





This City Church safeguarding policy was written by Norma Stewart drawing from a number of appropriate materials, documents and adopted by the Leadership of City Church Belfast .

Foreword

City Church is committed in all aspects of its life, to protect and champion the well-being of vulnerable groups – children, young people and vulnerable adults – both in the wider society and in its own community.

In City Church we are implementing the principles enshrined in the NI Children's Order 1995, that the welfare of the child is paramount. We are committed to serving standards of care and to work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We will act promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, report the behaviour of an adult, and will work with appropriate statutory bodies, including the police and local authorities when investigation into abuse and concern is necessary.

We are committed to encouraging an environment where all people, but especially those who may be at risk for any reason, are able to worship and follow their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

Sensitivity and informed pastoral care will be offered to anyone who has suffered abuse. The risks from those who have offended in a way that means they are a continuing risk to people will be managed sensitively with the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in mind, as well as attending appropriately to the pastoral care of those who have offended.

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Section1

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Section 1

Introduction

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone and central to our mission and ministry in City Church Belfast. This document demonstrates and guides all those within church on the part they need to play in order to ensure the church is a safe environment for everyone.

City Church's commitment to safeguarding

City Church is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to worship and grow safely in Christ. This is done by acting together in a coordinated and supportive manner and requires church leaders and safeguarding officer to make timely responses to concerns (advice sought/action taken within 24 hours), informing/consulting with necessary others, and drawing on the support of specialist agencies as needed.

All churches and faith communities are required to have in place arrangements which include; procedures to identify, respond and report concerns, codes for safe practice and safer recruitment procedures

We would emphasise that if there is something that makes you feel uneasy, please talk it through with someone and keep doing so until you feel comfortable. City Church's safeguarding officer and leadership will always make themselves available to respond to any safeguarding concerns.



Safeguarding in City Church Belfast

Policy statement

Church is committed to facilitating an environment in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are able to worship and grow in Christ safely. Abuse and maltreatment in any form is against scripture and the church's teaching in respecting the dignity and value of every person.

We are committed to:

the care, nurture and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and all adults. The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are at risk

fostering a safe caring community which provides a loving environment and the culture of 'informed vigilance' and actions towards safeguarding everyone.

We will seek to fulfil these through:

the production of clear policy and procedure to which all will comply

the safer recruitment, training and support of those in positions of responsibility and trust

responding without delay to concerns and complaints regarding actual or potential harm or maltreatment (advice to be sought/action taken within 24 hours)

collaborating with professionals and processes necessary to ensure proper safeguards and pastoral care

the provision of care and support to those who have experienced abuse

the provision of supervision and support to those who have abused others

Guiding principles

Principles below will guide all elements of safeguarding activity delivered by those at all levels within City Church:

pastoral care which is respectful and informed

timely safeguarding action

advice to be sought/action to be taken within 24 hours

the involvement of others on a need-to-know basis only

the early identification and management of actual or potential risks

active commitment to all in promoting and keeping our community safe



Code of safer working practice

This code is provided for all those within City Church to follow in working and volunteering with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The code represents the behaviours which constitute safe practice. As such it will assist those working with children and vulnerable adults to do so safely and responsibly enabling each to monitor their own standards of integrity and good practice.

The policy applies to all those in the City Church, paid and unpaid staff and congregation.

You should:

Treat all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity, keeping your own language, attitude and body language respectful.

Actively communicate with children, young people and vulnerable adults and involve them in planning and running activities where possible.

Avoid being alone with a child. Where possible there should be two properly recruited adults with each group of children.

Develop a culture where workers, children and vulnerable adults feel comfortable to point out inappropriate attitudes with each other.

Make clear who someone can speak to about a personal concern, and be confident in addressing concerns and allegations.

Never use illicit drugs, abuse prescription medicine, use alcohol when responsible for a child and vulnerable adults.

Keep physical contact specific to the needs of the activity and always seek permission from the person first.

Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, displayed.

Never use rough play, sexually provocative words and games or any forms of physical punishment.

Never scapegoat, ridicule or reject the child, group or adult or allow others to do so.

Avoid showing favouritism to any one child, adult or a group or doing anything to reinforce their possible infatuations towards you.

Giving lifts to children or young people on their or on your own, should ideally be done with the consent of parents.

Unknown adults should never give lifts to children.

Never share sleeping accommodation with children or invite them to your home alone.

Always operate within City Church principles and procedures and guidelines, clarifying these when unsure.



The above set clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice which serve to reduce the possibilities of positions of trust being abused or misused, or false allegations being made.

Safeguarding procedures

Concerns about children, young people and vulnerable adults will be diligently and promptly responded to according to our procedures, recognising the sensitivity it may hold for those involved. Where there is a concern, this should be reported to the appropriate person (church safeguarding officer) or advice sought from the leadership team immediately where possible, but at least within 24 hours.

Directions for action

Is the child/adult at immediate risk?

Yes

If the person is at immediate risk of harm/medical attention, **dial 999** to contact emergency services and follow any advice given. As soon as possible but within 24 hours, follow the recording and reporting steps below.

If any serious concerns about a child/young person arises out of office hours you are able to contact **the safeguarding team** by email: safeguarding@citychurchbelfast.org, or during office hours on **028 9023 8443**.

No

Concern about a member of the leadership - Inform church safeguarding officer who must seek advice on next steps.

Concern about a member of the congregation - Inform church leader and safeguarding officer who can seek advice when necessary.

Record the concern within 24 hours (**who, what, when, where, why, how?**) and file securely within church. Consider electronic protection of information.

Safeguarding responsibilities

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and most effectively undertaken when all are working within their clear roles and responsibilities.

Church leadership has a key role within the worshipping community and their influence and good management of safeguarding is fundamental in keeping all within the church community safe.



City church leadership should therefore:

Formally adopt and implement ***City Church policy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults***. Where helpful necessary policy may be developed and appended in consultation between leadership and safeguarding officer.

The implementation of policy and procedures should be discussed and reviewed by the leadership team of City Church at least yearly and the safeguarding officer should be invited to offer ideas for discussion at this time.

Copies of safeguarding policy should be displayed prominently within the church, ideally being placed on church website.

Appoint one church safeguarding officer to work with the church leader and leadership in order to implement the policy and procedures. The church safeguarding officer should attend a conversation at least yearly with leadership to review safeguarding procedures .

Display in church premises where children's activities take place, the contact details of the church safeguarding officer along with contact numbers for voluntary agencies e.g. Childline 0800 1111

Ensure that all those authorised to work with children (paid and voluntary) are appropriately recruited according to safe recruitment practice and are trained and supported.

Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities which involve children undertaken the name of City church and that risk assessments are completed for all activities.

Ensure all those who hire church premises undertake to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities towards children and young people.

Hire of Church premises

Ensuring the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults lies with those responsible for their care. Where external organisation/individuals are using church premises, hire arrangements must make it clear that the organisation/individuals are to abide by City Church safeguarding policy.



City Church Safeguarding Policy Statement

Every person has a value of dignity which comes directly from the creation of individuals in God's own image and likeness. People of Christian faith see this potential as fulfilled by God's creation of us in Christ. This implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

We accept and endorse the principles set out in City Church's Safeguarding Policy 2016

We commit ourselves to nurture, protect and safeguard all our members, particularly children young people and vulnerable adults.

We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole church community.

We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection, appointments, training and support of those working in both paid and voluntary positions with children or vulnerable adults, including the use of AccessNI disclosures and making appropriate referrals to AccessNI.

We will respond without delay to concerns and allegations that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and social care services in any investigation.

We will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them appropriate pastoral support.

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

The leadership of city church has agreed and adopted the above policy at its meeting on.

.....

We have appointed..... as our Church safeguarding officer.

Copies of City Church Safeguarding policy are held by

The leadership will review this policy annually.

The next review will take place on.....

Signed:

Pastor /Leader in charge.....



Rules for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

City Church safeguarding officer is responsible for ensuring the coordination of any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or the behaviour of an adult working with vulnerable groups. The role is to ensure that concerns are appropriately reported both to statutory agencies and to the leader of City Church . They should attend our leadership meeting at least once a year and work with the team to ensure the proper implementation of the safeguarding policy.

Where the church safeguarding officer becomes aware of a suspicion or concerns about possible abuse the following steps should be followed:

If a child/adult is in immediate need of medical treatment or protection, contact ambulance service or the police (very few situations will fall into this category, it is only when injuries have been received needing urgent medical attention or you believe that their safety and welfare will be endangered if they return to their home/living arrangements that this should need to be done)

Inform the leader, unless there is a valid reason not to, i.e. the concern is related to them.

Allegations against church leaders/officers

The guidance below relates to circumstances where it is alleged that the church leader/officer e.g. leader , caretaker, children , vulnerable adult leader, praise leader has:

Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, child/vulnerable adult

Possibly committed a criminal offence against/towards a child/vulnerable adult

Behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

Where there are concerns concerning the behaviour of, or allegations against, a church worker these concerns should be directed immediately to the church safeguarding officer and/or church leader who will confirm the appropriate next action.

Such action may involve providing advice, supervision and training, the use of statutory processes including suspension of an individual or a combination of these. A referral must be made to the police or local Trust where it appears that a criminal offence has occurred , or potentially may occur against a child or vulnerable adult.



Safeguarding training

All those volunteering and working with vulnerable groups must complete City Church safeguarding training and renew this every year.

Who is expected to complete this are:

The pastor of City Church

The leadership team

Safeguarding officer

Staff

Life Group Leaders

Pastoral Care Team

Children workers, all those volunteering with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Consideration to specific ministries in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Selecting, recruiting and supporting those that work and volunteer in City Church

Safer recruitment practices form part of a network of checks and balances which will minimise the possibility of appointing inappropriate individuals to work with vulnerable groups.

The four essential elements of "safe care " practice are;

1. Effective, clear appointment/recruitment procedures and practices
2. Explicit and shared standards
3. Clear, reliable supervision arrangements
4. Access to appropriate training opportunities



Appointments to paid and voluntary posts should be subject to a recruitment process, vetting checks and a mandatory six month probation period. Good appointment and support processes will therefore include:

Clarity about what the post requires the kind of person to occupy it (role description/person specification)

Completion of confidential declaration forms.

Consistent interviewing and assessment methods, identify is verified(by seeing photographic evidence i.e. a passport)

Requesting appropriate, specific references to ascertain the person's suitability for the role

Checking and rechecking that the individual is suitable to work with vulnerable people

Clear and thorough risk assessment to enable safe appointments to be made

Provision of appropriate means of induction, supervision, training and ongoing support.

Leadership should use the recruitment process as an opportunity to satisfy themselves that the person has the knowledge, skills, experience and the integrity for the work. It is recommended that the volunteers are not appointed to children's work until they have been regular members of the congregation for sufficient length of time for them to become known and trusted by the church community.

Children under the age of 18 wishing to volunteer must never be left alone with responsibility for a child/group of children, vulnerable adult(s) and should be supervised at all times. Recruitment principles should still be applied and a reference must be provided. They must also be counted as a child concerning ratios of adult to children when involved in children's work.

AccessNI

This organisation is responsible for processing applications for criminal record checks and for considering those judged to be a danger to either children, young people or vulnerable adults for barring (being legally prevented from working or volunteering with these groups). Access NI applications are renewed every two years.

Any person wishing to be a volunteer is required to present their Access NI approval prior to commencing work with children or young people.

There is a legal duty to refer anyone that has been employed by, or volunteered for City Church where allegations have been received, referred on to the appropriate authorities and found to have substance, to be considered for barring.



Section 2

Safeguarding children and young people

Child protection and child abuse

What is safeguarding?

Why is safeguarding important?

How might children be harmed?

What is the impact on children?

Why should the church be concerned?

Caring for those who may have harmed children.

Categories, definitions and signs of abuse

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse

Neglect

Emotional abuse

Child exploitation

Why children don't tell and adults don't act

Procedures to follow if there is a concern about a child

What to do with disclosures and concerns

Making a referral to children's social services/police



Other considerations

Consent

Safeguarding of children and adults is an integral part of the life and Ministry of City Church, set out clearly in this policy and it is everyone's responsibility. The safeguarding of children and young person policy sits together with the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. City Church proposes that all aspects of the policy for safeguarding children and young people can be applied to vulnerable adults too.

As defined in the psychology, sociology and social work fields, a vulnerable adult is any person who has not acquired (as distinct from mid-level or typical level) human life skills by reason of not having learned them through the formative years of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. A vulnerable adult is unable, rather than unwilling, to properly learn or properly maintain these skills.

Child protection and child abuse

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding: The broader activities through which we are vigilant and responsive to promoting the welfare of the children and young people and protecting them from potential harm. (The term child is set out in law as a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, therefore the term child is used throughout this policy and procedure and this includes young people.) Working together to safeguard children, 2013.

Safeguarding is demonstrated through carefully planned activities for children, offering support where possible, responding to concerns and working with partner agencies. It also involves caring for those hurt by abuse and managing the behaviour of those in our church who have caused or may cause harm to others.

The primary concept in safeguarding is recognising and responding to potential significant harm to children. Significant harm is any single or multiple maltreatment to the health and development of a child and it is determined by careful assessment.



Why is safeguarding important?

Too often children have died or been abused at the hands of those who should've protected them. Therefore the work of safeguarding children and young people is now guided by a significant body of legislation and policy. They serve to reinforce the importance of this work on the basis from which we should be operating. The UN Convention on the rights of the child (1989) challenges us to take measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. In Northern Ireland this is reflected in the Northern Ireland Children's order 1995 which provides statutory powers for social services to investigate and intervene where there are concerns of significant harm to a child. More specifically, statutory and voluntary organisations are guided by. "Working together to Safeguard Children (2013) published by HM Government which provide specific guidance for faith organisations. This policy has been developed alongside this legislation.

How might children be harmed?

Children can be harmed in many ways. Maltreatment of a child occurs where their health, physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, spiritual and social development is damaged by other people. All abuse is a betrayal of trust and the misuse of relationships in part. Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically. Abuse can be an act of commission, such as sexual abuse or, omission, such as neglect or failure to protect or report.

Child abuse affects girls and boys, babies and young people of all ages up to 18, including children with learning difficulties, children with physical disabilities and children from all kinds of family backgrounds. It occurs in all cultures, religions and classes . Research shows that disabled children are more vulnerable . Abuse may be happening in many situational contexts.

Digital technology such as the Internet and Mobile phones are being increasingly used as a medium for abuse . Amongst their peers, children may experience 'sexting' or be enticed to take or send explicit photographs of themselves. With adults it may also take the form of production and distribution of photographs or videos displaying abusive images of children. Children can be entrapped by these practices.

What is the impact on children?

Abuse can result in the child suffering significant harm and the need for court proceedings to safeguard their welfare. Abuse prevents children from achieving their full potential and undermines their dignity and rights. The harm it causes may affect children both while it is happening and in later life. It can be educational, emotional, psychological and relational. Historic accounts are therefore to be responded to with the same diligence. When abuse occurs within the context of the church it may affect the person's faith and spiritual development



Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic abuse. Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people, who are or who have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. Domestic abuse will always include at least emotional abuse of any child in the household, there may also be direct abuse on them.

Why should the church be concerned?

Churches are places where everyone should be able to have the opportunity to grow in their faith community. Sadly research has indicated that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally (Lucy Faithful Foundation). It is therefore likely that congregations may have people who have abused children among their worshippers, some of whom will be known. Not all have committed sexual offences; some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse, they may still present a risk to children. There is a belief that church is a community that considers redemption, it has a duty to minister to all people. This imposes a particular responsibility to not place people in the way of risk, and not to compromise the safety of children.

Caring for those who may or have harmed children

It is the policy of City Church Belfast that all those who work/ volunteer with children, young people and vulnerable adults have an AccessNI check as the final part of the safer recruitment process and that all elements of this process must be satisfactorily completed before a person allowed to commence working either as an employee or a volunteer. This check must be renewed every two years. Where information is disclosed on the certificate, resulting in a blemished disclosure, there will always be a risk assessment process carried out by the city church safeguarding/leadership team that will be proportionate to the role and information disclosed. The freedom of information act, 2012 means that many old minor or unrelated offences will no longer be disclosed part of this process. Disclosures of past events do not always mean that the person cannot be appointed to the proposed role.

As well as people with cautions and convictions against children there are many others whose behaviour may be considered to pose a risk to children. A protocol for managing offenders must be completed for all those with cautions or convictions relating to children. A covenant of care agreement should be completed with those who may potentially present a risk to children, for example even where they have not been arrested or charged with an offence. These agreements will put in place boundaries that will protect vulnerable groups and the (alleged) offenders including provision for pastoral care.



Categories, signs and definition of Abuse

There are four categories of abuse as described in “Working together to Safeguard Children”, (2013) from which the following definitions are taken.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning or scalding, drowning ,suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

Physical abuse

Physical signs	behavioural signs
bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse, but they are not the only ones. Other signs include:	sometimes if a child is being physically abused they may show changes in behaviour, such as:
injuries that the child can not explain or explains unconvincingly	becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed
Untreated or inadequately treated injuries	Having trouble sleeping
Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs , back, abdomen	Behaving aggressively or being disruptive
Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks	Showing fear of certain adults
Cigarette burns	Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem
	Using drugs or alcohol



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may include physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of the clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in the looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Woman can also commit acts of sexual violence, as can other children.

Sexual abuse

physical signs	behavioural signs
<p>pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas</p> <p>Genital discharge or urinary tract infections</p> <p>Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting</p> <p>Sexually transmitted diseases</p>	<p>A marked change in the Child's general behaviour. For example they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical elements, but which cannot be explained medically</p> <p>A young person they refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected</p> <p>They may show unexpected fear or distress of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities</p> <p>They might start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age</p> <p>The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new , secret friendship with an adult or young person</p>



Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child health and development. Neglect may occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. When a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

Protect the child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's emotional needs.

Neglect

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Abandonment Unattended medical needs Consistent lack of supervision Constant hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, distended stomach, emaciated Inadequate nutrition	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep often Steals food, begs from others Reports that there is no care at home Frequently absent or late Self-destructive Extreme loneliness and need for affection School dropout, (adolescence)



Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which causes 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, ridiculing what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the children. These may include interactions that are beyond the Child's development of capability, as well as overprotection and limitations of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interactions. It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, for examples in domestic abuse situations; serious bullying (including cyber bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

Emotional abuse

<i>Physical signs</i>	<i>Behavioural signs</i>
<i>speech disorders</i>	<i>habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting)</i>
<i>delayed physical development</i>	<i>antisocial, disruptive</i>
<i>substance abuse</i>	<i>neurotic traits (sleeping disorders, inhibition of play)</i>
<i>ulcers, severe allergy</i>	<i>passive aggressive behavioural extremes</i>
	<i>delinquent behaviour (especially Adolescent)</i>
	<i>developmental delays</i>



Official definition of child sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

This definition of child sexual exploitation was created by the UK National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG)



Why children don't tell and adults don't act

There is a belief that a child or young person would resist abuse at all costs or immediately tell trusted adults. Children usually need to overcome a number of barriers which may be emotional or intellectual but are very real for them. The majority of children and young people don't tell because often they;

Are scared because they have been threatened

Believe they will be taken away from home and put in care

Believe they are to blame

Think it was happening to all children

Feeling embarrassed and guilty

Don't want that abuser to get into trouble

Have communication or learning difficulties

Have not the vocabulary to explain what happened

Are afraid they won't be believed

All of us have the natural revulsion upon hearing someone has maltreated a child , especially if it is someone we know, and must resist our inclination to dismiss it's possible truth in favour of a more comfortable rationale.

The reason adults do not share their concerns maybe because we:

Find it hard to believe what we are seeing or hearing

Do not believe that someone we know may have behaved in this way

Fear we might get it wrong or make it worse

Fear the consequences of getting it wrong – for the child, young person, the family and/or for ourselves

Simply don't want to be involved

Believe we do not have the information about what to do who to contact.



Procedure to follow if there is a concern about a child

What to do with disclosure and concerns

Concerns about a child or young person may present themselves in a number of ways. The core actions that should always be taken are:

Take emergency action needed to alleviate any immediate risk to life or limb (call 999)

Discuss your concerns with your church safeguarding officer/church leader

Make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard or become concerned about (within an hour when possible)

Listen, don't ask any leading questions and treat all information confidentially

Ensure safeguarding action is taken.

All situations of actual or suspected child abuse should be reported without delay (Within 24 hours) to the appropriate agency and to the leader of City Church for further advice and support.

Making a referral to children's social services/police

If it is necessary to make a referral, this will normally be done by the incumbent church safeguarding officer or, when necessary City Church leader. The following points should be kept in mind:

Give the Gateway social worker/police officer as much detail as possible, names, addresses, descriptions, dates, times and what actually was said/seen

Distinguish between fact and opinion between what you have seen and what others have told you

Follow-up your contact with the relevant statutory agency either by letter or email confirming what you have said to them (within 24 hours)

Keep a record of all contact made, including the names of those who have reported to comment regarding the concern

Be prepared to have further discussions with social services and with the police investigation team

Continue to support the child and ensure they know what will happen

You may need support for yourself – from others in the church who know what is happening, i.e. the incumbent City church safeguarding officer



Other considerations

Consent

It is most important to ensure that children and young people are able to make an informed choice about whether to be involved in specific church activities (i.e. children/your groups). This can be done by sending the children and young people a brief document, meeting with them before the event/activity and talking them through what is involved. Children and young people should be given the option at any time before and during an event or activity to say if they feel unhappy or comfortable with what is happening and they must be listened to.

Parental consent must be obtained for all children and young people up to the age of 18 years, unless they are 16 years or over and living and working independently from the parent/guardian or not part of the looked after system or the local authority .

Consent will be needed for:

Activities the group will engage in , especially when taking place off site or addressing an issue that would be deemed controversial

Taking and use of any photographs or video clips

The use of private cars to transport children

The use of electronic means of communication with children-email, text, social network sites.



Section 3

Safeguarding vulnerable adults

Safeguarding Vulnerable adults

When is an adult vulnerable?

Why should the church be concerned?

How do I know it is mistreatment or significant harm?

Who might mistreat or abuse vulnerable adults?

general indications that abuse may be occurring

Categories of abuse

Physical abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse

Sexual abuse

Neglect

Financial abuse

Discriminatory abuse

Institutional abuse

Spiritual abuse

Domestic abuse

Procedure following disclosure a concern

What to do with disclosures and concerns

Confidentiality and information sharing

Responding to concerns of disclosures



City Church recognises that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions yet, at sometimes, may become vulnerable due to pressures, dangers or overwhelming circumstances. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. This may be because, for example, they have a disability, mental health issue or dementia. There is a duty for everyone to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person we must do so with and in the way that maintains dignity.

This Section of the policy document sets out City Church's commitment to working with others to promote and Safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults in its community.

When is an adult vulnerable ?

Government guidance describes a vulnerable adult as, any person over the age of 18 years "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and he or she may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm". Within faith settings it is also recognised as a person who has recently suffered personal adversity making them in particular need of pastoral support. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

Sensory or physical disability or impairment

Learning disability

Physical illness

Chronic or acute mental health (including dementia)

Addiction to alcohol or drugs

Failing faculties in old age and

Permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity through life events such as bereavement/loss abuse or trauma

Mistreatment or abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation.



Why should the church be concerned?

Every church has members who are or will become temporarily or permanently vulnerable and who may look to the church for support and care during these times. At times they may not have the capacity to make decisions that may have consequences for themselves and/or for others. These may relate to daily care, health, finance or property. City church has a duty to empower and protect such individuals, coming alongside family members where necessary.

All church activities which support an individual deemed vulnerable/risk must follow these five principles:

- 1) An assumption of capacity – all adults, even those felt to be lacking in mental capacity, have the right to make their own decisions and must be assumed to have a capacity to make decisions about their own safety unless its established (on a balance of probabilities) otherwise;
- 2) Individual should be supported in making their own decisions – giving an appropriate help and support before considering making any decisions on their behalf of;
- 3) Respect the right to make unwise decisions – recognise that person retains the right to make seemingly eccentric or unwise decision;
- 4) Act in the best interest – decisions made on behalf of the person who lacks mental capacity must be in their best interest and respectful of their basic rights and freedom;
- 5) Take the least restrictive option – when meeting a decision or acting on behalf of a person who lacks capacity, consideration needs to be given to whether it's possible to act in a way that should interfere less with the person's rights and freedom of actions.



How do I know it is mistreatment of significant harm?

Abuse or mistreatment is a single repeated act which violates an individual's human and/or civil rights. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, be an active and neglect or omission, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into financial or sexual transaction to which they have not given, or cannot give, consent.

The harm may be deemed significant where there is not only ill-treatment but impairment and avoidable deterioration to physical, mental, social, sexual or emotional health. The seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear and concern should be assessed carefully taking the vulnerable person's demeanour and point of view into consideration. Each situation should be consider the:

Vulnerability of the individual,

Nature and extent of the abuse

Length of time it has been occurring

Impact on the individual

Risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults.

Who might mistreat or abuse vulnerable adults?

Vulnerable adults may be mistreated or abused by a wide range of people including relatives/family members, professional staff, paid carers, volunteers, other vulnerable people, neighbours, friends, mere associates or strangers. The abuse can take place within a caring relationship or when an abuser is not well known to the victim.

It may be accepted or exacerbated by the behaviour or culture within an institution, in which case it is described as institutional abuse. Abuse concerns the misuse of influence or power or control and/or authority can result in harmful or criminal activity.

Someone may use their position of influence, power or authority to the detriment of the safety, welfare and the general well-being of a vulnerable person through ignorance, or with intent and for personal gain – this could be seen as deliberate agreement.

General indication that abuse may be a occurring

It may not always be obvious that a vulnerable adult is being subjected to mistreatment or abuse; and it may not be appropriate to question them at the time. However there may be general indicators that something is amiss and that the adult is unhappy about the situation. Marked changes in their behaviour or disclosure of concern should always be discussed immediately with the City church safeguarding officer.



Some general indicators that may not be just about the vulnerable person:

Covering up or rationalising, injuries or demeaning behaviour towards them

Confusion and/or denial that anything is amiss despite mark the duration

flirtatious, precocious or expression of sexual behaviour out of character

Indications of unusual confinement e.g. closed off in a room

Behaviours may be observed about the carer, family member or the person close to the vulnerable person include:

Getting the vulnerable person to pay for their ie carer's shopping/petrol/tickets

Taking advantage of their naivety of trust

Attitudes of indifference or anger towards the vulnerable person

Blaming or chastising them e.g. soiling themselves was deliberate

Aggressive for harsh behaviour (threat, insults, harassment)

Inappropriate display of affection or care

Social isolation or restriction of activity, Obvious absence of assistance or attendance



Categories of abuse

Nine categories of abuse have been identified . Any or all of these may be carried out at the result of: deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable adults, negligent or ignorance.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the act of physical ill treatment. It may include hitting /slapping/pushing/punching/kicking/burning/biting/suffocating and misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Physical abuse -adults **Possible indicators of abuse**

Any injury not fully explained

untreated or poorly treated injuries

Unexplained bruises or welts, particularly in protected areas

Bruises in various stages of healing, clusters forming regular patterns

Any cuts or abrasions

Injuries to head/face or/scalp

Broken eyeglasses or frames

Unexplained burns, fractures or lacerations

Malnutrition or dehydration without an illness related cause ; loss of weight

Lack of personal care

urinary/faecal incontinence

Inappropriate use of medication, overdosing/underdosing

History of moving GPs, or moving between agencies (agency hopping)



No suspected injury should be ignored, however, care should be taken as not all marks and injuries are caused as a result of abuse.

The key to identifying maltreatment or abuse is noticing unexplained marks, or injuries with unsatisfactory explanations. Where an injury occurs often, you should at least question the safety of the environment and what could be done to minimise further risks. Always note the site and type of injury observed so that patterns can be identified. If however the injury or injuries still give cause for concern discuss the issue with City church safeguarding officer (within 24 hours) to decide if further intervention is required.

Emotional or psychological abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse is the use of threats or fear of the use of power over relationships to deny the vulnerable person's independent wishes. This includes: threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation and denial of dignity, blaming, controlling, bullying, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal of services/supportive networks.

Harassment may include name-calling, victimisation and ostracism, unwanted sexual attention, stalking, compromising invitations or gifts, the display of images that are racial/sexual offensive or the suggestion that sexual favours might be advantageous.

Emotional or psychological abuse – adults

possible behaviour of vulnerable adults	possible behaviour by abuser
Insomnia/sleep deprivation Change in appetite, weight gain or loss Ambivalence to parent Anger without an appropriate cause Defensive /resignation, helplessness, Excessive fears Unexplained paranoia Self harming/suicide attempts Emotional withdrawal – the person becomes Uncommunicative or nonresponsive Low self-esteem	Threats, intimidation, bullying Threats of abandonment Promises which are not kept Punitive approach to incontinence -Blaming , sanctions Few visitors or other contact Locking the person inside

Visible signs may not be evident, however the impact of emotional mistreatment should never be underestimated as a deterioration in the victim's physical and mental health may take a long time to recover from, and maybe irreparable.



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is the sexual act (contact and noncontact) carried out without the informed consent or knowledge of the other individual. Noncontact abuse may include sexual suggestions, salaciously exposure to indecent material and indecent behaviour. Contact abuse may include rape and sexual assault or acts to which the adult at risk has not consented or could not have consented or was pressured into consenting. Victim suffered emotionally and psychologically if you believe there is any issue about an individual's capacity to consent to any relationship, you should seek advice from the church safeguarding officer within 24 hours.

Sexual abuse - adults

Possible indicators of abuse

Low self-esteem Single or partial disclosure Nightmares Signs of depression or stress Unusual difficulty in walking and sitting Torn, stained or bloody underclothes Pain, itching or any injury to genital area Sexually transmitted disease/infections Bites, bruising or any marks on inside of arms Significant change in sexual behaviour/language Agitation during personal-care/examination Pregnancy in a person who is unable to consent

No one should enter into an intimate sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility for.



Neglect

Neglectful behaviour is any pattern of activity or omission which seriously impairs an individual. These include: ignoring the need for medical or physical care, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care, religious or educational services, or the deliberate withholding of necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Also denying contact with family, failing to intervene in situations where there is danger to the vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk.

Neglect – adult

Possible indicators of abuse

poor physical condition, e.g. rashes
Inadequate heating/lighting
Inadequate clothing in poor conditions
Malnutrition
Failure to access medical care and give prescribe medication when required
Lack of assistance with eating and drinking
Failure to provide privacy and dignity
Inconsistent/reluctant contact with health or social agencies
Inappropriate clothing
Sensory deprivation
Poor personal hygiene



Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the willful use or manipulation of the vulnerable person's property, assets or monies without their informed consent or authorisation. This can include theft or fraud of monies or possessions, exploitations, pressure or undue influence to change wills, and financial arrangements, or the misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

Financial abuse – adults

Possible indicators of abuse

signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the adult signature of which were signed when the adult cannot write
Sudden financial changes, including unexplained large sums of money
Inclusion of additional names on adults bank account
Issues with carers and powers of attorney
Abrupt changes to or creation of wills
Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to vulnerable person's affairs or possessions
Unexplained transfers of assets to family member/someone outside the family
Numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone should have been paying these for the vulnerable person
A carer asks financial questions about a person, unrelated to their care
Lack of amenities, such as the TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford
Unexplained disappearances of money or valuable possessions e.g. silverware or jewels

You should be alert to the deliberate isolation of a vulnerable person from friends and family.

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse is maltreatment or harassment that is based on any characteristic of a person's identity, such as their race, sex or disability. Many of the signs of discriminatory abuse will be the same as for emotional abuse. The impact of discriminatory abuse can lead to significant self harm and must never be underestimated.

The emotional and psychological impact of discriminatory abuse can cause untold damage to the individual, both physically and mentally and in many cases leads to self harm and tragically in some cases suicide.



Institutional abuse

Institutional abuse is when a culture of poor practise or maltreatment within a setting becomes routine at the expense of good professional practice. It may be experienced through inflammatory attitudes, negative, stereotype and abusive behaviours which are not corrected. Local authorities and churches should promote good practice in adult care.

Institutional abuse – adults

Possible indicators of abuse

lack of respect and dignity Name calling and inappropriate ways of addressing people. Inappropriate use of power and control: Inability to make choices and decisions Agitation when routine is broken : Patterns of challenging behaviour: Inappropriate use of power and control: inadequate staffing levels People being hungry or dehydrated Poor standard of care

Spiritual abuse

Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious beliefs or practices. This can include the misuse of the authority of the leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance which may result in both vulnerable adults and children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.

City Church needs to avoid practice which would be seen as an attempt to force religious values or behaviours on vulnerable people. Additionally, spiritual abuse may include attempts to direct what people believe and do and to deny choices.



Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the use of forms of control and/or maltreatment within an intimate or domestic relationship. Types of domestic abuse include:

Physical eg-: hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining, giving too much medication or the wrong medication, assault with everyday implement such as kitchen knives, kicking, biting, shoving, smashing someone's possessions, imprisoning them, forcing them to use a illicit drugs as a way of blackmailing and controlling them.

Psychological – (also called emotional, mental or verbal abuse). For example: shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating someone, blackmailing them, threatening harm to children or pets if they misbehave, negative or critical commenting on every aspect of their appearance and skills, keeping them deliberately short of sleep, being obsessively and irrationally jealous, keeping them isolated from friends and family, threatening suicide or self harm.

Sexual – for examples, forcing someone to take part in any sexual activity without consent e.g. rape, sexual assault, forcing them or blackmailing them into sexual acts with other people, forcing children to watch sexual acts, sexually name calling, imposition of dress code upon a partner, involvement in the sex trade or pornography, knowingly passing on sexually transmitted infection is, controlling access to contraception.

Economic/financial- or example the illegal or unauthorised use of someone's property, money, benefit book, other valuables, forcing them to take out loans, keeping them in poverty, managing every penny they spend, refusing to let them use transport or have money to pay for it.

Spiritual abuse can be part of the Domestic abuse.

Stalking and cyberstalking are also forms of control and abuse . Church workers should remain alert to the use of words, physical or sexual practices to demean and control a vulnerable adult.

Domestic abuse – adults

Possible indicators of abuse

has unexplained bruises or injuries Show signs of feeling suicidal becomes unusually quiet /withdrawn Has panic attacks Has frequent absences from work or other commitments Wears clothes that conceal even on warm days Stop talking about his or her partner is anxious about being out too long, and rushes away



Procedures following disclosure or concern

What to do with disclosures and concerns

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility and concerns about vulnerable adults can emerge in a number of ways. City Church leadership and lay workers should be alert to possible signs of abuse when visiting their congregation, and if they observe anything that makes them uneasy, should seek advice and report concerns to the appropriate authorities. It is possible that a historic abuse could be disclosed as part of the pastoral process. The process for responding to historic abuse is the same as for current abuse (even when the alleged perpetrator is deceased) and advice should be sought from the City Church safeguarding officer.

The actions that should always be taken are:

Take any emergency action needed to alleviate any immediate risk to life or limb

Make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard of a become concerned about within an hour possible

Listen, do not ask any leading questions and treat all information confidentiality

Discuss your concerns with your church safeguarding officer/City church leader

Ensure safeguarding action is taken, supporting the adult, if they have capacity, to make a referral when this is the action they choose to take .

All situations of historic, actual or suspected abuse should be reported without delay (within 24 hours)



Confidentiality and information sharing

Any disclosure made by vulnerable adults or any concerns that become apparent must be treated with sensitivity and any sharing of information must be carried out on a strictly need-to-know basis. This priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults and City church advises "Where a vulnerable person is judged to be at risk of significant harm or an adult is likely to harm themselves or others, usually it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting that vulnerable person. All concerns therefore should be in the first instance be passed to the safeguarding officer/City Church pastor within 24 hours.

Is appropriate to ascertain the wishes of the vulnerable person about what they want to do about the situation, explaining the boundaries of confidentiality. Care should be taken however if telling the vulnerable person what you are going to do you could make them more vulnerable or at further risk.

Responding to concerns and disclosures

There are many reasons why individuals do not disclose this treatment or abuse, perhaps personal family reasons or fear. Some people blame themselves for what has happened or make excuses for their abusers particularly if they rely on them for care, support, shelter or companionship. Fear of getting a loved one into trouble may be very real. So consequently victims may refuse to speak to the police, especially in the initial stages even if the situation is extremely serious.

If someone tells you about mistreatment or you have concerns about a vulnerable person, your role is to respond sensitively and provide support. Ascertain what the vulnerable person wants to do about the situation and consult the safeguarding officer within 24 hours. Drawing diagrams and sketches may be very useful in trying to actually record a concern. In individual should sign their notes and keep them safe.

In emergency situations (where are you believe that the adult will be further harm if left in the current situation) contact the police, ambulance or social services immediately and inform the church safeguarding officer as soon as possible but within 24 hours. The safeguarding officer should then discuss the situation with City Church Leader. They should make a record of the meeting afterwards and always let the police know of what they have seen and done in responding to the situation.



Do

Assure them you are taking them seriously

Stay calm, the person concerned is likely to be anxious and needing reassurance

Listen attentively and accept what is being said, your role is to pass on the concern

Let the person tell you in their own words, avoid any assumptions and suggesting explanations

Keep any questions to minimum

What is said and seen using their own words and actions

Let them know that you have a duty to speak to your safeguarding officer about the situation and that their concerns may have to be shared with others who could have a part to play in protecting them

Reassure them that they will be fully involved in any decisions about what will happen next

Explain that you will try to take steps to protect them from further harm

Do not

Press for more detail, someone more appropriate may do this at a later point

Be judgement or jump to conclusions or voice your opinion

Do not promise to keep secret/to keep complete confidentiality

Discuss information with alleged abuser

Attempt to deal with the problem alone

The simple actions will help to protect the vulnerable adult against further abuse

**Please also see separate document for City Church E- safety policy
May 2016**