



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(Last reviewed December 2025)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS PART OF THE SAFEGUARDING SERIES:

- 1. Safeguarding Policy*
- 2. Safeguarding Handbook*

PRODUCED BY ACUK NATIONAL OFFICE IN ASSOCIATION WITH THIRTYONE:EIGHT

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1. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

1.1 - Document Details

Information Management	SAFE	
Document title	Safeguarding Policy	
Document Author	Adrian Galley	7 October 2022
Document Approval	Trustee – Safeguarding Lead	12 November 2025

1.2 - Version Control

Date	Version	Author	Comments
7 October 2022	0.1	Adrian Galley	Draft version amalgamating children and adults at risk policy. The following is added: additional overseas requirements; Code of conduct; and, reporting flowcharts.
1 November 2022	1.0	Adrian Galley	New version
25 October 2023	1.1	Adrian Galley	Revised sect 2/3 plus new adult report flowchart. Introduction of 'expression of interest' in safer recruitment.
8 November 2023	1.2	Adrian Galley	Edited sect 2.3
3 October 2024	1.3	Adrian Galley	Revised: sect 8 online safety; additional paras 3.3-3.6 on 'disclosures'; 'self dec'; 'non UK workers'; 'those who have lived overseas'; 4.2 working overseas.
12 November	1.4	Adrian Galley	Revised from 31:8 policy: Significant revisions to all sections. Removal of other policies to InfoHub.

2. ORGANISATION DETAILS

2.1 - Contact details

Name of Place of Worship	Smawthorne Community Church
Address:	51-53 Beancroft Road, Castleford, WF10 4DS
General Email address:	admin@smawthorne.church
Lead PastorName:	Phillip Earnshaw
Lead Pastor Contact Email:	philearnshaw@smawthorne.church
Safeguarding Coordinator Name:	Angela Earnshaw
Safeguarding Coordinator Email:	angelaearnshaw@smawthorne.church
Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator Name:	Stephen Wood
Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator Email:	stephenwood@smawthorne.church
Membership of Denomination	The Apostolic Church UK
Denomination Safeguarding Officer	Adrian Galley
Contact Details for Denomination Safeguarding Officer:	E: adrian.galley@apostolic-church.org Tel: 07817 409635
Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (ACUK)	Craig Hopkins
Contact Details for Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (ACUK)	E: craig.hopkins@apostolic-church.org Tel: 07814 332 250
Charity Number:	Charity Registration No. 284789 OSCR Registration No. SC037835
Thirty-one:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.	24-hour helpline: 0303 003 1111 (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact your Pastor-in charge)
Insurance Company	Congregational

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

2.2 - Our Vision

Smawthorne Community Church provides ministries to its local community and specifically children and young people and adults in need, this includes a foodbank and groups to support those who have been bereaved and in need of support and friendship. Smawthorne Community Church also provides financial management training to those in our community who would benefit from this. Smawthorne Community Church has robust safeguarding measures in place to protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults entrusted to the church's care.

This church is part of the Apostolic Church UK, our charitable objects are:

The preaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. The promotion of any other charitable purpose consistent with the Christian mission of the church and in particular the relief of the sick, elderly and poor.

2.3 - Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to *"all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status"*. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from *"all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child."*

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

This policy and other relevant documents are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight.

2.4 - Governance

The trustees are appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for how an organisation or charity operates and have a critical role in decision making

and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or “the way we do things around here”. Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

“The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object” (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017)

The Trustees will have overarching responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation, including referring to the relevant charity regulator.

England and Wales [Charity Commission] – Reporting Serious Incidents [RSI]

[How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK](#)

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles. • there are accountability structures
- with codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day to day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication

3. PREVENTION

3.1 - Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults with care and support needs may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

Children

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the relevant legislation defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years old.

Adults at risk of harm/adults in need of protection

There are different criteria mapped out across UK legislation to define an adult at risk of harm under safeguarding.

In England:

The Care Act 2014 states that adult safeguarding duties apply to any person aged 18 years or older who:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

All jurisdictions:

To safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also, for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

This policy is in line with the following legislation:

England

- The Children Act (1989 & 2004)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy (see Appendices).

3.2 - Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and adults at risk are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal in England and Wales and Northern Ireland for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

3.3 - Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers (employed or volunteers) will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an 'expression of interest' or application form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A self-declaration form and relevant criminal record check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant including safeguarding training
- The applicant receives and signs a copy of the 'code of conduct' form (signature recorded)
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

3.4 - Disclosure checks

Disclosure checks will be carried out for all workers (paid/volunteers) engaged in work with children and adults at risk of harm. Checks will be carried out relevant to the nations they are based in: **Eng/Wales: DBS Enhanced or Basic**

These checks will be renewed every 3 years. *[In Eng/Wales, individuals are encouraged to sign up to the Govt Update Service to avoid the need for further checks, saving time and money.]*

3.5 - Non-UK workers (e.g. ROI)

Disclosure checks will be carried out according to the national requirements. However, for those who are also fulfilling ACUK recognised roles (e.g. Pastors or Safeguarding Coordinators), checks will also be required under the Eng/Wales system.

3.6 - Workers who have lived outside of the UK

We require a 'certificate of good conduct' or suitable police checks, for those individuals who have lived outside of the UK for more than 6 months since they were 18. Disclosure checks should not have gaps. Where a check has been conducted only within the UK, this will not have covered all jurisdictions. It is important that overseas records are checked, 'as far as is reasonably possible' to give a complete picture, before the recruitment decision is made.

3.7 - Self-declaration forms

The use of self-declarations is extremely important in our safer recruitment processes. They act as a deterrent to unsuitable applicants, and encourage openness and honesty before the recruitment process is concluded. These completed forms must form part of our safeguarding record that is held securely.

3.8 - Young helpers under 18

Young people under 18 will often be used as helpers and will not be left unsupervised. (Indeed, this happens outside the church with children from secondary schools having work experience in infant schools and nurseries).

In these circumstances, we advise that such helpers should be responsible to a named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. For example, they should not be counted as a 'worker' when considering staff/child ratios.

The full recruitment procedure would not be applied, though we would expect to acquire basic information about the individual and take up personal references. Police checks would not normally be required. Care should be taken to ensure that this process is not used to avoid proper checks for recruitment.

It is advisable for young helpers to work with children at the younger age groups, to avoid blurring of friendships with peers.

3.9 - Recruitment of ex-offenders

No applicant for voluntary or employed service within the Church or any worker in the course of their service will be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of disclosure information including convictions.

Interviews will provide the opportunity for open and measured discussion on the subject of offences. Failure to reveal information at interview that is directly relevant to the position being sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary service.

At interview or when receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, we will take into consideration:

- The relevance of the conviction to the position being offered
- The seriousness of the offence
- The time since the offence took place
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Any change in the applicant's circumstances since the offence took place.

Everyone involved in the recruitment process will be made aware of this policy.

3.10 - Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

All workers are required to complete the thirtyone:eight FOUNDATION training, with refreshers every three years.

All Lead Pastors/Senior Leaders in the church, and Safeguarding Coordinators are required to complete the thirtyone:eight ADVANCED training for their role.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

3.11 - Practice Guidelines

As a church working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of potential harm or abuse and false or unfounded accusations.

We have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or available on InfoHub.

For some activities you will need specific forms, e.g. consent forms, risk assessments etc. The relevant forms can be found on InfoHub.

3.12 Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers and volunteers have been issued with a

code of conduct for supporting children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and outside of their role. They will also receive further training as necessary.

The code of conduct can be found in the handbook or on InfoHub.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

4.1 - Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement, will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

4.2 - Working Overseas

We operate in the following ways:

- Overseas partnerships (with MOUs and Project plans for each area)
- Short term mission trips
- Overseas ministry trips (including preaching trips)

Our policies apply in each of these contexts. As a Leadership we will not tolerate or condone any abuse or mistreatment of children. The Leadership will take all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place when we operate overseas, recognising that there are different reporting mechanisms and organisations responsible.

Where we are working overseas, we will ensure the following processes:

1. 'Safer recruitment' process followed (including application form/ references etc)
2. Disclosure checks are required for all taking part in overseas missions.
3. Pre-trip Approval and Risk assessment completed (see template on InfoHub)
4. Signed 'Code of Conduct' for all team members
5. Mandatory training for all team leaders ('Managing Risks' & 'Personal Safety and Security') and team members (Travel Safety and Personal Security).
6. UK based link person (provided with all itinerary information/risk assessments etc)

5. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

5.1 - What to do

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below (contact details are at the front of this document):

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator". They are nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the "Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator".
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the National safeguarding Officer, or Lead Trustee.

The worker can also contact:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.
Tel: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

The worker or volunteer should record the disclosure, allegation or concern onto the cause for concern form and share this with the Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding Deputy or Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible. Please see a copy of the cause for concern form in the appendix.

- The Safeguarding Lead may first ring the Thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. Based on the concern, they may then then contact the relevant statutory services.

For England:

- Children's Services:
 - Adults Services:
 - Police: 101 or 999 if person at is at risk of harm:
 - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
 - Charity Commission for England and Wales:
- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, such as:
 - National Safeguarding Officer or lead trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident/raise a concern.
 - Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO (England and Wales), Child's Named Person (Scotland) or the Gateway Team (Northern Ireland) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
 - Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to the statutory services, the police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of Smawthorne Community Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

5.2 - Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- If the child requires immediate medical attention, contact the relevant medical services, informing the Doctor of any concerns.
- Contact Children's Social Care or Thirtyone:eight for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- If the disclosure, allegation or concern is directly about the parents, then do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland).
- For lower-level concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carers to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of harm.
- Where the parent/carers is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Care direct for advice. • Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland).

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or concerns of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) and police, on 101.
- Depending on the circumstances, they will need to consider whether it is appropriate to speak to the parents of the child. If they are not sure about this, then they will contact Thirtyone:eight.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland)/police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

5.3 - Detailed procedures where there is a concern about an adult at risk:

Concerns or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services on 999, informing them of any suspicions.
- Contact Adult Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) who will be able to advise whether this reaches the safeguarding threshold and actions required.
Alternatively, Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

5.4 - Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer -LADO(England and Wales), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS (England and Wales) for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (England and Wales).
- Share information about the concern with the police.

5.5 - Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Coordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- Make a referral to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service DBS (England and Wales).
- Share information about the concern with the police.

The legislation across all four UK nations (The Care Act 2014, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership key documents 2015 (Northern Ireland) and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014) places the duty upon Adult Social Care to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision.

However, this is a decision for Adult Social Care to decide not the organisation.

5.6 - Allegations of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult:

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from a child, the procedure in relation to sexual abuse will be followed (please see above).

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Give the adult the option to report this to the Police (England and Wales). If the adult does not wish to report this to the police, then the Safeguarding Lead can pass on the information relating to the alleged perpetrator, however, must not share details of the Survivor.
- If the alleged perpetrator is in a role working or volunteering with children or young people, make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer -LADO(England and Wales) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working with adults with care and support needs, liaise with Adult Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role within your organisation, contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

5.7 - ACUK reporting requirements

ACUK is one national charity and as such the national trustees are legally responsible for everything that takes place under its remit. Therefore all safeguarding concerns MUST be reported to the National Safeguarding Officer, who will ensure the trustees are informed. This MUST NOT hold up the progression of reporting as outlined above.

The trustees may have to inform other agencies (e.g. Charity Commission) of certain categories of incidents. Our policy of notification is as follows:

IMMEDIATE for any incidents or allegations about a worker/volunteer. Contact by phone as soon as is practicable.

URGENT for any incidents etc where you have contacted the Police or Social Services. Email as soon as possible.

ANNUAL for all other incidents etc.
Include in the annual national return.

6. WELLBEING SUPPORT AND PASTORAL CARE

6.1 - Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering wellbeing support/pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation. (See Handbook for more guidance)

6.2 - Working with those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the organisation is known to pose a potential risk to children, or adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer wellbeing support/pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate external parties.

7. ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

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

Date of the most recent review: **12 November 2025**

Date of the next review: **11 November 2026**

Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: **Angela Earnshaw**

Signature: 

Date: **7 Dec 2025**

Lead Pastor

Name: **Phil Earnshaw**

Signature: 

Date: **1 Dec 2025**

A copy of this policy is also lodged with:

The Apostolic Church, Suite 105/110 Crystal House, New Bedford Road, Luton LU1 1HS

Appendix 1 - UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

What constitutes abuse?

In drawing up this policy, it is recognised that the term 'abuse' can be subject to wide interpretation. The starting point for a definition is the following statement: 'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'.

The Policy outlines the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be abused, harmed or neglected.

There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Definitions of Abuse

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) are stated below.

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. This includes someone in a position of trust.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fabricated induced illness or factitious illness by proxy or *Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy**.

**Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy is defined as a form of child abuse in which the parents, or carers, give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children (The Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry)*

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as long as they meet the needs of another

person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse).

Other Safeguarding Issues

As a church, we are aware of the guidance that is available in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Private Fostering and the Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism.

We are vigilant to the risk of any of them being practised and alert to the signs of potential or actual abuse. We take this abuse very serious and will take timely and appropriate action in respect of concerns about any child suspected to be at risk of any of them.

Appendix 2 - RECOGNISING ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them • Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming • Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts / scratches / substance abuse

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Appendix 3 - RESPONDING TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General Points

- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound) · Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – **don't promise confidentiality**
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse · Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful Things You May Say or Show

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Don't Say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

Concluding

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (You might have to consider referring to Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator in the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or contact an agency such as thirtyone:eight for advice or go directly to Local Authority Children's Social Care/Police/NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed. It is quite possible that hearing an allegation may affect you in some way and finding an appropriate person to talk to is important. Depending on the nature of the issue, and those involved, you may wish to speak to one of the leaders you relate to. However, you must be mindful of the need to respect privacy, and possibly confidentiality, of those involved/affected. Other sources of support include: the Safeguarding Coordinator or their deputy; thirtyone:eight and Children's Social Care.

Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within minutes of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g., a description of the activity).

Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.

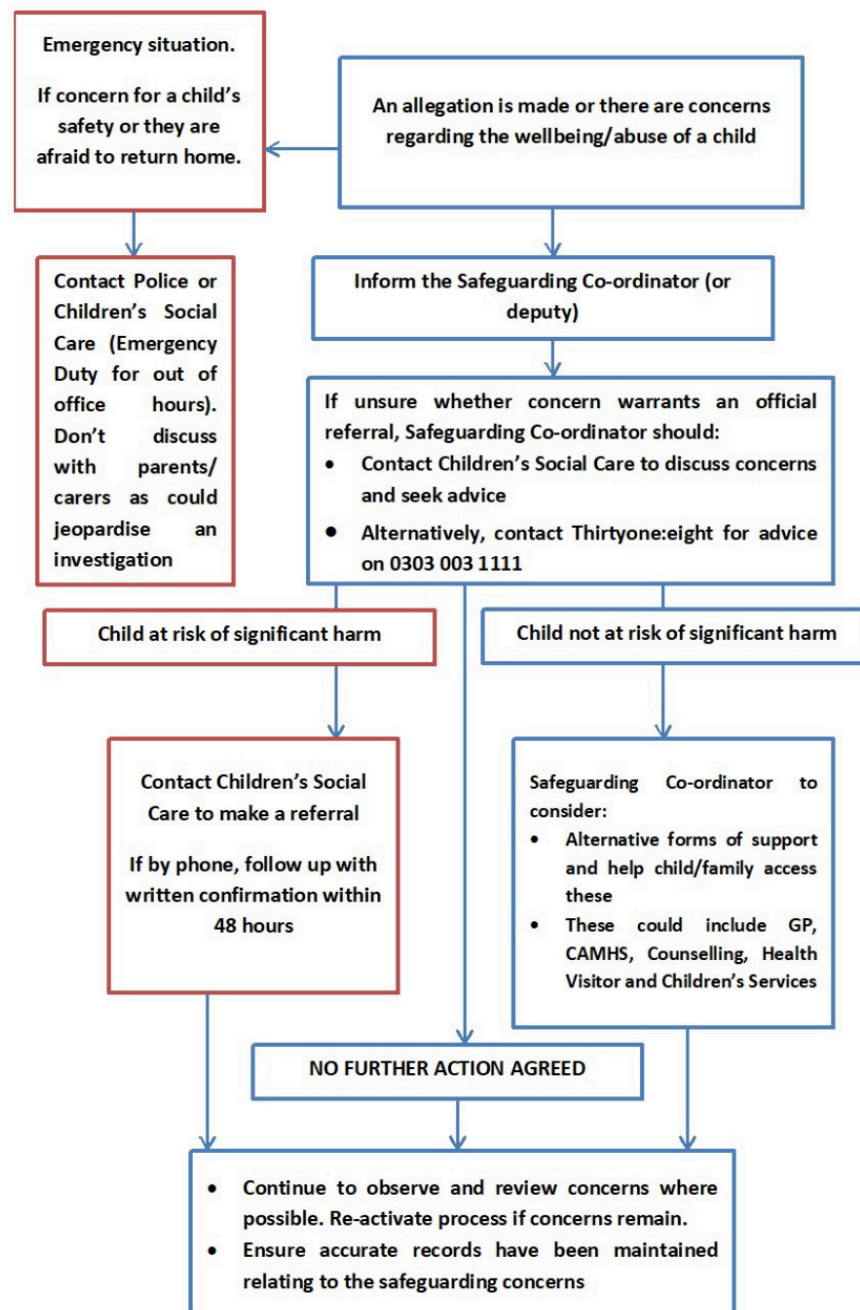
Copies of 'Important Safeguarding Forms' including Incident forms are kept in the church office.

Appendix 4 – Flowchart for Action: Children and Young People

Flowchart for Action Children and Young People



This flow chart provides an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of a child. It is to be used in conjunction with written procedures.

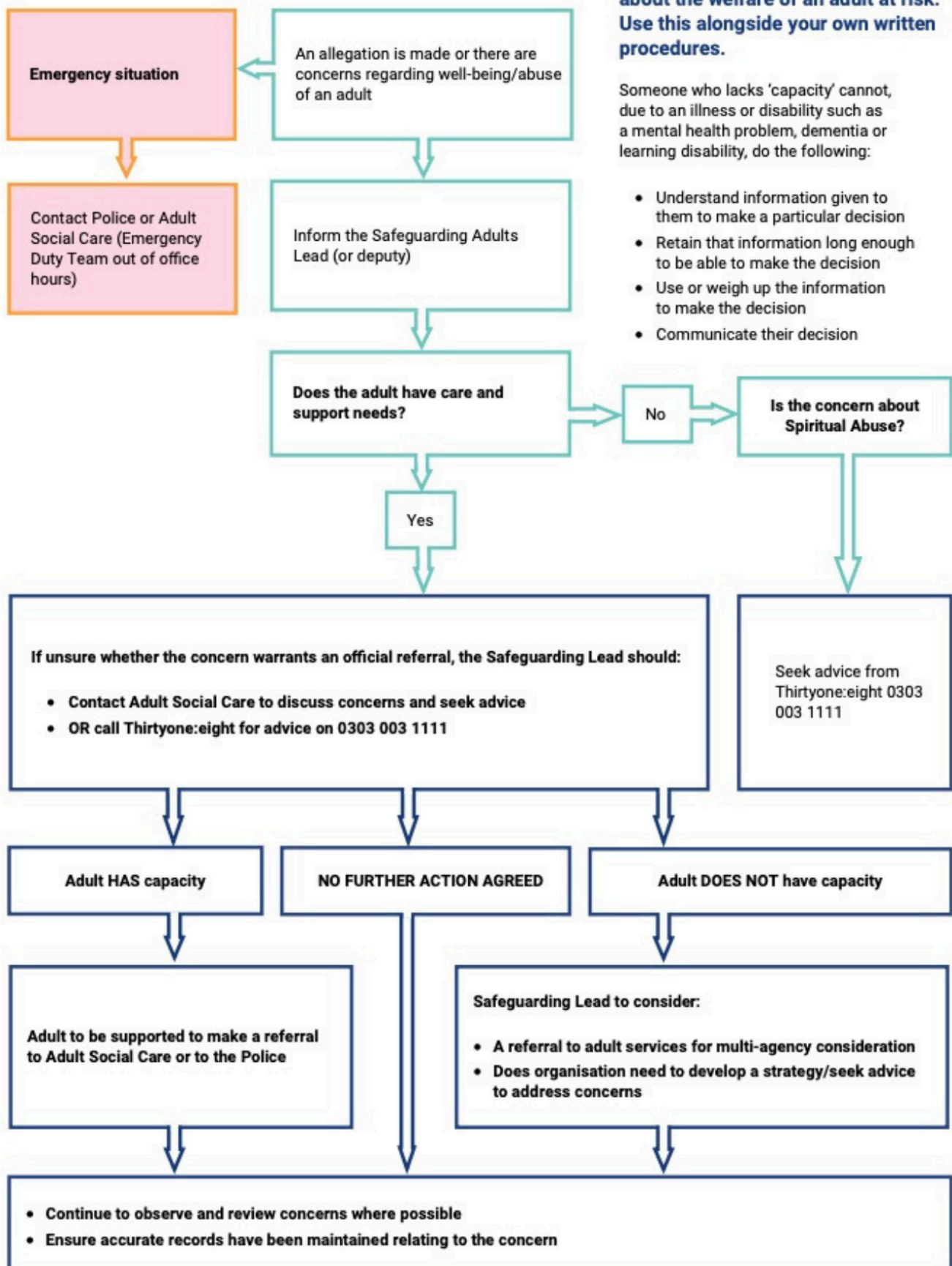


Working Together to Safeguard Children defines significant harm as:

“... any Physical, Sexual, or Emotional Abuse, Neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.”

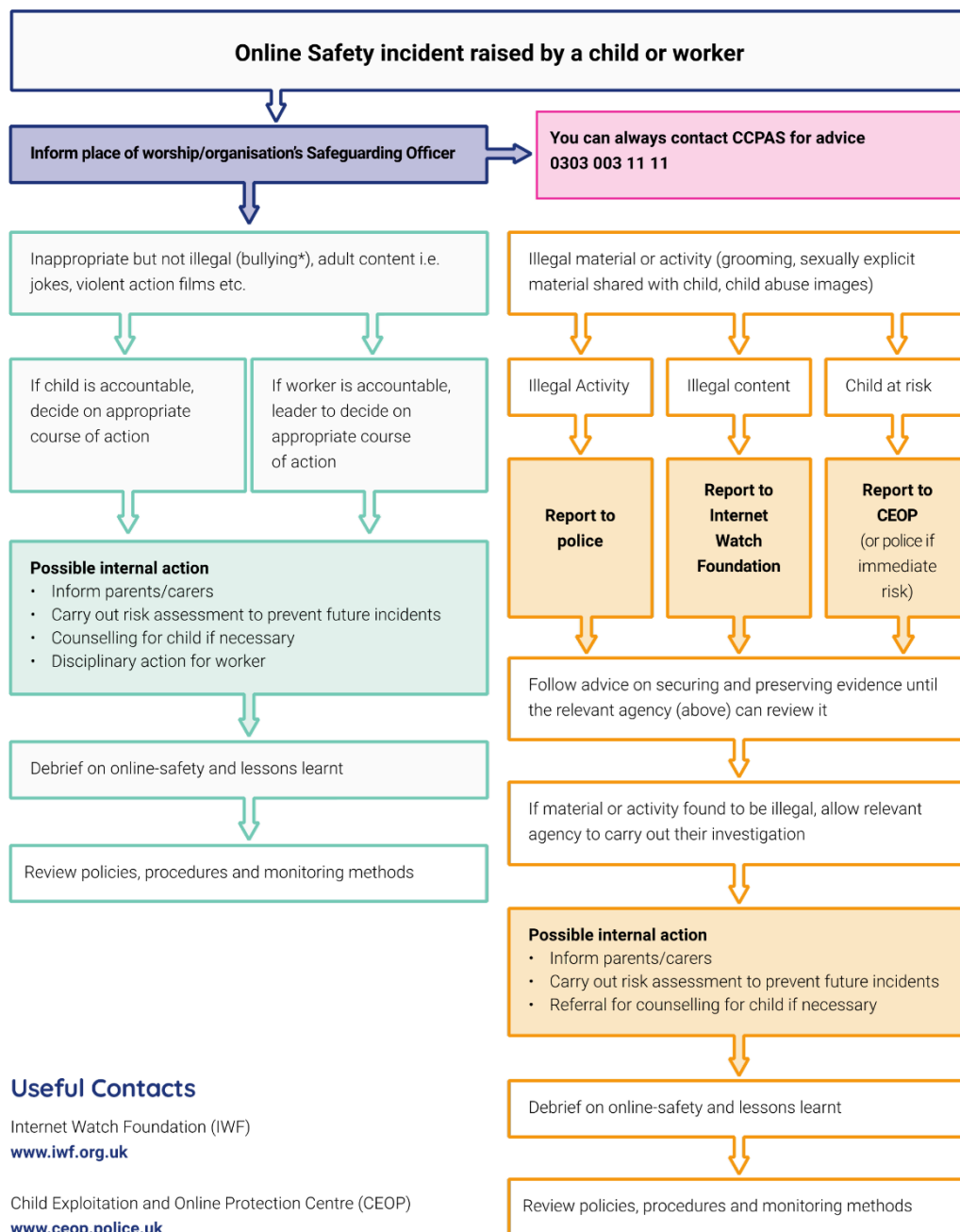
Appendix 5 - FLOWCHART FOR ACTION: ADULTS AT RISK

Action for Adults at risk flowchart



Appendix 6 – ONLINE SAFETY FLOWCHART

Online Safety Flowchart



Useful Contacts

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
www.ceop.police.uk

(*) Some forms of bullying or content may be illegal – see Malicious Communications Act 1988, Obscene Publications Act.
For extreme pornography – Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, etc.

