details of training in your local area.

Leaders of groups working with or for Adults at Risk should inform the leadership team at an early stage when new employees or volunteers are required.

Young people aged 16 or 17 years who are assisting as helpers, will be appointed in the same way as adults, but will need their parents' permission and will only undertake roles where adult supervision will be in place at all times.

Safe recruitment practices are not about being suspicious but are there to protect all people involved with or linked to the job concerned.

### **Support**

All those working with Adults at Risk will receive safeguarding training as soon as possible after they are appointed to their role. This training includes:

- Training specific to their role (which may include specific issues relating to the type of Adults at Risk in question)
- Recognising possible signs of abuse specific to Adults at Risk
- When and how to report any concerns
- The name and contact details of the Designated Person for Safeguarding in the local church
- An understanding of good practice.

We will use the safeguarding training provided through Southern Counties Baptist Association (SCBA) as this has been specifically designed to reflect safeguarding in a church context. Until level 2 training has been completed, all workers will work under supervision

We require that safeguarding training be completed every three years in order to keep workers refreshed and up to date with practices and procedures.

### **Supervision**

The volunteer agreements include a named person who will provide volunteers' primary support and is available to discuss any matters of concern either you or they might have. He/she may signpost volunteers to other support too if appropriate.

## **Part 3 - Safe behaviour**

Good practice guidelines are not about rules and regulations but are about working together to enable all people to get more out of their church and community life in safe and enjoyable ways.

It is not possible to guard against every eventuality or protect those Adults at Risk from every potential harm or abuse by cruel and abusive people.

Throughout this section the term “church workers” refers to ministers, deacons, lay workers and volunteers – anyone who has a role working within the church, whether paid or unpaid.

### **Pastoral relationships**

All those involved in pastoral ministry should work in a way that follows the clearly defined procedures which have been agreed by the church. These boundaries, terms of confidentiality and recommendations of financial integrity and record keeping are in place to protect Adults at Risk and to protect workers from false accusation.

### **Boundaries**

Agreed boundaries include:

- Workers should be aware of the possibility that they might be seen by an Adult at Risk as someone who has more authority than them within pastoral relationships and so of the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism, or gives the impression of a special relationship, should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Workers should recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies, and they should not hesitate to get further help when working with situations outside of their experience.

### **Financial integrity**

Clear and transparent systems are in place to prevent the possibility of financial irregularities occurring within the church context. Any allegations of financial discrepancies may be based on misunderstanding or confusion.

- Those who work with Adults at Risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If

handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the deacons, who will decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated lay people. This includes counting the money received in collections made during services
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the deacons. Church workers (including ministers) should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- There are several legal procedures which may be used to protect the financial and business affairs of Adults at Risk, such as Power of Attorney, Deputyship and Appointeeship. Expert legal advice should be sought to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the Adult at Risk.

## **Part 4 Safe practice and premises**

### **Record keeping**

It is good practice to record pastoral visits or meetings, noting the date, time, location, subject and any actions which are to be taken. The record of these meetings should stick to facts and try to avoid opinion. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be stored in a safe and secure manner for at least 75 years. Please speak to Fay Hanniker or Gary Tuttle as our church Designated Persons for Safeguarding if you have records that need to be stored for this purpose.

### **Confidentiality**

With Adults at Risk, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the statutory authorities or the local association. However, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what someone has disclosed, not even for prayer ministry.

### **Premises**

We aim to make the Church buildings as accessible as possible to all people, recognising the limitations that the age and design of some buildings may cause.

### **Language**

Every effort is taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility.

### **Worship**

There are no services which specifically cater for certain groups of Adults at Risk, such as those with learning disabilities, the deaf or the visually impaired at Wokingham Baptist Church. Rather in all worship services every attempt is made to consider the wide range of requirements within the congregation.

For example:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- The use of inclusive language
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear
- Speakers being mindful of speaking slowly and clearly
- Prayers which appear on screen are available in large print.

## Photographs

With mobile phones and tablets with cameras, it is very easy to take pictures and immediately upload them to the internet. Make sure that you have the person's permission to take a picture, and if you intend to upload it, make sure that they are happy for people to see it online. When taking group pictures remember to get permission from everyone who will be photographed including, **in all cases**, any person in the background of a photograph, who may be identifiable.

There may be many reasons why someone does not want their picture on public display, from simply not liking their photo being taken, to not wanting an abusive ex-partner to be able to identify their current location.

## Working with alleged or known offenders

If it becomes known that within our congregation there is an offender or someone against whom a serious allegation has been made, the Association Safeguarding Contact will be contacted immediately. There are several processes which will need to be followed, but each one is dealt with on a case by case basis, and the Association Safeguarding Contact will advise the church at each step.

### The process

- A small group of people is specifically set up to work with the alleged or known offender. This will include the minister, and it may be an existing church safeguarding group. This group will liaise with the local association and statutory authorities where necessary.
- A risk assessment is carried out to determine the level of risk that the alleged or known offender poses.
- A formal agreement is written and then agreed by the alleged or known offender. This lays out the conditions under which they can attend church services and various other activities organised by the church.
- The formal agreement is reviewed at regular intervals (not less than annually and when circumstances change) by all parties.
- A press statement is prepared and written in advance, where appropriate.

It is important that no information about the alleged or known offender or the formal agreement is shared with anyone outside of the small group without the individual's knowledge, and that confidentiality is maintained.

### Alleged or known offenders who are themselves at risk

A formal agreement may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties, yet having something in place is still necessary. Therefore an alternative may be to arrange a meeting with the individual in question.

This will result in the same outcome as a contract, but is a more informal and appropriate approach. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure the individual is complying, exactly as a formal agreement would be.

### Pastoral support for alleged or known offenders

An important aspect of this care and support is the imposition of boundaries or a formal agreement (or equivalent). If the offender truly wants to participate in the life of the church, has an understanding of the extent and damage of their crimes, and is committed to a new life, then they will understand the necessity of the restrictions placed upon them.

Alleged offenders should also be able to access pastoral care and support and a formal agreement (or equivalent) needs to be put in place and reviewed once the outcome of the situation is known.

### Pastoral support for families of alleged or known offenders

The families of alleged or known offenders will also be affected by what has happened, and in particular how they are now perceived and treated by the wider community. The church has the opportunity to play a vital role in the care and support of families of alleged or known offenders. The support offered would be drawn up in consultation with Association Safeguarding Contact.