



Plymstock United Church Safeguarding Policy

Adapted from URC Good Practice 5

Introduction

This policy has been adapted from the URC Good Practice 5 Policy and should be used alongside the 'Good Practice 5 policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk' document. (This can be accessed by following this link: [Good practice policy and procedures \(urc.org.uk\)](http://www.urc.org.uk/good-practice-policy-and-procedures)) It is important to remember that a safeguarding policy alone is worthless without proper implementation and a church-wide commitment to keeping people safe.

This policy is supported by the following nine appendices:

- 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
- C – Online and mobile devices policy
- D – Recruitment of Ex-offenders policy
- U – Useful contacts

Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this 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.

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 Plymstock United 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 Co-ordinator(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 discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed (see **Appendix D** for our 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 Co-ordinator 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 will 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 URC document **Appendix R: A Guide to domestic abuse Good practice policy and procedures** (urc.org.uk)). 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: Online and Mobile devices safety policy.**

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 or 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 Co-ordinator 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 Co-ordinator 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 Co-ordinator 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
- 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 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) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the DO. 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. DO contact details are included in the Key Contacts section of this policy.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. Likewise, their contacts details are included in the Key Contacts section of this 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 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 will immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim Moderator.

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 Co-ordinator(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: John Eames (Senior Elder)

Telephone No: 07393328991

Email: eamesyj@gmail.com

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 Co-ordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations relating to children, young people or adults should be addressed:

Name: Ms Caroline Chapman

Telephone No: 07597852255

Email: caroline@plymstock.org.uk

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

Name: Mrs Jane Mather

Telephone No: 07845982183

Email: jane@plymstock.org.uk

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name: Ms Jan Murphy

Telephone No: 07875 454064

Email: safeguardingofficer@urcsouthwest.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)**

Name: Plymouth Lead DO (contacted through Children's Social Care)

Telephone No: 01752 306430 (out of hours – 01752 346984)

Email: LADO@plymouth.gov.uk

- Statutory contact in the case of a child
Plymouth Children's Gateway Service
Telephone No 01752 668000 (press 1 for Children's Services)
Email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk
Out of hours No 01752 346984
- Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk
Plymouth Gateway Service
Telephone No 01752 668000 (ask for Adult Social Care)
Email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk
Out of hours No 01752 346984

NOTE: A list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults can be found in **Appendix U** at the end of this 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: March 2022

Date of the next review: March 2023

Signed: J. Eames (Senior Elder)

(on behalf of the church Elders)



Appendix A1

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the Church Meeting of Plymstock United Church.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Plymstock United 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.

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.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.

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), 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 United Reformed Church's policy and guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the local church trustees.



Appendix A2

The role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC)

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 co-ordinate 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 co-ordinate 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 Co-ordinator (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.
- 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 [Good practice policy and procedures \(urc.org.uk\)](http://urc.org.uk) 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.

Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

All workers of the church must 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 Co-ordinator 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 accounts and not private accounts following church online and mobile policy (see Appendix C)
- Have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with URC good practice guidelines and online and mobile policy (Appendix C)
- 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 – using the church mobile phone or setting up a specific group following guidelines in the online and mobile policy
- 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 online 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

on behalf of _____
[church name]

Name of worker: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A4

Code of Conduct for Working with Adults

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).

Be accountable

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

Promote the privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing of people

- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Ensure that a vulnerable adult is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than the way in which a person who is not an "adult at risk" would be treated in a comparable situation.
- Always act in the best interest of people, with their present and past wishes and feelings being considered.

- Put the needs, views and wishes of people first, helping them to control and choose the help and support they receive.
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent.
- Always maintain the privacy and dignity of people who have help and support, and their carers.
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts.
- Always make sure that your actions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing.
- You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit anyone.
- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour.
- Always take comments and complaints seriously; respond to them in accordance with *Good Practice 5* and inform your leader/supervisor/safeguarding designated person.

Work effectively with other volunteers/colleagues

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

Effective communication

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

Respect people's right to confidentiality and decision-making

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

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.

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

on behalf of
[church name]

Name of worker:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A5

Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form (blank printed copies can be found in the safeguarding folder in the foyer)

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			
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?	
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	

Appendix A6

Signs and symptoms of abuse

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.
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 sexual act or behaviour.</p> <p>No one should enter a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not consent or was pressurised into consenting. Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner without consent. Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing. Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts. 	<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. Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections. A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults. Disturbed sleep patterns.

<p>hold a position of trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • 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 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>	<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, including not providing adequate food or assistance with eating/drinking, or not providing sufficient or appropriate clothing. • 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"> • 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. • 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.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
An unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment.	<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.
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.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Discriminatory Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageist, racist, sexist, or 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
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 practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	<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 leadership and/or supervision of staff or volunteers. • Inappropriate use of physical interventions and 	<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. • Lack of adequate procedures. • Poor record keeping/missing documents.

	poor practice in the provision of intimate care.	
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
<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. 	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 fear of involving those who are HIV positive). • 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. 	<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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber stalking – repeated online threats/activity making someone afraid for their safety. • 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. 	
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Modern Slavery	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
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<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. • Travel and identity documents removed. 	<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. • In fear of the authorities and in fear of removal or consequences for family.
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Radicalisation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
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<p>The process that moves a person to legitimise their support for or use of violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violent and inappropriate material. • Being recruited in person – online or face-to-face. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expression of extremist views • Accessing extremist websites/social networks or possessing extremist, violent literature.
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<p>The promise of an ideology which gives purpose and belonging. 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"> • Joining extremist organisations. • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. • Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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Child Sexual Exploitation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<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, 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"> • Cutting • Burning • Bruising • Scratching • Hair pulling • Poisoning • Overdosing • Intentionally putting themselves in risky situations • Overeating or undereating • Inserting objects into their own body • Hitting themselves or walls • Exercising excessively • Self-neglect (adults) <p>Some may self-harm to create a reason to physically care for themselves, or to feel something instead of numbness or disconnection.</p>	<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. • 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.

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 [Good practice policy and procedures \(urc.org.uk\)](http://urc.org.uk)

Introduction

The use of electronic communication is an integral, normal and important feature of society across business, personal and social spheres. This is especially true for children and young people who have never known a world without the internet.

All methods of communication have associated risks of misunderstanding and abuse. Everything written has the potential to be misinterpreted or misread, and emotions and attitudes are hard to convey in print. While we cannot eliminate those risks completely, we will endeavour to safeguard children and young people and those working on behalf of the church from abuse, misunderstanding or allegations. We recognise the need to, “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

General Guidelines

1. All Church communications via email, phone, text and social media should be with the parents/carers and never directly with a child or adult at risk.
2. Workers should not put any pressure on children or young people to reveal their email address, mobile phone number, online identity, etc. None of the details to be held on private phones for church use. (see section Church owned mobile phone)
3. Only workers who have been appointed under the church’s agreed safeguarding procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact parents/carers on behalf of the church.
4. Contact with parents/carers by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general social conversations.
5. Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker, significant conversations should be saved if possible as a text file or screenshot, and a log be kept of when they communicated and who was involved. This contact must be reported to the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as practically possible.
6. Workers should not share any personal information with children and young people and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person. Workers should not ‘befriend’ on-line any young or vulnerable person.
7. Workers should be careful in their communications with parents/carers, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives.
8. Clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding the use of unnecessary abbreviations and emojis.
9. Electronic communication should not be used after 9.00pm, before 8.00am, or during school hours.

10. Workers should be aware of how young people are using their smartphones to access internet-based sites whilst on Church premises and should encourage the safe and appropriate use of on-line communications for example the guidelines on the NSPCC website.

Church-owned Mobile Phone

We recognise that some family and friendship connections may exist outside these guidelines. However, for the purposes of church activities and communication the following procedures apply.

1. The church will provide a suitable phone to be used primarily by the Community and Families worker (or an approved deputy in case of absence). **This is the only phone that should be used to communicate with parents/carers.**
2. Contact details may be stored on this phone, which should be password protected.

Mobile Phones/Devices (eg: texting, MMS, WhatsApp)

1. Mobile phone usage should be primarily about information-giving.
2. 'Text language' abbreviations should be avoided so that there is no misunderstanding of what is being communicated.
3. 'Text conversations' should usually be avoided (ie: a series of messages being sent to and from between mobile phones).
4. The use of the phone camera should comply with the church's policy on photos/video.
5. Workers should not retain images on mobile phones of children or young people.

Instant/Private Messaging – IM/PM (eg: Facebook Messenger, Skype)

It is sometimes possible for individuals to initiate PM with people who have not intentionally connected with them via this method.

1. The use of instant messenger services should be avoided whenever possible.

Social Networking (eg: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr)

1. Lower age limits of any social networking platform should be checked and strictly adhered to.
2. Communication about youth work via social media should only take place within official groups created with explicit permission on behalf of the church.
3. Social networking groups should include at least two workers, should not be open to the public, and should explain the code of conduct for the group.
4. Workers should only use an agreed account/profile for social networking about youth work.
5. Accounts/profiles used by workers should be kept at the highest security settings for that platform.

Photographs and Video

1. Photographs or video of church activities will only be used with the express written permission from parents/carers and the children or young people themselves, and only for the stated purpose.
2. When using photographs of children, group pictures will be used wherever possible.
3. Individual children should not be clearly identifiable either in images or in associated writing (this includes not using full names or other identifying information).
4. Any stored images of children should be held securely on password-protected machines.

Introduction

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.

Policy statement

Plymstock United 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.

Plymstock United 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.

Plymstock United 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, 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.

Plymstock United 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, Plymstock United 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.

Plymstock United 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. Plymstock United 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.

Plymstock United 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 Plymstock United Church's attention prior to disclosure being received.

Plymstock United 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 U

Useful Contacts for All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

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

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.

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)

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

Thirtyone: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.thirtyoneeight.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

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)

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

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.

www.elderabuse.org.uk

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.

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

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)

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

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 (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

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.

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

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

Survivors Scotland

Scottish government website providing a directory of support for survivors of childhood abuse in Scotland.

www.survivorscotland.org.uk