



Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

for The Church at Carrs Lane, Birmingham, a Local Ecumenical Partnership supported by the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church.

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of people in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are at risk of abuse or neglect
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church and its associated business, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult at risk.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and good practice.

Purpose:

As the people of the Methodist & United Reformed Churches we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. It is intended to support the Church and its associated business in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people, adults at risk, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse. Its purpose is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and adults at risk in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with: 1) Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain (Updated April 2019); 2) Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church (2015); 3) Practice Guidance on Carrying Out Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Checks as part of Safer Recruitment (2015); 4) Practice guidelines to support the report domestic abuse and the Methodist Church taking action (updated in January 2018); 5) Safeguarding Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures (updated May 2018); 6) Data Protection Policy (May 2018 including GDPR provisions).

Practice:

Therefore, **The Church at Carrs Lane and associated business:**

- is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults at risk and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount;
- recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people;
- recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It recognises that physical neglect, self-neglect, domestic violence, abuse through social media, child sexual exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery or radicalisation can all be seen as examples of abuse. It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously these issues of promotion of welfare;
- commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adult at risk may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust;
- commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the Methodist Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches;
- commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be at risk;

- affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding all those adults at risk of abuse or neglect who are on our premises.

Recommended Procedures

Good Practice:

Good practice means that:

- all people are treated with respect and dignity;
- those who act on behalf of the Church and associated business should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit;
- the church premises will be assessed for safety for children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Trustee/Elders' meeting in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Trustee/Elders' meeting will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable;
- any church-organised transport of children or adults at risk will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate;
- promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Trustee/Elders' meeting will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area;
- these things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and adults who are at risk.

Appointment of staff

Staff

Staff may be required to undertake a DBS check, depending on the post. When we advertise staff vacancies, we make it clear if a DBS check is needed for the post. All staff are made aware of, and are expected to follow, our Safeguarding Policy. Our induction process ensures that staff understand the terms and condition of their employment. The Staff Handbook refers to the protection of vulnerable people and the full Safeguarding Policy. The contract of employment requires that staff comply with all policies in force.

Volunteers

The Church at Carrs Lane assesses all its voluntary roles in order to clarify if a DBS check is needed for the role. All Pastoral Visitors require a DBS check. The Safeguarding Officer and Clerk to the Trustees assess new roles as they are created. Where a DBS check is required of a volunteer, this is undertaken before they begin their voluntary role.

A register of DBS checks, certificate numbers and dates of renewals is kept by the Clerk to the Trustees on behalf of the Safeguarding Officer.

Church events:

Where church events take place on church premises, or are organised on behalf of the church, safeguarding is the responsibility of the Trustee/Elders' meeting.

Other groups on church premises:

All groups and individuals must provide a copy of their own safeguarding policy or comply with the Church's safeguarding policy. It is the hirer's responsibility to provide adequate safeguards for children and adults at risk attending their meeting or event. The Centre Manager or Minister will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

Procedure for responding to a concern:

Where there is a concern that an adult or child may be being abused, or a direct disclosure of abuse is made, this should be shared with the Ministers and/or Safeguarding Officers. Anyone responding to the child or adult concerned should use the following guidelines: listen well, avoid judgements or leading questions, make as accurate a record as possible of what you hear, reassure but be honest about the need to share the information with Ministers or Safeguarding Officers. The Safeguarding Officers will in most cases liaise with the District Safeguarding Officer, though in some cases statutory agencies, such as Social Services or police may be contacted first.

Safeguarding Officer

It is the responsibility of the church to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Elders/Trustees or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. There should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for the ministers to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. However, to avoid any disruption in safeguarding provision, it may be necessary for the minister in pastoral charge to take responsibility for some or all of the activities for a very short period of time while other arrangements are made.

The Church at Carrs Lane appoints **Mrs Christine Tudor Jones** as Safeguarding Officer. The Church at Carrs Lane and associated business supports the Safeguarding Officer in the role, which is to:

- support and advise the ministers and the elders in fulfilling their roles (CTJ);
- liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators (CTJ);
- provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues;
- promote safeguarding best practice within the Church's associated business (RC) and the local church, with the support of circuit ministers (CTJ);
- attend training and meetings organised to support the role
- ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to the church's policy and practice (also see Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - Updated Jan 2015);
- ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made;
- oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of The Church at Carrs Lane and associated business (ie lettings, groups, property etc)
- ensure the church and associated business complete a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups and lettings in the church and that these have been annually reviewed
- ensure the church and its associated business complete a risk assessment on each area of activity in the premises; that this is stored and reviewed at least annually, and that it is readily available on request
- ensure that the church and associated business recruit safely for all posts

- ensure that the church and conference centre have a safeguarding noticeboard with a copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information.

Key concepts and definitions:

- The term 'Adults at Risk' has come into use following implementation of the Care Act 2014. An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone over the age of 18 who has a need for care or support. Someone who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse. We also consider an adult at risk to be an adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.
- A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- Safeguarding and protecting children or adults at risk from maltreatment means preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or adult at risk or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Review:

- The original version of this policy was agreed at a Trustee/Elders' meeting held on 28th March 2017. It was rewritten in April 2018 and agreed by the Eldership on Tuesday 22nd May. The latest review was agreed by the Trustees on 15 December 2020 It will be reviewed annually by the Clerk to the Trustees, Church Safeguarding Officer and Policy Review Group, reporting to the Elders' Meeting.
- The date of the next review is December 2021.

Signed:

The original is signed. This version is unsigned to protect individuals from identity fraud.

Revd Dr Neil Johnson
Chair of Trustees/Elders

Dated 15 December 2020