



Promoting Safeguarding

Preventing Abuse

Protecting All - children, adults and staff

# Safeguarding Policy

## Children & Adults

### 2023

Cricklade United Church  
United Reformed / Methodist

South Western Synod

## Introduction

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Cricklade United Church.

We acknowledge both adults and children's right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice.

We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.

We will implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator who will have specific responsibilities for safeguarding, although we recognise that safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and adults at risk.

We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources and training, to those who work with children and adults at risk.

We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk, which could include partners of offenders.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and can affect both adults and children.

All concerns and allegations of abuse, including domestic abuse, will be responded to appropriately, including referring to the Police and Social Care if necessary, either Adult or Children's.

We will co-operate with the Police, Children's and Adult's Services in any investigation, will follow multi agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We will refer concerns about staff - volunteers and paid, lay or ordained - that meet the relevant criteria, to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Our statement of safeguarding Principles is attached as Appendix 1

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. They can be contacted as detailed below (please insert details)

Name John Youe

Contact phone number 01793 751650

Email address johnyoue962@gmail.com

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Church Secretary can be contacted as detailed below (please insert details)

Name Margaret Roberts

Contact phone number 01793 751063

Email address margaret.roberts4745@gmail.com

#### Aim and purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting the vulnerable, children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children and adults at risk within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events.

#### Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Council and Church Meeting and applies:

- to those who attend our Church/place of worship;
- to our trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- to organisations which hire our building with agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent United Reformed Church good practice guidance.

Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy, and our procedures.

## Definitions

Children refers to those under the age of 18 years.

Adults at risk Any adult (over 18) who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

### Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to beneficiaries of the charity, either adults at risk or children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

### Preventing abuse

The church will appoint a safeguarding coordinator for children and adults at risk. A role description is attached as Appendix 2.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with Children, appropriate records will be kept (see URC Record Keeping policy for further details), and adequate insurance will be in place for each event.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Completion of self declaration forms
- Obtaining Disclosure and barring checks wherever legally entitled to do so
- Taking up two references (not family)
- Interviewing candidates

Training in safeguarding will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as Appendix 3) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults at risk.

Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with children or adults must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this safeguarding policy as a condition of the letting agreement. If they have their own safeguarding policy they will be asked to provide a copy. If they do not have their own safeguarding policy, the church will encourage them to adopt one before agreeing to the hire (e.g. by referring them to [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk) for guidance on this). In some cases the church may agree to a small organisation following the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

What are we protecting from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults at risk. A copy of the definitions relating to children is attached to this policy at Appendix 4. The definitions of abuse in relation to adults at risk is attached as Appendix 5

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. A list of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to children is attached at Appendix 6 and in relation to Adults at Risk at Appendix 7. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories.

It is essential to note that these are only indicators of possible abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for any of these signs and/or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child or adult at risk makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- Stays calm and listens carefully.
- Reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else if a child is at risk of harm.
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Informs the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Church Secretary). Makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record (using the template in Appendix 8). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

## Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police will be contacted.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur:-

- The concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies (see below for the relevant statutory contacts)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it using the template at Appendix 8. This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.
- The person about whom the allegation is must not be informed by anyone in the Church if it is judged that to do so would place a child or vulnerable adult at increased risk.

Statutory contact in the case of a child or adult:

Wiltshire Council: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

For children: Multi Agency Safeguarding: 0300 4560108

Mon- Thurs 8.45 - 17.00 Fr: 8.45 - 16.00

For Adults: 0300 4560111

Out of Hours for either of the above: 0300 4560100

If someone in the church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adult at risk

We will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer, so that they can offer advice and support, and we will contact the relevant statutory agency.

If the allegation is regarding a church staff member or church volunteer

When the relevant criteria is met, in the case of children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation, possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this decision.

Please insert details

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children or adults at risk OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not work with children because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfied the harm test or has committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

In such cases a report will also be made to the Charity Commission as they deem such a referral as a 'serious incident' and require notification

Sources of advice, guidance, and support

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Jan Murphy 07875 454 064

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 24 hour helpline: Tel 0845 120 4550

(n.b. This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact the Synod Safeguarding Officer, who does work outside ordinary office hours)

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact (please insert name of person and telephone number e.g. minister or church secretary)

It would be helpful to have complaints in writing as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing complaints will be acted upon.

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

Review

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

Date of most recent review: 29th January 2023      Date of next review: January 2024

Signed:

Sarah Simpson

(on behalf of the Church Council)

29th January 2023