St George's Morpeth

Safeguarding Policy

Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies to:
- all members of our church
- all those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- our trustees and elders
- paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- volunteers
- organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

The values and safeguarding principles within the United Reformed Church are described in **Appendix A1**. The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with these principles and the most recent URC good practice guidance (GP5). Children, parents/carers, adults at risk and those responsible for safeguarding them will be informed of this policy and our procedures.

Definitions

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for the time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all to whom this policy applies (see above), whether adults, children or young people. We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Preventing abuse

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators for safeguarding children and adults. A job/role description is attached as *Appendix A2*.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate and accessible consent forms will be used (for children's activities or activities for people with special needs), appropriate records will be kept, and adequate insurance will be in place.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers with emphasis on those in regulated activities. We will treat applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed (see *Appendix D* for the church policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders) and ensure that safer recruitment-related procedures are followed, as appropriate, which include:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- providing workers with job or role descriptions and person specifications
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks for eligible roles and positions
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/agreements.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as *Appendices A3* and *A4* depending on the vulnerable group) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or the termination of people's service.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed or harm children or adults, we will inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or Synod Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and adults.

When any church premises are let to an external, informal group or individual, those hiring the premises should hold and abide by their own safeguarding policy. If a hirer does not have a policy, they must abide by the church's own safeguarding policy, a copy of which should be made available. Each hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults at

risk are always protected by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. ***Appendix A6: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse*** provides definitions of different forms of abuse and further help and guidance. Some signs could be indicators of several different categories of abuse. It is essential to note that these are only indicators of possible abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for these signs and/or behaviour. There might be domestic abuse that requires a different approach (please see ***Appendix R: A Guide to domestic abuse***). The indicators will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

Church workers and members will also pay attention to online safety and their electronic communications with children and adults. Grooming and abuse of any form can occur offline (both physically and verbally) and online. ***Appendix C: Church online safety policy*** provides an acceptable use policy in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children and provides sample forms which children and workers *should* be asked to sign.

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

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused or have been abused, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listens carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- informs the church Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours (if the Church Safeguarding Coordinator is implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (using the template in ***Appendix A5***). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.

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

- The concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer **within 24 hours** and a decision needs to be made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory authorities
NB: Key Contacts of relevant statutory contacts in Northumberland are included on **pages 7/8.**
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at **Appendix A5**. This record will be kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory authorities if a referral is made
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at further risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted beforehand
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns and referrals to police and statutory authorities.

Prior to any referral to Children's Services, the child's wishes and rights should be considered when determining what action to take. There should also be a verbal consultation with Local Authority's Children's Services to ensure that making a referral is an appropriate action. The parent/carer will normally be contacted to obtain their consent before a referral is made.

However, if the concern involves, for example alleged or suspected child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Honour Based Violence, fabricated or induced illness, or the Synod Safeguarding Officer has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing should be said to the parent/carer ahead of the referral, but a rationale for the decision to progress without consent should be provided with the referral.

In the case of referrals to adult social care or other services for adults at risk, information should be shared with consent if the adult has capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act and if this does not place the referrer, them or others at an increased risk. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others. (See section 14 of Good Practice 5 for further advice and guidance).

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

If someone in the church is alleged or known to harm/have harmed children or adults, it is essential to inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support.

For any concerns relating to children, the Designated Officer (DO) in Northumberland Children's Services (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the DO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the DO about when to inform the worker and the church will

follow this advice. As noted, DO contact details are included in the Key Contacts section on pages 7/8 of this policy.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. Likewise, their contacts details are included in the Key Contacts section on pages 7/8 of this policy.

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS / PVG for consideration of barring to share information about any individual in regulated activity where for safeguarding reasons the organisation has either terminated the employment, failed to appoint, or would have terminated the employment had the individual not moved on through resignation, retirement or re-deployment. In such cases, the Synod Safeguarding Officer needs to be advised/informed.

NB   Depending on the seriousness of incidents or allegations, a report to the Charity Commission will also need to be considered at the elders/trustees' meeting, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and require notification.

Managing those who may pose a risk to the welfare of others

The use of rigorous and careful supervision is paramount to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing safeguarding contracts with known or alleged offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk. Where it is known that someone has a caution or conviction for committing a sexual offence, the church can play an important role in the prevention of further abuse by helping the offender to live an offence-free life.

If anyone is made aware that a person attending their church has been convicted of an offence against a child or has had an allegation of this nature made against them at any time, the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim Moderator must be informed immediately.

It is important to provide known or alleged offenders with a group of people who will offer support, friendship and supervision. Following advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer, when appropriate, a formal safeguarding contract will be drawn up between the church, the person who is considered to pose a risk to the welfare of people in the church, and any statutory agencies, when involved.

Training

Safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role. All relevant staff members and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training delivered by the Synod. The Safeguarding Coordinators will ensure that trustees/elders and people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers) have undergone safeguarding training, as recommended by the

URC.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact:

Name: Morag Stead (Church Secretary)

Telephone No: 07745802475

Email: moragstead@outlook.com

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

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

Key Contacts: Sources of advice and support

- The church **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations relating to children, young people or adults should be addressed:

Name   Margaret Brock

Telephone No   01670 511897 or 07881761135

Email   margaretdbrock@aol.com
In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator** should be contacted:

Name   Lorna Anderson

Telephone No   07415883407

Email   ihatecustard1@btopenworld.com

- **Northern Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name   Matt Knowles

Telephone No: 07761 525592

Email: matt.safeguarding@urc-northernsynod.org

URC Safeguarding Office (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone No   020 7520 2729

Email   safeguarding@urc.org.uk

- **ThirtyOne: Eight** (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact URC)

24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (DO)**

Name   Carol Glasper

Telephone No: 01670 623979

Email   **Carol.Glasper@northumberland.gov.uk**

- **Statutory Contact in the case of a child at risk**

   Children's Services: 01670 536400 during office hours

   Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6005252 outside office hours

- **Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk**

   Adult Social Care Services: 01670 536400 during office hours

   Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6005252 outside office hours

 Note: A list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults can be found in *Appendix U.*

Review

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

Date of the most recent review: 22 January 2023   Date of the next review: January 2024

Signed: ....*Morag Stead*   (on behalf of the Church Elders)

Appendix A1
Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the leadership of St George's URC, Morpeth

Safeguarding is taken seriously by St George's United Reformed Church, Morpeth. We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or are experiencing harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect

of children and adults, and ensure the well-being and pastoral care of those who are or may be at risk.

We will prevent abuse for extremist or other purposes and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

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

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a place of worship all will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy

Safeguarding Coordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available in our posters, websites, or in other communications.

We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of trustees and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the Church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained. We will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. We will use DBS/PVG checks as part of a wide range of checks on trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults at risk.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, DO (the Designated Officer, formerly known as LADO), Local Safeguarding Boards (in Wales), Children's Partnership Boards (formally Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to working with those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, offering appropriate pastoral support where possible as well as to challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the Church. We will also offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervising them, referring them to the appropriate agencies, and, where appropriate, implementing safeguarding contracts.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside the denomination, as appropriate.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment are in alignment with Good Practice 5 – United Reformed Church's Policy and Guidance in Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the local church elders.
Name: Morag Stead…(Church Secretary)   Signed: …*Morag Stead*   Date: 5 February 2023…

Appendix A2
The role of a Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Context

We believe that children and adults at risk deserve the best possible care that the church can provide and that the church should be a safe place for everyone involved. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

Purpose of the role

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church.
- To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church.

Responsibilities

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church
- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and are fit for purpose.
- To make sure that elders and others in the church are aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, including URC guidelines and Charity Commission responsibilities.
- To collaborate with the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, the Minister, the DBS/PVG signatory people and the Synod Safeguarding Officer on all matters around safeguarding.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in the recruitment of all workers (both volunteers and paid) including, but not exclusively, ensuring that the relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks.
- To review and ensure others' safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place when any church premises are let to an external organisation, informal group or individual.

To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues
- To be a named person that children / adults at risk, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate departments and teams within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.

- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To ensure safe practice is in place for supporting people who pose a risk to children and adults at risk at church.
- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer about any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory authorities.
- To report safeguarding information annually to the Eldership/Church Meeting and the Synod Safeguarding Officer, using the appropriate system, to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church
- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impact of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and all people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers), as recommended by the Synod, and ensure that their training is renewed every three years.
- To attend appropriate training for the role, including refresher training every three years, and keep updated on matters related to safeguarding.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when on leave, and to publicise who the substitute is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

Requirements for the role
- To have knowledge of policy and practice for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk.
- Good communication (written and oral) skills
- Be willing to attend appropriate safeguarding training/refresher training organised by the Synod.
- Be willing to be easily contactable – and prepared to make contact details public to enable direct contact when needed.

Appendix A3
Code of Conduct for working with children and young people

All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children and young people. The word 'child' throughout this document refers to all those under the age of 18.

DO

- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture
- Act inclusively, seeking to make everyone feel welcome and valued
- Use appropriate language
- Be a good role model
- Treat people with equal care and concern
- Make all reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities and special education needs
- Listen to children and tell the Church Safeguarding Coordinator if you have any concerns about a child's welfare
- Refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning
- Encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact
- Interact with children in a public place. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk
- Make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies.
- Have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with URC good practice guidelines
- Use physical contact wisely; it should be:
  - in public
  - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child
  - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult
  - respectful of the child's wishes, feelings and dignity
- Respect children's and young people's privacy
- Ensure that any communication online is done through a work or church account – this may require setting up an account specific for that purpose
- Ensure, where possible, parents or guardians are present in the building or other workers are aware when young people are communicating with you via social media. Communication with a child via social media should only ever take place when their parent or guardian and other adult workers are aware of these online interactions.

- Inform your line manager or point of contact of your intention to communicate online with families or young people and keep a record of times and dates when you do this.
- Keep up to date on policies, procedures and training, including safeguarding and health and safety
- Understand that your conduct outside of work, including on line, can impact on your work with children and young people

DO NOT
- Abuse the power and responsibility of your role for example do not belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo)
- Exclude children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason
- Overshare about your own situations
- Show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts)
- Threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed
- Feel you have to deal with every problem on your own
- Use physical restraint unless they are causing harm to themselves or others
- Spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Contact them through private messaging
- Keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences
- Use child/young person's personal data for other purposes than activities consented
- Take photos or videos without consent
- Engage with children or young people through your personal social media or mobile account
- Assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker
- Promise to keep anything a secret. It may be that if a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of harm, you will need to share that information but only on a need to know basis
- Work in ways that puts your needs and interests before those of the children you work with
- Discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged
- Interact with children you are working with from personal social media accounts

NB   Examples of abuse in sport and religious settings have come to light in recent years. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 has been extended to include people who hold positions of trust in religious and sporting settings. This therefore relates to people who coach, teach, train, supervise or instruct on a regular basis, leading to some dependency by a child/young person on them.

Agreement by Worker

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children and young people on behalf of St George's URC, Morpeth

Name of worker:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A4
Code of Conduct for Working with Adults

This code describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitude expected of all church workers working with adults, including adults at risk, to ensure that you are providing a compassionate, caring and supportive environment.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect (14.7 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014). The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has care and support needs (whether or not the adult is being provided any services from the local authority or other statutory body to meet their needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

In Wales, s126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as an adult who:

1. is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
2. has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and
3. as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

In Scotland, The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 defines an adult at risk as a person aged 16 or over who:
- is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- is at risk of harm; and
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with adults. You are responsible for and have a duty to ensure that your conduct does not fall below the standards detailed in this code, which are also supported and detailed in the Care Act 2014 (14.1.99) and the principles of Adult Support and Protection revised code of practice in Scotland (2008).

Be accountable
- Be honest with yourself and others about what you can do, whether or not the adult is being provided with any services.
- Recognise your abilities and limitations.
- Only carry out or delegate tasks agreed in your role description.
- Be able to justify and be accountable for your actions.

- Ask your leader/safeguarding lead/safeguarding deputy for guidance if you feel inadequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your role.
- Tell your leader/safeguarding lead/safeguarding deputy about any issues that might affect your ability to perform your role.
- Always establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your relationships with people.
- Never accept any offers of loans, gifts or benefits from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them.
- Comply with United Reformed Church (URC) policies and procedures.
- Tell your leader/safeguarding lead/safeguarding deputy if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.

Promote the privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing of people
- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Ensure that a vulnerable adult is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than the way in which a person who is not an "adult at risk" would be treated in a comparable situation.
- Always act in the best interest of people, with their present and past wishes and feelings being considered.
- Put the needs, views and wishes of people first, helping them to control and choose the help-and support they receive.
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent.
- Always maintain the privacy and dignity of people who have help and support, and their carers.
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts.
- Always make sure that your actions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing.
- You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit anyone.
- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour.
- Always take comments and complaints seriously; respond to them in accordance with *Good Practice 5* and inform your leader/safeguarding lead/safeguarding deputy.

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

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

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

Training, policy and procedure
- Attend all necessary training which helps to support you in your role.
- Complete all necessary safeguarding training at least every three years.
- Have a good awareness of URC policy and procedures, including *Good Practice 5*.

Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Respect the individuality and diversity of all people, including those you encounter and work with.
- Treat all adults equally and inclusively and do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, religion/belief, cultural background, sexual orientation and disability.
- Promote equal opportunities and inclusion for the people you encounter and work with.
- Report any concerns regarding equality, diversity and inclusion to a leader/safeguarding lead/safeguarding deputy as soon as possible.

Agreement by Worker

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with adults, including adults at risk on behalf of St George's URC, Morpeth

Name of worker: ....

Signed: .... Date:

Appendix 5
Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form

Where a person is in imminent danger of harm or a criminal act may have been committed, the police must be notified immediately on 999. Otherwise, call 101 to report a crime or any other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

- Please fill in this form with the information available within 24 hours after becoming aware of a safeguarding incident or concern. You do not have to fill in all sections.
- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible, and **do not interpret** what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.
- The completed form must be passed on or sent by secure email to the designated safeguarding person, and immediately followed up after sending.

Date on which this form is completed			
Full name of the person reporting the concern/incident			
Relationship to child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk			
Church details, if known	**Synod**	**Church**	**Number**
Contact details of church or organization, if known	**Address**	**Phone numbers**	**Email**
Full name of child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk			
Date of Birth, if known			
Contact details, if known	**Address**	**Phone numbers**	**Email**

Has the individual given consent to report? (or report as appropriate)	**Yes**		**No**	Reason for no consent:
If under 18, have the parents/carers /guardians of the child been informed?	**Yes**		**No**	Reason for no consent:
Please give a summary of the safeguarding incident/concern				
Date/time of incident				
What happened? Please provide detailed information about the circumstances and the person experiencing or being at risk of harm, abuse or neglect (preferably as a timeline)				
When did it happen? (date, time)				
Where did it happen? (specific location)				
What action/s were taken, and by whom?				
Name of anyone involved and in what way, including witnesses				
Other services or agencies involved Note: If referred to statutory authorities, or				

other services, please include name and contact details	
Next steps or recommendations	
INTERNAL USE	
Date received	
Full name of Designated Person	
Progress	
Conclusion	

Appendix 6
Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

It is important to be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse. Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be a perfectly ordinary explanation. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not 'ring true', should give more cause for concern.

Below is a comprehensive table of definitions, signs and symptoms of some of the types of abuse. The table has been compiled from a number of different sources, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Please note: it is not an exhaustive list, and relates to the abuse of both children and adults.

Physical Abuse	Includes….	Some of the key indicators
To inflict pain, physical injury, impairment or suffering	- Hitting, slapping and beating. - Shaking, pinching, throwing and pushing. - Kicking, biting, burning, drowning and hair pulling. - Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint. - Parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. - Inappropriate use of restraint techniques or other physical sanctions. - Isolation or confinement.	- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. - Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, welts. - Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc. - in unusual places (e.g. around the mouth), in unusual patterns (e.g. symmetrical) or in particular shapes (e.g. fingertip bruising or belt marks). - Black eyes, burns, broken bones and skull fractures. - If the person is seen to have injuries that recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without plausible explanation. - Any injury that has not received medical attention or been properly cared for. - Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene. - Loss of hair, loss of weight and

		change of appetite.
		• Repeated or unexplained tummy pains.
		• Person flinches at physical contact and/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather.
		• Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.

Emotional Abuse	Includes….	Some of the key indicators
The use of threats, fear or power gained by another's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological stress. In children it can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.	• Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour. • Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation. • The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation. • Making someone feel worthless, a lack of love or affection or ignoring the person. • Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Emotional abuse may well be indicative of other forms of abuse. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.	• Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour. • Becoming quiet, clingy or withdrawn or conversely becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. • Denial and hesitation to talk openly. • Excessive fear or anxiety • Behaviour such as rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking. • Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness. • Loss of appetite. • Low self-esteem, helplessness or passivity. • Confusion or disorientation. • Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour. • Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults. • Running away, school non-attendance, stealing or lying.

Sexual Abuse	Includes….	Some of the key indicators
For a child – forcing or enticing a child to take part in	• Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not	• Emotional distress. • Preoccupation with anything sexual and age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour.

sexual activities. For an adult - Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. No one should enter a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.	consent or was pressurised into consenting. • Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner without consent. • Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing. • Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts. • Filming or photographing a child in sexual poses or acts. • Enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways. • Being spied on while a person is undertaking or receiving personal care activities. • 'Sexting', grooming and using social media to share inappropriate content.	• Mood, attitude or behaviour changes. • Expressions of feelings of guilt or shame. • Itching, soreness, bruises or lacerations, particularly around the genital areas. • Difficulty in walking or sitting, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding. • Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections. • A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults. • Disturbed sleep patterns. • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. • Significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook. • A very young girl or a woman who lacks mental capacity to consent to intercourse becomes pregnant. • Underage Pregnancy/Termination.
Neglect	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs (physical and/or psychological) are not met. In a child, neglect is likely to result in the serious	• Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services. • Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment. • Ignoring medical or physical care needs,	• Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene. • Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food. • Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions. • Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment.

impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.	including not providing adequate food or assistance with eating/drinking, or not providing sufficient or appropriate clothing. • Child/vulnerable person being left alone or unsupervised. • Failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous (particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess the risks to themselves or to others). • Deliberately withholding medication or aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids. • Denying social, religious or cultural contacts, or denying contact with the family.	• Developmental delay in children. • Low self-esteem, socially isolated and poor concentration. • Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example no heating or lighting). • Health and safety hazards in the living environment. • Untreated medical conditions, pressure sores, rashes, lice on the person. • Depression or low mood. • Person and/or carer have inconsistent or reluctant contact with Heath and Social Services. • Callers/visitors are refused access to the person. • Prolonged isolation or lack of stimulation. • Person who is not able to look after themselves is left unattended and so put at risk. • Not being helped to the toilet when assistance is requested.
Self-Neglect	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
An unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment.	• Hoarding or having no possessions at all. • Living in squalor and neglecting self-care and hygiene. • Failure to provide oneself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, healthcare and safety precautions.	• Dehydration, malnutrition or obesity. • Untreated medical conditions and poor personal hygiene. • Unsanitary living conditions. • Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing and lack of necessary medical aids. • Homelessness. • Not adhering to medical advice. • Not taking medication as advised/prescribed.
Financial Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The inappropriate use,	• Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or	• Unexplained loss of money. • Missing personal belongings such as art, jewellery and silverware.

misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	goods. • Exploitation or profiteering. • Applying pressure in connection with Wills, property or inheritance, or financial transactions. • The abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will. • Being charged excessive amounts for services such as minor building works on a property. • Loans made under duress, threat or dishonestly extracted. • Mate-crime – where vulnerable people are befriended by those who go on to exploit them.	• Deterioration in standard of living, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings. • Unexplained lack of money, inability to pay bills or getting into debt. • Sudden changes in a person's finances or a disparity in assets and living conditions. • Person unable to access their own money or check their own accounts. • Cheques being signed or cashed by other people without someone's consent. • Recent acquaintances expressing sudden or disproportionate interest in the person and their money. • Reluctance on the part of the family, friends or the person controlling the person's funds to pay for necessary food, clothes or other items. • Recent changes of deeds/title of home. • Inappropriate granting and/or use of Power of Attorney. • Sudden change or creation of a will to benefit an individual significantly. • Someone else having possession of money/ bank cards. • Someone else reported making financial decisions. • Fraud.
Discriminatory Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	• Ageist, racist, sexist, or abuse based on a person's disability. • Abuse linked to a person's sexuality. • Harassment, slurs or similar inappropriate use of language and treatment. • Withholding services without proper	• Low self-esteem. • Withdrawal and social isolation. • Anger. • Person puts themselves down in terms of their age, race, gender identity or sexuality. • Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. • Preference not to receive care from

	justification, or lack of disabled access to services and activities. • Lack of respect towards a person's culture, or deliberate exclusion.	particular individuals. • Feeling as though there is a lack of control based on age, gender, religion. • Signs of substandard service offered (health/education).
Institutional Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The mistreatment of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	• The inability of an institution to safeguard people from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. • Having fixed rules and routines by which people are controlled. • People prevented from acting within their rights. • No access to personal possessions or personal allowance. • Inadequate staffing, poorly trained staff and a lack of leadership and/or supervision of staff or volunteers. • Inappropriate use of physical interventions and poor practice in the provision of intimate care.	• Inappropriate or poor care. • Being routinely referred to in a condescending fashion. • Disrespectful language and attitudes. • Adult being spoken to or treated like a child. • A person's privacy and dignity being routinely compromised. • Failure to recognise the individuality of each person and applying a 'one size fits all' approach to support. • No evidence of support services care plans that focus on the individual's needs. • Inadequate staffing levels and the absence of individual care. • Lack of adequate procedures. • Poor record keeping/missing documents.
Domestic Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
Any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people,	• Physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse. • Patterns of controlling and coercive	• Unexplained bruises or injuries. • Unusually quiet or withdrawn. • Fear, anxiety or panic attacks. • Frequent absences from work or other commitments.

who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of age, gender or sexuality or social status. Rarely is domestic abuse a one-off incident.	behaviour. • Child to parent/carer abuse. • Abuse towards elderly family members. • Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). • Honour based violence, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and community. • Forced marriage. • Children can experience it by seeing and/or hearing the abuse, or seeing the injuries or distress afterwards, as well as being directly targeted.	• Stops talking about their partner/family member. • Is always accompanied by their partner/family member. • Becomes isolated and withdrawn from friends and other family. • Doesn't have control over possessions or money. • Anxious about being away from home and rushes to get back.
Spiritual Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The abuse of trust or misuse of power by someone in a position of spiritual authority (such as a minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional	• Forcing religious ideas or practices on to people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. • Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters – reducing individual choice and responsibility. • The misuse of scripture or power to control behaviour and pressure to conform. • Oppressive teaching and isolation from others. • The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the	It is often difficult for churches to identify spiritual abuse because its definition may be more an issue of personal interpretation of common practices in the church or denomination. • Pastoral practices that 'force' people into accepting religious values or ideas. • A feeling of confusion and uncertainty as to who, what or why they believe any more. • Deeply scarred – emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. • Feelings of betrayal leading to deep distrust, self-isolation and powerlessness. • A changed and damaged view of church – loss of church as a safe space.

personal attack.	abuser has a "divine" position. • Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in people experiencing emotional, physical or sexual harm. • The denial of the right to have a faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. • Exclusion of people from the full range of church life (no arrangements for gluten-free wafers or non-alcoholic wine at Communion, or promoting fear of involving those who are HIV positive). • Oversimplification of forgiveness and healing without regard to pain or suffering.	
Online Abuse	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The use of the internet (via email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, online games, live-streaming etc) to harm or harass in a deliberate manner. It can happen at	• Communications seeking to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, humiliate. • Threatening earnings, reputation, employment, safety. • Cyberbullying/ Harassment – repeated offensive, rude, insulting messages. • Denigration – derogatory information and/or digitally altered photos.	• Withdrawn, time spent alone, exclusion from social events. • Spend a lot more/less time than usual online, texting, gaming, on social media. • Reluctance to let anyone near their phone/ tablet/laptop etc. • Change in personality – anger, depression, anxiety etc • Changing appearance, trying to 'fit in' • Staying away from school/work • Nervous behaviour. • Loss of self-confidence. • Distressed/withdrawn.

any time and is not limited to a specific location – can be experienced even when alone. It can affect anyone at any age.	• Flaming – posting insults using vulgar/profane language. • Impersonation – hacking accounts and taking on someone else's identity. • Outing/Trickery – sharing someone's secrets or tricking them into revealing embarrassing information. Cyber stalking – repeated online threats/activity making someone afraid for their safety. • Trolling – online provocations, starting arguments, threats and insults. • Grooming – building emotional connection to gain trust for exploitation/abuse. • Sexting – sharing or coercion into sharing sexual, naked or semi-naked images/videos/ • messages.	
Modern Slavery	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
		• In a dependency situation, under the control and influence of others. • Malnourished or unkempt, wearing the same clothes all the time. • Travel, identity and financial documents held by someone else, or use of false/forged documents. • Living in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation, living and working at same address, few

		personal possessions.
		• In debt to others, low or no pay, excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport.
		• Unfamiliar with the neighbourhood, unsure of home/work address.
		• Scared, untrusting, withdrawn, anxious, avoiding eye contact.
		• Showing signs of abuse, having old/ untreated injuries and healthcare issues.
		• In fear of the authorities and in fear of removal or consequences for family.

Radicalisation	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The process that moves a person to legitimise their support for or use of violence. The promise of an ideology which gives purpose and belonging. Can take place over a long time period or happen quickly. The person may not understand that they have been radicalised.	• Exposure to violent and inappropriate material. • Being recruited in person – online or face-to-face. • Joining extremist organisations. • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. • Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. • Extremist recruiters speak directly to the vulnerabilities people experience at times in their lives, e.g. sense of not belonging, low self-esteem, issues at home, involvement with gangs/criminal groups or identity crisis with their cultural heritage.	• The expression of extremist views • Accessing extremist websites/social networks or possessing extremist, violent literature. • Behavioural changes, anger and use of inappropriate language. • Becoming disrespectful and intolerant of others. • Using words and phrases that sound scripted, talking about 'us' and 'them'. • Sympathies, admiration or associations with known extremists. • Advocating violent actions or means. • Changing name or friends.

Child Sexual	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**

Exploitation		
A type of sexual abuse. The child is given gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. The tricking or grooming of children to believe they are in a loving and consensual relationship. Can be both in person or online. The child may not understand that they have been abused. They may seem to be condoning or even encouraging the abusive behaviour.	• The use of violence, coercion and intimidation to force the child into sexual activity. • Invitations to parties where drugs and alcohol are freely given in exchange for sex. • Deceiving children into producing online indecent images/films of themselves. • Children being used to recruit other children into sexual exploitation. • Children being trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. • Sexual exploitation as part of gang initiation, status, protection or punishment.	• Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. they can't or won't explain. • Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour. • Swings and changes in mood or character, being secretive. • Gang-association and/or isolation from friends and social networks. • Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups. • Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area. • Alcohol or drug misuse. • Going missing for periods of time. • Skipping school.
Self-Harm	**Includes….**	**Some of the key indicators**
The intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is often used as a way of coping woth expressing or releasing overwhelming emotions and distress.	• Cutting • Burning • Bruising • Scratching • Hair Pulling • Poisoning • Overdosing • Intentionally putting themselves in risky situations • Overeating of undereating	• Unexplained cuts, bruises or burns, which are likely to be on wrists, arms, thighs and chest. • Keeping themselves fully covered, even when in hot weather. • Signs of depression, including low mood, tearfulness and a lack of motivation or interest. • Becoming withdrawn and a reluctance to speak to others. • Weight loss or weight gain due to changes in eating habits, including

It may also be about converting emotional pain into physical pain, expressing something that is hard to put into words or feeling that they are in control.	• Inserting objects into their own body • Hitting themselves or walls • Exercising excessively • Self-neglect (adults) • Some may self-harm to create a reason to physically care for themselves, or to feel something instead of numbness or disconnection.	being secretive about eating. • Low self-esteem, such as an inclination to blame themselves for external problems and expressing that they are not good enough. • Alcohol or drug misuse. • Bald patches from pulling out hair.

Things to note about abuse:

- It is unlikely that just one type of abuse will occur in isolation from another
- There can be an overlap of the signs and symptoms with different types of abuse
- All abuse involves the misuse of power
- There is an emotional abuse aspect to all types of abuse, including the witnessing of abuse
- If a child witnesses (including hearing) domestic abuse, this is considered to be child abuse
- Any type of abuse committed within the church can also have a negative impact on someone's faith and relationship with God
- It is not our role to determine which type of abuse it may be or to investigate.

For more information about specific forms of abuse, useful contacts of relevant organisations and details about those who are vulnerable to abuse, see:

[Good practice policy and procedures (urc.org.uk)](#)

- *Appendix E: A Guide to Working with People with Disabilities*
- *Appendix R: A Guide to Domestic Abuse*
- *Appendix U: Useful Contacts – For All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults*
- *Appendix V: Safeguarding and Digital Communications*
- *Appendix X: Responding to Allegations of Bullying and Harassment*

Appendix C
On line safeguarding policy

Technology is constantly advancing, bringing with it additional safeguarding considerations. An online safety policy is necessary to safeguard all electronic communications between the church and children/young people (those under 18 years of age) recognising the merging between online and offline worlds and the distinctiveness and difficulties within faith based organisations of defining clear boundaries for everyone.

This online safety policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and procedures for the acceptable, safe and responsible use of online technologies for adults and children within this church, including the use of mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices.

It explains what will happen in the event of unacceptable use of these technologies and details the support that will be provided to support children, parents and others in the safe and responsible use of these technologies beyond the church.

Why we have a policy

The use of the Internet and mobile devices has become an integral part of church and home life. There are always going to be risks to using any form of communication which lies within the public domain. It is therefore imperative that there are clear rules, procedures and guidelines to minimise these risks and especially when children use these technologies.

It is also important that workers and church members are clear about appropriate procedures so that they are safeguarded from misunderstandings or allegations through a lack of knowledge of potential risks.

St George's URC Morpeth acknowledges that whilst we will endeavour to safeguard against all risks, we may not be able to completely eliminate them. Any incidents that may arise will be dealt with quickly and according to policy to ensure that children are best protected

Policy Aims

- to ensure the safeguarding of children within and beyond church by raising awareness of appropriate and acceptable uses of online technologies
- to outline the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved
- to have clarity about procedures following the misuse of any online technologies
- to work with parents / carers and to maintain a continued awareness of both the benefits and potential issues of online technologies

Our commitment to online safety

We will equip children with the skills and knowledge that they need to use the technology in this church safely and responsibly, and to manage the possible risks. We will also ensure

that they are aware of where they can go to get help, apart from trusted adults, if they are uncomfortable with anything in the digital world.

Children and Young People are expected to make appropriate and safe use of electronic communication (devices)

When using a computer or electronic device with internet access at this church, children will be made aware of what is acceptable usage and will agree not to:

- search for and/or enter pornographic, violent, racist or hate-motivated websites
- download, forward, copy or burn onto CD any music, images or movies from the Internet where permission has not been granted by the copyright holders
- disclose any personal information e.g. addresses (postal, email or messenger), telephone numbers, bank details, including personal information about another person
- send or display offensive messages or pictures
- deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal
- use obscene language
- violate copyright laws
- trespass in folders, work or files belonging to others
- retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures
- harass, insult, bully or attack others
- damage computers, computer systems or computer networks
- use another user's password
- use computers for unapproved commercial purposes

Sanctions:

- violations of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use
- further action may be taken such as informing parents / carers
- when applicable, police or local authorities may be informed

Appendix C1 below contains a pro forma containing expectations that children/young people and/or parents/carers will be asked to sign.

We will make appropriate use of any photographic images and/or video footage taken during church activities.

Clear guidelines will be operated as follows:

- permission will be sought from parents / carers before any images are taken and/or displayed. Images will only be used for the specific purpose agreed by the person photographed

- written consent will specify what purposes the image will be used for, and how it will be stored. For instance if the intention is to use an image on the church website or other forms of publicity, this will be clearly stated at the time that consent is sought
- further written consent will be sought if images are to be used in ways other than originally specified
- if children object, even if parents /carers have agreed, their wishes will be respected
- photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will only enable individual children to be clearly identified where there is specific permission
- children's full names and/or other details will not be used anywhere in association with photographs or other media
- when using photographs of children, group pictures will be used wherever possible
- any use of images will reflect the diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity
- personal mobiles will not be used to take photographs or other digital media
- except in exceptional cases, which will be agreed, and known about, digital media relating to children will be stored on church computers. Should this not be possible for any reason, where the media is to be stored will be recorded.

Church photographs containing children and young people will be taken on a church owned device which will be the responsibility of the Minister for use and storage. Photos using this device may be taken, with the Minister's permission, by other designated persons, who have enhanced DBS checks.

We will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, including the use of filtering software on all computers used within this church.

To ensure that unwanted and unsolicited information, viruses and other malware does not intrude on the use of digital technology, we will ensure all appropriate and reasonable steps are taken to protect computers and the users of them as follows:

- filtering software will be installed on all computers used at this church or as part of any activities operated by the church.
- on our church website/s, details will be prominently displayed as to where to find help online including having the CEOP button on the website

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to all online safety concerns.

In the event of concern that there may be an online safety incident, this will be reported to the church's designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the same manner as the reporting of any other safeguarding concern. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will then determine if the matter should be reported to the statutory authorities or other appropriate agencies, including CEOP or the Internet Watch Foundation. In case of church's designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or deputy, not being available, the matter needs to be reported to the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

We will operate safe email communications with children and young people.

When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers will:

- obtain parental agreement before they use email services to communicate with a child or young person
- use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation
- ensure that all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and that this policy is explained to children and young people.

We will make appropriate use of mobile phones where they are needed.

Not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want a worker to have the number. Workers will therefore have alternative means of communication and will ensure that communication goes through parents if this is their preference.

Mobile phones should only be used where necessary and will be guided by the following considerations:

- where appropriate group rather than individual texting will be used
- care will be taken with the language used, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with people's name.
- any texts or conversations that raise concerns will be saved and passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor
- any images of children taken on a mobile phone will be downloaded to the church computer and kept securely
- workers will not take or keep images of children on their personal mobile phone.
- workers will not give out their personal mobile number to children
- as well as ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 9pm or before 9am, workers will also ensure that calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school / college, as this may be against the educational establishment's rules
- workers will enable a password/lock on all devices to ensure data protection and will prevent unauthorised access being gained

We will consider the appropriate use of Chat & Messenger Services and whether these are necessary.

Instant Messenger Services (IM) are internet programmes that allow people to write and receive messages in real time.

As with other forms of online communication, workers will take care with regard to language and content, as well as when and for how long a communication lasts.

Workers will ensure that all communications using IM services adhere to the following:

- communication will not take place between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am
- workers will ensure that they enable settings when using IM services which allow for significant conversations to be saved as text files and will keep a log of when and with whom they communicated

- children/young people will be made aware that conversations will be recorded and kept (via text files or similar)

We will make safe and appropriate use of social media platforms when communicating with young people.

When using social media platforms we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- workers will not add young people with whom they work to their personal social media platforms if they are under the age of 18.
- workers may set up a Adult Care ServicesFacebook group / page for the church or church group and invite young people (in the appropriate age group) to be members
- workers will only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working
- workers will ensure that their personal profiles on any social media platforms are set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature
- messages sent to young people regarding youth activities will be posted openly and 'inbox' messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy will be sent to an identified person to assist transparency

Sanctions

Workers will be made aware that not complying with any of the above will incur sanctions, which could include suspension or dismissal and referral to appropriate authorities.

Appendix C2 contains an Acceptable Use Policy that workers will be asked to sign.

We will store data securely

There are a variety of ways that data can be stored. Where data of any form about children is stored, this will be password protected and in general be stored securely on the church premises. If this is not possible then a record will be made of where the data is stored. Where it is necessary for data to be transported, memory sticks will be purchased for workers so that there is a separation between personal and church information.

Appendix C1
Child Agreement

Children and young people agree to the following expectations for responsible use of technology:

- Where using a social media platform I will only use my own login and password which will be kept secret
- I will not deliberately browse, download or forward material that could be considered to be offensive or illegal, for instance pornographic, violent, racist or hate-motivated material
- I understand that I must not bring software into the church/organisation without permission
- I understand that I must not violate copyright laws
- I am responsible for email that I send and for contacts I make. I will only send messages which are polite, appropriate and free from unsuitable language.
- I will not send any attachments which are hurtful, abusive or offensive
- If I receive anything, see anything or come across a website which may be unsuitable or makes me feel uncomfortable I will immediately tell a responsible person such as the leader of my group or the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator or deputy, or report it to The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) or the Internet Watch Foundation
- I understand that I must never give my home address, phone number, send photos, give out personal information, or arrange to meet someone who contacts me over the Internet
- I will not send anonymous messages and I know that chain letters are not permitted.
- I understand that any youth and children's workers are not allowed to accept friend requests via social media platforms
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I will not be allowed to use the Internet at church and that my parents / carers will be informed.

Signed
....

Name [Print]
....

Dated
....

Appendix C2

Worker Agreement

To ensure that all adults are aware of their responsibilities when using any online technologies they are asked to sign their agreement to specific Acceptable Use Rules. This is both to provide an example to children regarding safe and responsible use and as a safeguard from any potential allegations or inadvertent personal misuse.

These rules apply to all online usage and to anything that may be downloaded or printed.

General:

- I have been given a copy of the church online safety policy to refer to for all online safety procedures I should follow
- I know who the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and deputy are
- I will only use church equipment in an appropriate manner and for professional uses (NB if portable equipment is taken home, I will ensure my home insurance covers this)
- I will adhere to copyright and intellectual property rights
- I will take measures or seek advice to prevent the introduction of viruses to the network.
- I will ensure that all devices, including memory sticks, containing information about children are password protected and that I keep my password secure
- I will report any accidental misuse
- I will report any incidents of concern to the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy.

Photographs & video:

I know that:
- all images should be appropriate and beyond first names not reveal any personal information about children if uploaded to the Internet. Images should only be uploaded with permission from the parent / carer, as well as the child involved
- I should not take images on any personal devices. If in exceptional circumstances such use is felt necessary it should be agreed in advance or reported promptly to the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Images of children should be stored securely on the church computer, never on personal devices, including memory sticks.

Communication & Social Networking:

- I will ensure all messages are written carefully and politely
- I will not keep communications secret from those in the church to whom I am accountable

- I will not communicate with children online without consent from a parent / carer
- I realise that I am putting myself at risk of misinterpretation and allegation should I contact children via any systems other than those agreed
- I will not accept or request the 'friendship' of children/young people via social media platforms
- I understand the value of setting my 'Privacy' settings appropriately on any social networking site
- I will keep a record of any online communication with a child
- I will not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential by the church, a young person or anyone else.

I have read, understood and agree with the online safety policy and the rules specified above and understand my responsibilities regarding safeguarding children when using online technologies.

I also understand that if I fail to follow agreed procedure there will be sanctions that could lead to my being suspended or dismissed, once appropriate procedures have been followed.

Signed ……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Print   …………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Dated   …………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Appendix D
Church Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Introduction

This appendix applies to local churches in England and Wales with a view to support their local safer recruitment processes.

The DBS code of practice, published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, makes it a requirement that DBS applicants who have a criminal record are treated fairly and are not discriminated against because of a conviction or other information revealed in a DBS check. The code also obliges bodies that undertake checks to have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders; a copy of which can be given to DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. The sample policy statement below can be used or adapted for this purpose.

Policy statement

St George's URC Morpeth complies fully with the DBS code of practice when accessing an applicant's suitability for positions within the church which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and to not discriminate against any subject of a criminal record check based on convictions or other information revealed.

St George's URC Morpeth will only request that an individual disclose details of convictions or cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where the position advertised is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order, a DBS certificate at either a basic or enhanced level can legally be requested. Where a position falls within the legal definition of a "regulated" activity, a check against the Barred Lists for Children and Adults will also be undertaken.

St George's URC Morpeth will only ask potential candidates about convictions and cautions that are not protected in law. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records and regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

St George's URC Morpeth will only make an application for a criminal record check through the DBS service where the law indicates that this is proportionate and necessary to the position advertised, such as those roles which involve working with children and adults at risk in a regulated or unregulated activity. Where this is the case, application forms, job adverts and recruitment information will contain explicit reference to the fact that this position requires a criminal record check in the event that the applicant is offered the position.

At interview or during an appropriate discussion, St George's URC Morpeth will ensure that an open conversation takes places with the applicant regarding any offences or other information that may be relevant to the position. Failure of the applicant to share any information that is relevant to the position sought may result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary position.

St George's URC Morpeth ensures that all those who are involved with the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. St George's URC Morpeth will also ensure that they have received appropriate training and guidance in the relevant legislation and understand the importance of confidentiality throughout the recruitment process.

St George's URC Morpeth will discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before a decision is made whether to continue with the offer of employment. A risk assessment will be conducted with the applicant and only in cases where the disclosure impacts upon the applicant's ability to safely hold the offer of employment will it be withdrawn. This is provided that the information revealed has been brought to St George's URC Morpeth's attention prior to disclosure being received.

St George's Morpeth URC will make every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](), and make a copy available on request.

Appendix E
A Guide to working with those with disabilities: Communication and etiquette

Language

Appropriate use of language is less to do with 'political correctness' but more to do with challenging negative stereotypes and incorrect assumptions about people with disabilities. Often people with disabilities have identified a vocabulary that they feel comfortable with and efforts should be made to accommodate this. People should take care not to address a companion or carer as a conversational go-between or talk in childish language.

Listed below are words and phrases that are not helpful with acceptable alternatives:

Unhelpful words / phrases	Helpful words / phrases
Physically challenged, differently abled, cripple, invalid, handicapped. Handicapped has its origins in 'cap in hand', with implications of charity and begging. Invalid can be interpreted as 'not-valid'.	Person with disability
Mentally retarded, mentally handicapped, intellectually challenged.	Person with a learning disability
Deaf aid	Hearing aid
Deaf and dumb	Profoundly deaf, without speech
Disabled toilet	Accessible toilet, wheelchair-accessible toilet
Victim of disability or 'the disabled' – this is impersonal and implies a group separate from the rest of society.	A person with disability
Suffering from, afflicted by.	A person with…
An arthritic, spastic or epileptic.	A person with arthritis, a person who has cerebral palsy or epilepsy
Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair.	Wheelchair user

Consider that the use of euphemisms, irony and jokes for some people with disabilities can be misunderstood and the true meaning may not be grasped, or it may be felt to be offensive.

Visual impairment

Below are some guidelines that will help someone with a visual impairment to feel welcome and included:

Identify yourself by name when you meet someone with a visual impairment.

Reserve seats as near to or at the front of any gathering, so the partially sighted person has the option to sit closer to what's going on. Offer to assist someone who is blind to find his or her way around. Don't push – always allow them to take your arm and, if necessary, provide space for a guide dog to lie down.

As far as possible, make sure that all corridors, approaches and circulating areas are free from obstructions.

Ensure large print paper versions are available for songs and other written material as well as audio recordings of talks.

All print for partially sighted people should be in typefaces such as Arial, Univers and New Century Schoolbook. These are all good examples of clear and legible typefaces. Avoid simulated handwriting and ornate typefaces as these can be difficult to read. No single size is suitable for everyone, but most people prefer their large print in the range of 16 to 22 point, but this may need to be checked with the person using the material. Printing should be on contrasting colour paper (black on white, or black on pale yellow is best) and on matt (non-glossy) paper. This also helps people with dyslexia. Don't use pale coloured type on dark colours or print over photographs. Photocopied acetates make excellent large-print song sheets

It is better not to use hand-written OHP acetates, and if this is unavoidable, it is important not to use all capital letters as it's much harder to read. The size of words on the screen will depend on the size of the venue and position of the OHP/digital projector, but all users should prepare acetates/ projector material to an agreed minimum.

For safety reasons, good lighting is essential for partially sighted people (Deaf people benefit too, as lip-reading is only possible in good lighting).

Use colour contrast as much as possible to designate entrances/exits.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate what facilities are provided for blind and partially sighted people:

Hearing impairments

Below are guidelines that will help those with a hearing impairment feel welcome and included:

Always address the deaf or hard of hearing person direct, not the person who may have accompanied them.

Make sure that your face and mouth can be seen clearly. Look directly at the person and speak at a normal speed and volume with clear lip patterns. Avoid exaggerated lip patterns that are harder to read. Keep your hands away from your face and remember eating whilst talking hinders effective lip reading. Don't speak directly into the person's ear.

A hearing induction loop should be provided for talks, entertainment, etc, whether you are aware of people using hearing aids or not. It is not always obvious someone has a hearing aid and most people do not like to draw attention to the fact.

If possible, someone should be conveying what is said and sung using British Sign Language (BSL). They should stand in a visible, well-lit place (probably the front). Courses are now readily available for training in BSL, including distance learning. As many people as possible should be trained so that this responsibility doesn't rest on one person's shoulders.

Be aware that background noise can make life very difficult for people who use a hearing aid because it often distorts the sounds they are trying to hear.

Be prepared to write things down, if necessary, particularly if communication is difficult. The important thing is not to give up.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate facilities are provided for the hard-of-hearing.

Speech impairment

Never finish a sentence or word for a person with speech impairment. It is also important not to get agitated or become impatient when you are waiting for words to be said. In this situation retain your interest in the person, perhaps by nodding affirmingly and/or retaining eye contact.

Impaired mobility

If possible, mark out reserved parking spaces for those with mobility difficulties as near as possible to the building entrance. Reserve seating that is the most accessible and minimises

walking, but remember that it is up to the person to decide where they want to sit. Always enquire if they would like assistance before you help.

Wheelchair Users:

All internal and external access needs to be level or ramped.

Don't designate one area for wheelchair users – this unnecessarily draws attention to their disability.

Make sure that at least one seat is alongside each wheelchair position for a friend to be able

to sit with a wheelchair user.

When talking to a wheelchair user, it is polite to sit down so that you are on the same level, making eye contact easier.

Remember that a wheelchair is part of the user's personal space, so don't lean on it, hold it or attempt to move it/push it unless asked.

The international symbol should be shown on literature, advertisements and notice boards to indicate facilities are provided for people with impaired mobility. Please see: http://bit.ly/2Tr4sJO

Learning disabilities

Adults and children with learning disabilities often experience difficulties dealing with life issues and/or adjusting to new situations. The term 'learning disability' is often used in a general way that, because of people's preconceptions, isn't always helpful. For example, it can include people with conditions like Dyslexia or Asperger's syndrome, where intellectual capacity is unhindered or maybe exceeds the general average, but may affect social skills and the ability to communicate effectively.

Equally none of these 'givens' may apply, which underlines the importance of not making assumptions about people that are known to have a learning disability and not treating them in a childish or patronising way. Below are some guidelines that will help those in this situation feel understood, valued and supported:

- adults with learning disabilities may have limited or no reading ability so where possible, signpost facilities and directions (e.g. fire exit) using images as well as words
- read out written material and, if applicable, include songs with repetitive or uncomplicated words
- offer assistance if people are experiencing difficulties understanding or need help with certain instructions.

- keep all communication of information in 'bite-size chunks', taking extra time if necessary to explain. Make explanations clear, concise and uncomplicated
- be patient if individuals are noisy or move about when it seems inappropriate and/or

    don't immediately pick up on the 'norms' of how things are done within the church.

Appendix F

General Information and Consent Form

Details of participant

Full name: ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Address: ……..

……….

Gender: …………………………   Date of birth: …………………………………………………………….

Doctor's name, address & telephone number: …………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………..

Current medical conditions (including asthma, allergies, migraine, diabetes, epilepsy, etc):

………

………

Any medication currently being taken: …………………………………………………………………………

………

To request that medication be given: Please complete *Request to Administer Medication* form.

Any additional needs (e.g. special dietary requirements, disability, etc): ....

....

National Health Number: .... Blood Group: ....

Date of last anti-tetanus injection: ....

In the last four weeks, has the participant suffered from or been in contact with any disease which may be contagious or infectious? If yes, please give brief details:

....

Contact details of parent/carer

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

Home phone: .... Other phone: ....

Email address: ....

If you do not hold parental responsibility for the participant (e.g. if you are a foster carer/ grandparent, etc) please give details of the person with parental responsibility for them:

Name: ....

Home phone: .... Other phone: ....

Address: ....

Details of alternative emergency contact

Name: ....

Home phone: .... Other phone: ....

Event details

Name of group (or event): ....

Venue: .... Date(s) of event: ....

Do you allow the participant to make their own way home? ....

If not, who will collect them? ....

General consent

Please note that these declarations must be signed by the parent/carer of the participant named on this form or by a person with parental responsibility for the participant.

I give consent for .... *to attend and participate in the normal activities of the above group/event. I acknowledge the need for them to behave responsibly and to take note of any safety instructions.*
I understand that while involved they will be under the care and supervision of the approved adult workers appointed by the church, though during periods of free time close supervision by workers may not always be possible. While these workers will take all reasonable care of the participants, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered during, or as a result of, the activity.

In the event of illness or accident requiring emergency treatment, I give consent for them to receive emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment as considered necessary by the medical professionals present. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me first.

Signed: .... Dated: ....

Photography and video

From time to time, we may take photographs or videos of the participants to provide a reminder of the event for those involved and to use on church displays, posters and flyers, church website, and occasionally in the local press. Photos or videos used publicly will focus on activities and groups rather than individuals; they will not show the outside of an identifiable building and participants will not be named or linked with any personal details. Photos or videos will not be taken if the participant is themselves unwilling.

Are you happy for photos/videos to be taken of the named participant?   Yes / No

Please circle Yes or No to make clear in which ways you are willing for them to be used:

Displays   Yes   No

Publicity (e.g. posters/flyers)   Yes   No

Website   Yes   No

Press   Yes   No

I give consent for photos/videos of the participant named on this form to be used, as above.

Signed: ....   Dated: ....

Electronic communication

It can sometimes be helpful for workers to communicate directly with older children via mobile phone, email and social networking websites. For example, to share information about an event, to find out who is planning to attend, to seek feedback, or to offer encouragement. Communication would be kept within reasonable hours, would be appropriate to the working relationship, a record would be kept, and would be accountable to other workers.

Please circle Yes or No to make clear in which ways workers may contact this participant:

Text messages   Yes   No

Email   Yes   No

Social networking websites   Yes   No

I give consent for workers to contact the participant named on this form, as shown above.

Signed: ....   Dated: ....

Appendix G

Request to Administer Medication

Please complete this form to request that a church worker gives medication to a child or supervises a child's self-administration of medication. Please understand that no worker is obliged to do so, though many will be willing.

Event details

Name of group (or event /activity) ....

Venue: .... Date (of event/activity): ....

Details of participant

Full name: ....

Address: ....

....

Gender: .... Date of birth: ....

Medical condition or illness for which medication is required: ....

....

....

Details of medication

Name of medication (as described on the container): ....

Date medication was dispensed: ....

Length of time the participant will take this medication: ....

Directions for use

Dosage - how much should be given and at what time of day? ....
....

Method - how should the medication be given? ....
....

Any special precautions? ....
....

Any known side effects? ....

Please discuss any emergency procedures with the group leader prior to the event.

Details of parent / guardian / carer

Name: ....

Home phone No: ....   Other phone No: ....

Email address: ....

If you do not have parental responsibility (e.g. if you are a foster carer / grandparent, etc)
please give details of someone with parental responsibility:

Name: ....

Home phone No: ....   Other phone No: ....

Email address: ....

Emergency Contact

Name: ....

Relationship to the child ....

Home phone No: .... Other phone No: ....

Email address: ....

Declaration of consent

Please note that these declarations must be signed by the parent of the participant named on this form, or by a person with parental responsibility for the participant.

I request and give consent for an adult worker to administer medication to the participant named on this form, in accordance with the information and instructions provided on this form. If relevant, I have provided written procedures for administering this medication in an emergency and will discuss these with the group leader before the event.
I undertake to give the medication personally to the group leader at the start of the event in a clear plastic bag with the participant's name on it.

Name: ....

Signed: ....

Dated:

OR

I give permission for the participant named on this form to carry the medication and administer it themselves, as necessary.

Name: ....

Signed: .... Dated: ....

Appendix R

A guide to supporting those affected by domestic abuse

1. Introduction

This guide has been produced to develop your understanding of what domestic abuse is, the difficulties and dangers faced by those dealing with abuse, and what steps you can take to offer support in a safer way.

Domestic abuse is alarmingly common. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2018 an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

People who perpetrate domestic abuse do not discriminate. It can happen to people who are married; not married; heterosexual; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender; living together, separated or dating. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.

Whether or not you are aware of it, it is likely that you know someone who has been affected by domestic abuse. The Methodist Church in the UK conducted a survey in 2002 and found that:
- 17% of respondents had experienced domestic abuse.
- The main perpetrators of the violence were husbands and partners.

Christianity Magazine, in conjunction with Restored (An International Christian Alliance whose aim is to transform relationships and end violence against women by working with churches and Christians worldwide) conducted a survey in September 2013 and discovered that:
- 40% had suffered some form of intimidation in their relationship.
- 16% had suffered some form of physical violence.

The Evangelical Alliance UK in its 'How is the Family Report' 2010 found that:
- 10% of women answering the survey had experienced physical abuse in their relationship.
- 7% of men admitted perpetrating physical abuse.

Christian homes are not immune to domestic abuse. The responsibility to offer help and be a voice for the prevention of domestic violence is fundamental to core Christian values – those of love, justice, equality, respect and care for one another.

2. Defining Domestic Abuse

In 2013 The UK Government defined domestic abuse as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Controlling behaviour is defined as:

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is defined as:

An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

It has been widely understood that coercive control is a core part of domestic abuse and the inclusion of this in the definition highlights the importance of recognising coercive control as a pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), so called Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage are classified as Domestic Abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM), sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting', is recognised internationally as a gross violation of the human rights of girls and women, often taking place whilst girls are still in their childhood or early teenage years. It is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to take abroad a British national or permanent resident for FGM, or to help someone trying to do this.

Performing FGM or helping it to take place, which would include taking girls/women to countries where FGM is still legal, carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison.

Honour Based Violence

There is no specific offence of "honour based crime". It is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation. Honour based violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not).

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Scotland

In Scotland there is no criminal offence of 'domestic abuse' or statutory definition of what constitutes domestic abuse. However, Police Scotland define domestic abuse as:

> Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere, including online.

3. Understanding domestic abuse

How does domestic abuse happen?

It is of course difficult to understand what motivates one human being to abuse another and

why someone stays in a relationship that causes them, and those around them, particularly children, so much suffering. Many ask why the victim stays. Nikki Dhillon Keane in her book Domestic Abuse in Church Communities[1], highlights that this is the wrong question, and a form of victim blaming. Instead we should be asking why the perpetrator abuses.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse, like their victims, come from all walks of life. It is not always

easy to recognise perpetrators of domestic abuse, as they can be charming and friendly in public, yet abusive and violent behind closed doors.

Domestic abuse is about one person in a relationship using a pattern of behaviours to intimidate and control the other person. Perpetrators of domestic abuse frequently avoid taking responsibility for their behaviour, by blaming their violence on someone or

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[1] Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

something else, denying it took place at all or minimising their behaviour. It is therefore important to remember that responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator of that abuse.

Many people experience abuse within the so-called cycle of abuse in which periods of comparative calm or peace (known as the 'honeymoon stage') will be followed by a build-up toward an abusive episode. Although it may appear as though these periods of apparent calm are non-abusive, they represent part of a manipulative cycle, in which the abuser feels in control of their partner and situation. They may show repentance for pain caused, or even promise to change. Often it is these periods of apparent calm, which give the victim of abuse the hope that change can be achieved, and that the abuse will stop, which keeps them locked in the abusive relationship.

Not all relationships follow the same cycle, and individual experiences vary, some stages – especially the honeymoon or calm periods, may shorten or be left out completely, especially as the abuse intensifies over a period. Each stage of the cycle can last from a few minutes, to a number of months.

There are many myths surrounding domestic abuse. For instance, it has been said that domestic abuse can be attributed to a lack of control. However, perpetrators of abuse are often careful about when, where and to whom they are abusive. They can use violence and tactics of coercion as a way of exercising control and getting what they want. So, rather than being out of control, it can be a method to gain control.

The use (or misuse) of substances such as alcohol or drugs has been suggested to be a contributing factor. However, many people who drink too much or take drugs do not abuse their partners or family members. Likewise, perpetrators of abuse may be violent without the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Some suggest that domestic abuse is perpetrated by people who have mental health issues. However, most people with mental health problems do not abuse other people. Mental health issues are more likely to be the result of experiencing domestic violence than the cause of it. For instance, women who have experienced domestic violence have higher rates of mental illness: 64% experience post-traumatic stress disorder, 48% have depression, and 18% attempt or commit suicide[2].

A particularly damaging myth is that perpetrators do it because they were a victim of abuse in the past. Some perpetrators of abuse have witnessed or experienced abuse in the past and have normalised that behaviour. However, most victims and survivors of abuse do not go on to abuse anyone. Survivors of childhood abuse are more likely to become victims than perpetrators of abuse in adulthood.[3]

It can be extremely difficult to leave an abusive partner or family member, and some victims will never leave. There are many practical and psychological barriers to ending a relationship

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[2] From a Department of Health meta-analysis emerging from the VVAPP programme: Itzin, C. (2006). Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

with an abusive partner or family member. The risk of death is also at its highest at the point of separation or just after leaving an abusive partner.

Barriers to leaving an abusive relationship

The reasons why someone experiencing abuse may believe that it is not possible for them to move away from the situation in which they are being abused are complex. Some of these are shown below:

- Fear of death, theirs or their children's.
- Lack of financial resources – no access to money; not able to support themselves and

  their children independently.
- Safety – the victim may be fearful of what the abuser will do to them and the children if they left or attempted to leave.
- Remembering good times – particularly those at the start of the relationship. There could for instance be long periods between incidents of abuse when the abuser is charming and caring.
- Hope or belief that the abuser will change or that things will get better.
- A belief that staying is better for the children.
- Shame – the embarrassment of people finding out.
- Having nowhere to go.
- Isolation – if emotionally and financially dependent on their partner, they may be very isolated.
- Religious or cultural beliefs – admitting that there is a problem may bring shame on their family or pressure not to leave the marriage.
- Leaving everything behind – having to leave friends, family, neighbours, job, school, clothes, possessions, pets etc.
- Lack of self-confidence / self-esteem – the victim's self-esteem has been steadily worn down and they no longer believe that they can manage on their own, or that they have any options.
- Self-reliance. A belief that they can cope and don't need or want help.
- Pressure – from family and friends to stay and 'make it work'.
- Denial – convincing themselves that "it's not that bad".
- Expectation – having grown up in an abusive household, the belief that this is what relationships look like.
- Guilt – the belief that they deserve the abuse and it is their fault
- A sense of duty.
- Loyalty – devotion to the abuser regardless of their actions.
- Fear of being alone – being with someone, despite their faults, is better than the fear of being lonely.
- Attachment issues/Co dependency.
- Lack of support – doesn't know who to turn to or where to go, particularly if English is not their first language.
- Rescuing – the belief that they can change the abuser.
- Intimidation – the abuser threatens to take the children or pets away.
- Immigration – the fear of being deported.

- Love – despite the abuse, they still feel that they love the abuser.
- The victim does not realise its abuse.
- Exhaustion. It is easy to underestimate the amount of energy needed for a victim to keep themselves, and possibly their children, alive and relatively safe.

4. The different kinds of domestic abuse

Below is a list of the main kinds of domestic abuse. However, in most cases more than one form exists.

Psychological abuse

This can include threats, gas lighting (making someone doubt their own reality) and mental torture. It can be used to groom victims for other types of abuse, although by itself it can cause devastating and lasting damage to a victim. It is a way of wearing down the victim to make them easier to control and therefore have power over them.

Isolation

This is a very powerful form of psychological abuse as it is of course much harder to exert power and control over someone that is surrounded by a support network of family and/or friends. Perpetrators might insist on moving to an area far away from their family and friends, sow seeds of doubt about close supportive relationships in a way that damages those relationships or become so aggressive when the victim tries to see family or friends that it is simply easier to stop seeing them. A perpetrator can also prevent someone from working and can monitor and/or block telephone calls.

Physical

This can include any of the following:

- Hitting, biting, slapping and beating.
- Shaking, pinching and pushing.
- Kicking, burning and hair pulling.
- Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint.
- Imprisoning, assault with implements and destroying possessions.

Perpetrators of physical abuse often carefully cause injuries only where they will not be visible to others. They do not abuse because of losing control of their temper but use physical abuse to gain and then maintain control over their victim.

Sexual

There are a range of abusive acts that are included within this definition

- Any behavior which uses sex or sexual activity in order to gain power and control over another person.
- Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts that the person has not consented to, could not consent to or was pressurised into consenting to.
- punishment for not having sex.
- Forcing the victim/survivor to agree to have sex in order to avoid other abusive behaviour.
- sexual name calling or shaming.
- Being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts.
- Imposition of dress codes upon a partner, enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways.
- Involvement in the sex trade or pornography.
- Knowingly passing on sexually transmitted infections.

Emotional abuse

- Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behavior.
- Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation.
- Shouting, swearing, frightening or blaming behavior.
- Ridiculing, being obsessively and irrationally jealous.
- The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation.
- A lack of love or affection, or ignoring the person leading to feelings of worthlessness.
- Constantly checking where someone is.
- Telling them they are too fat/thin, stupid/useless.
- Telling them they are a bad mother/father, wife/husband/partner.

Economic/Financial abuse

- Prevent or discourage the victim from working.
- Force the victim to earn money so that they do not have to work.
- Keeping the victim in poverty, controlling all of the money, refusing to allow the victim access to their own money.
- Expect the victim to account for every penny they spend.
- Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods.
- Applying pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- Force the victim to take out a loan or withhold money so that they cannot buy essentials like food for the children.

Economic abuse disproportionately affects women.[4]

Threats

- Making angry gestures.
- Using physical size to intimidate.
- Shouting you down.
- Destroying your possessions.
- Breaking things.
- Punching walls.
- Wielding a knife or a gun.
- Threatening to kill or harm you, the children and/or pets.

Neglect

Adults can be the victim of neglect as one adult might rely on another individual for example if they are elderly or frail, have a learning disability, a physical disability or an illness. They might also have a mental health issue or English might not be their first language.

Neglect is when a person's wellbeing is impaired, and their care needs are not met. It might include:

- Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services.
- Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not giving someone proper food, or assistance with eating or drinking.
- Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment.
- Deliberately withholding aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids.
- Denying social, religious or cultural contacts.
- Leaving someone alone or unsupervised.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices, or the coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. In a domestic abuse context, it might include:

- Forcing religious ideas or practices onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices.
- The misuse of scripture to control behaviour and pressure to conform.
- The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position.
- The denial of the right to practice their faith.

Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, 'Money matters: research into the extent and nature of financial abuse within intimate relationships in the UK' https://www.refuge.org.uk/files/Money-Matters.pdf cited in Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

- Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in emotional, physical or sexual harm.

Stalking, harassment and digital abuse

This is a more common type of abuse once a relationship has ended. With the availability of social media abuse by digital means has become an increasing problem. Stalking and harassment can be a sign that a perpetrator could be extremely dangerous, even if they have not so far been physically violent.

5.   Domestic abuse in different groups

Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. For any victim of domestic abuse, whatever their age, gender, sexuality or culture, the effects of the abuse are likely to be deeply significant. It will also impact friends, family, colleagues and neighbours – in fact whole communities can be affected by abuse that takes place behind closed doors. Below, in alphabetical order, are some groups that are affected. It is not an exhaustive list.

Children

Statistics from the NSPCC show that 1 in 5 children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse. Children are often called the 'hidden victims' of domestic abuse – their voices are not heard, and they have no choice whether or not to stay in the abusive environment. Living in a home where domestic abuse is taking place can be hugely distressing and confusing for children.

It can have a serious effect on their behaviour and overall wellbeing, both in the short and long term and they are likely to experience a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse [5]

Children may witness domestic abuse directly, but they can also witness it indirectly by hearing the abuse from another room, seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards, finding disarray like broken furniture or being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

Witnessing parental conflict may increase the likelihood of a child developing risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, alcohol and drug use and early sexual activity[6]. Domestic abuse can cause confusing relationships with parents. Children may:

- Not be able to develop a strong bond with their parents/carers (poor attachment).
- Worry their parents will divorce.
- Hope an abused parent will leave for safety reasons.
- Be afraid of their parents.

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[5] *Royal College of General Practitioners and NSPCC,* 2014; Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008.
[6] *Early Intervention Foundation*, 2018.

The Psychological effects of witnessing domestic abuse include:
- Aggression and challenging behavior.
- Depression.
- Anxiety – including worrying about a parent's safety.
- Changes in mood.
- Difficulty interacting with others.
- Withdrawal.
- Fearfulness, including fear of conflict.
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings. [7]
- Low self-esteem.
- Nightmares and flashbacks.

Physical effects can include:
- A risk of injury when they try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Self-harming.
- Higher rates of illness and fatigue.
- Reduced physical growth.
- Impact on nervous and hormonal systems (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018).
- Bedwetting.
- Eating disorders.

Emotional effects can include:
- Guilt that they didn't try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Feeling responsible for everything happening in the family.
- Attempts to be perfect and anxious to please.
- Fear of the abuser and other people who are similar to the abuser.
- Distressed and/or frightened by seeing arguments or violence.
- Afraid of their own emotions, such as anger.
- Difficulty in creating positive relationships.
- Feelings of powerlessness, insecurities, guilt, fear and loneliness.

Exposure to domestic abuse in childhood undermines a child's basic need for safety and security and can have a negative impact on their development, educational outcomes and mental health. It is contained within the definition of emotional abuse (Working Together 2018).

Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a child is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, safeguarding procedures must be followed by referring to Children's Services/Social Work Scotland. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on children, and the increased risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

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[7] Diez, et al 2018; *Early Intervention Foundation*, 2018.

Child to parent/carer

Child to parent/carer abuse is an aspect of domestic abuse where the child in the relationship seeks to control and coerce the parent, grandparent, foster parent or carer. There can be a number of reasons why a child is violent and/or abusive towards their parent or carer. It can include if they have seen a parent/carer be on the receiving end of abuse and they may believe it is normal behaviour to treat them in that manner.

Child to parent/carer abuse is largely under-reported and parents are often unable to identify or define what they are experiencing as abuse. Instead, they may talk about 'struggling with their child', 'having relationship difficulties with their child' or 'living in fear of their child'. They may not realise that there is specific help available for them, or they may feel ashamed and embarrassed that they cannot control their child, and that they are afraid of them. Additional barriers in seeking help may arise if the parents or carers responsible for the child cannot reach a consensus on the best course of action.

LGBTQ+

Domestic abuse can happen in lesbian and gay relationships, and between people who are transgender or have non-binary gender identities. Stonewall's research shows that 1 in 4 lesbian and bi women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. Two thirds of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a third a man. Almost half (49%) of all gay and bi men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

There is limited research on how many trans people experience domestic abuse in the UK, and the best studies have small group samples. However, these figures suggest it is a significant issue. A report by the Scottish Transgender Alliance indicates that 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner[8]

LGBTQ+ people may experience unique forms of coercive control targeted at their sexual orientation or gender identity. For victims who are not 'out' the perpetrator may threaten to expose the victims sexual or gender identity to friends, family, the police, church or employer. Research by Stonewall found that more than one in ten LGBTQ+ people (13%) who had experienced domestic abuse in the past year reported that their partner had threatened to 'out' them. The concept of 'outing' can also apply to HIV status.

Other forms of abuse that are unique to transgender people are their partner deliberately using the wrong pronoun, forcing someone to perform a gender that they do not want to present as, or preventing them from medically transitioning, for instance by hiding hormones or creating barriers such as controlling finances to accessing surgery [9]

The discrimination often faced by LGBTQ+ people in their everyday lives can create huge barriers to accessing domestic abuse support [10] The Government's national survey of

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Stonewall.org.uk
[9] *Free to be Safe LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse* 2018
[10] *Free to Be Safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse* 2018

LGBTQ+ people found that 40% of respondents had experienced a homophobic, bi phobic or transphobic incident in the previous 12 months, committed by someone they did not live with[11].

Someone experiencing domestic abuse in a LGBT relationship may struggle to find the necessary support (Broken Rainbow, the UK organisation that offered support for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse closed in 2106) and they may have to 'out' themselves in order to report the abuse. A perpetrator of domestic abuse may attempt to increase isolation by saying that no-one would believe or help them because the police and support services are all homophobic.

People may feel unable to turn to their church community for support because they don't know what sort of response they will get. Some victims seeking support find rejection and condemnation because of their sexual or gender identity.

Misconceptions, homophobia, and simply the lack of suitable and relevant services, can cause LGBT victims of domestic abuse to feel isolated and unable to do anything but suffer in silence'

Men

On average one in six men experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. However, male victims of domestic abuse are only half as likely to report their abuse as female victims[12]. Shame and embarrassment are common feelings amongst male victims, and unfortunately, there are far fewer support services for them, particularly regarding emergency accommodation like refuges and shelters.

Men can be abused by women or men. It can become complicated when the man tries to ward off or defend himself against an attack by a female perpetrator and some male victims report facing arrest when the police assumed that the female was the victim.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales records (March 2018) that an estimated 4.2% (695,000) men experienced domestic abuse in the previous year. Each year, an average of 30 men are murdered by their partner or ex-partner[13].

Older people

Elder abuse can happen in any family, or in institutions. In domestic situations the perpetrator can be the person's main carer, such as a spouse or daughter/son or other relative.

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[11] Government Equalities Committee (2018) *National LGBT Survey: Research Report*
[12] Office for National Statistics
[1] Office for National Statistics

For some the abuse may have started earlier in life and persisted into old age. For others they may have entered into a new relationship later in life, only to find that their new spouse is abusive.

There may be a late onset of domestic abuse that begins or is exacerbated at a significant point in life, such as retirement, ill health and frailty, disability or changes in family roles. For people who are limited to their own homes owing to frailty or disability, the abuse may go on for many years without anyone to see what is happening, particularly if the abuser is the victim's key carer.

It may be more difficult for older victims of domestic abuse to seek help, and when they do, the services available are not always suited to their needs. Dementia can cause the victim extreme difficulties in understanding and reporting the abuse, and in being believed if they do report it.

People living with a chronic illness or disability

People who have a disability are twice as likely to be a victim of domestic abuse [14], for instance research suggests that one in two deaf women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives[15].

People with either disabilities or suffering with chronic illnesses are likely to have higher dependency upon family/carers meaning that if they are being abused, they could be less able to report it. This is compounded if the person has difficulty communicating owing to a speech impairment or hearing difficulties.

The perpetrator could be the person's main carer and withhold or threaten to withhold medication as a form of coercion and control. They may also withhold aids such as wheelchair or refuse to assist with essential tasks such as washing or eating. They may also always accompany the victim to medical appointments which would severely limit their opportunity to report abuse.

People who have a learning disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse, are less likely to report it and even when they do are less likely to be believed[16].

Women

Statistics show that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. The Office for National Statistics 2018 record that women are four times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault by a partner (including attempts) in the previous year. The Crime

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[1]   Women's Aid (www.womensaid.org.uk)
[15] Dhillon-Keane N 2018
[16] Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

Survey for England and Wales records[17] that an estimated 7.9% (1.3 million) women experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

Pregnancy is a particularly vulnerable time for women. Department of Health statistics show that 40%-60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused while pregnant[18]

Increasingly perpetrators of domestic abuse use technology and social media to control and instil fear in those they victimise. In a Women's Aid survey[19] 85% of respondents reported online abuse perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner as part of a pattern also experience offline.

Domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and leads to, on average, 2 women being murdered each week.[20]

In findings by Women's Aid 46.2% of women in refuges had spent between 2 and 10 years in the abusive relationship, with 17% of women enduring a violent relationship for more than 10 years. Research by the NSPCC suggests that BME communities continue to live in abusive situations for longer. Women from BME communities potentially face additional barriers to reporting owing to a fear of discrimination by statutory services or a fear about their children's (mainly daughters) ability or prospect to marry.[21]

Young people (aged 16 – 18)

When the government updated their definition of domestic abuse in 2013, they widened it to include young people who are aged 16 and 17 years old. This definition recognises that those in this age group can experience abuse within their relationships.

Teenagers experience high levels of abuse within a relationship, with a 2011/12 government survey finding that the 16-19 age group were more likely to suffer partner abuse than any other age group.

There is often stigma surrounding domestic abuse in teenage relationships, and young people can feel that adults trivialise the abuse experienced. In addition, many domestic abuse support services are not open to young people until they reach 18 years old.

All young people under 18 are children and the definition of emotional abuse in respect of children includes them witnessing Domestic abuse. Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a young person is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, Children's Services/Social Work Scotland should always be notified. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on young people, and the increased risk and impact of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

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[17] March 2018
[1]   DoH 2005
[19] The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The economics of abuse
[20] Living without abuse
[21] Women's Aid

6. Responding to someone who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse

It takes tremendous courage for someone who is being abused to come forward and disclose that this is happening. They are most likely to tell someone they trust. Pastoral support can make a huge difference to those who are victims of domestic abuse. It is important, however, to highlight that it is crucial for victims of domestic abuse to be signposted to relevant agencies so that they can receive appropriate specialist support from the various organisations who are trained and experienced in these matters.

Below are guidelines for talking to someone who is a victim or survivor of domestic abuse:

Listen and believe what they say. Take time to listen and ensure that you talk in a safe place. It is worth remembering that it is much more likely that a victim will minimise what they are experiencing rather than dramatising it. What they tell you might therefore be the tip of the iceberg. Give them time to talk, but don't push them to talk if they don't want to. Take care not to trivialise, judge, criticise or dismiss what they tell you. Acknowledge that they're in a difficult and frightening situation.

Take care of your reactions. It can be difficult to hear a victim's account of domestic abuse. Think constantly of what a victim might need and be mindful of your body language as well as what you say.

Reassure and support them. It is important that you tell them that it is not their fault and that nothing justifies the abuse that they have suffered. If they have suffered physical injury offer to go with them to a Hospital or GP. You can also offer to support them in reporting to the Police.

Make sure they are safe. If possible, have a prepared plan of action in place within the church, to protect anyone disclosing abuse and to prevent church workers or yourself being put at risk. If you are concerned about someone's immediate safety, contact the police.

Do not investigate. It is not your job to go and speak to the perpetrator about the abuse, even if you know them. By doing so you place the victim, any children involved, and possibly yourself, in danger.

Gently question/Explore. Do not ask direct questions such as "Does your partner beat you?" or "Are you a victim of domestic abuse?" Instead, ask gentle questions such as "How are things at home?" or "What's troubling you?"

Keeping confidentiality. What has been disclosed to you should not become common knowledge within the church community, not even for prayer purposes, unless the victim chooses to share that information themselves. Any records or notes of what has been said should also be kept confidential. However, complete confidentiality cannot be promised, as it may be necessary to contact the safeguarding designated persons of the Church, the police or other statutory authorities, especially if there are children involved.

Record and report appropriately. Fill in the incident report (*Appendix A5*) and pass it to relevant people with the victim's consent. A record can be the first step to enable people affected by domestic abuse to seek appropriate support and access other services.

Talk to an expert*.* The church can, and should, work in partnership with other agencies and professionals as appropriate, to provide the best possible support for the individual or family. External support should always be sought in situations beyond your experience and expertise.

Empower them to make their own decisions*.* As far as possible it is vitally important to ensure that a victim/survivor makes the decisions and that you support and respect their choices. In situations where the victim decides to return to the perpetrator and children could be placed at risk it will be necessary to involve Children's Services. If this is necessary you should explain your intention to contact the statutory services and make every attempt to involve the victim in the decision-making process, unless that would mean placing the children at increased risk.

Do not:
- Suggest or offer couples counselling to those where their partner is the alleged abuser. This is not a helpful or appropriate response to domestic abuse and creates more fear and strain for the person being abused, whilst offering the abuser another opportunity to exercise control.

Church response to the perpetrator

Perpetrators of abuse need support and pastoral care. However, caution should be exercised as many perpetrators are highly skilled at manipulating people into colluding with abuse. If a perpetrator asks for help to change their abusive behaviour the most appropriate course of action is to recommend a perpetrator programme. As detailed above it would be completely inappropriate for anyone from the church to engage in couples counselling or reconciliation/ mediation. The first priority must be for the perpetrator to address their violent behaviour and the church can help find an appropriate treatment program. Do not agree to advocate for the perpetrator or to provide a character witness for them as this could be misinterpreted as the Church condoning domestic abuse.

Sometimes a perpetrator may claim a conversion experience and use this as justification as to why they do not need treatment. It would be dangerous to accept this, on its own, even if the person appears repentant. A person who is genuinely repentant will understand and accept that they need help to address their problems. Anyone who has been supporting a victim should never meet a perpetrator on their own or confront them with anything the victim has told them. Not only is this a breach of confidentiality but it may also place the victim, and yourselves, at risk. It is important to liaise with the statutory authorities where an individual is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) involvement.

It may be necessary to discuss boundaries or restrictions you would need to place on their attendance at Church, such as safeguarding contracts If an individual is convicted of

committing crimes associated with domestic abuse, a contract is required with the support of the Synod Safeguarding Officer. A safeguarding contract is advised to protect the alleged perpetrator, victims and the local congregation. The process of writing a contract is the same as described in Good Practice 5's *Section 13 – Managing and supporting those who pose a risk of harm to children*.

See also **Appendix Z: Guide to managing risk and offenders** for further details.

What should churches do?

There are a number of ways in which your church can act as a place of compassion and caring for those who have experienced, or are currently experiencing, domestic abuse:

Believe it. For many people in church domestic abuse is a taboo subject, with many believing that it does not happen.

Preaching/teaching. Speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching, study groups and prayers within the context of regular worship. Make it clear that domestic abuse is wrong and against Christian teaching. Pray for victims and perpetrators of abuse and for the work of specialised agencies that can help both victims and perpetrators. It is common for the Christian faith to put emphasis on the family structure and a positive family image, which may not be helpful for those from an abusive family setting.

Have information available in your church building. Have brochures and posters in places where a victim can take the information without fear of discovery. Telephone numbers of local and national domestic abuse helplines should also be included. Some of this information could be placed in a private location such as the toilets (male and female) to avoid scrutiny by others. Churches can develop good relationships with other statutory and voluntary agencies working in this area to draw on their expertise and refer victims to them.

Have a safe space to talk if possible. Ensure that there is space within the church building for people to talk in confidence and that conversations that warrant privacy are not held over coffee where sensitive information may be overheard.

Youth groups. By allowing young people to discuss and work through how they think and feel about their relationships, you are demonstrating that your church is a place of safety and somewhere where it is possible to be honest about abuse. If you can tackle these important issues within the safety of a youth group, youth fellowship or similar, you are creating a space for young people to talk about what might be happening in their families. It will be useful to be mindful of the fact that the definition of domestic abuse was widened to include the age range 16 to 18. Being mindful will ensure that you do not miss possible signs of domestic abuse between this age range.

Training. It is recommended that particularly relevant people in the church, e.g. ministers, elders, pastoral leaders, church Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers receive training about domestic abuse, either as part of their ongoing safeguarding training

or as a stand-alone session. This training will help individuals within the church reflect on the damage caused by domestic abuse, and how best to support victims and perpetrators. It is also important to make such training available to anyone who wishes to attend, confirming that it is everyone's responsibility to respond well to domestic abuse. Your Safeguarding Officer can either provide training or arrange suitable training.

Educate the church using local expertise. You may want to invite someone from the local police or a local support agency to talk about their work and to find out more about domestic abuse. Holding a well-publicised event and opening it up to other local churches and the local community, highlights your desire to stop domestic abuse being a taboo subject. Refuges and domestic abuse charities are always in need of extra resources. You could hold a fundraising event for them or agree to regularly offer financial support.

Marriage Preparation. It is a sad fact that getting married is known to be one of the triggers that can lead to the start or escalation of domestic abuse. Marriage preparation is, therefore, an ideal time to talk with couples about to be married about issues surrounding domestic abuse, such as equality, conflict, communication, control and violence. It will be very important to explain a biblical view of marriage, and to be clear that violence and abuse play no part in the marriage relationship. Those who lead marriage preparation should have received training on the issues of domestic abuse beforehand.

Personal Reflection. It is important for all to reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes as these can impact how we respond to a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Consider whether your views need challenging and find either books or someone you trust, such as a Spiritual Director, to explore your views. There are many helpful resources online also.

The Domestic Violence disclosure scheme

This is sometimes known as Clare's Law. Under this scheme you can ask the police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. This is called 'right to ask'. If records show that you may be at risk of domestic abuse from a partner, the police will consider disclosing the information. A disclosure can be made if it is legal, proportionate and necessary to do so.

The 'right to ask' also enables a third party, such as a friend or family member, to apply for a disclosure on behalf of someone they know. Again, the police can release information if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

In order to make an application under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme you can contact the police by either visiting a police station, phoning 101 or speaking to a member of the police on the street.

Domestic abuse and The Bible

The Bible has often been misused in domestic abuse situations by the very people whose role and duty it is to help. Victims have been told when disclosing, for instance, to:

- pray harder
- submit to your husband (this is used in the context of heterosexual relationships)
- try to get your partner to church
- lift up the abuse to the Lord

These responses could be unsafe and unhelpful and, in the case of submitting to your husband, can be seen as encouragement to stay in an abusive relationship. It is very clear within the Christian tradition that God does not expect anyone to submit to abuse at the hands of another person.

The church often has much to say about violent crimes in society, but some have regarded abuse in the home as a 'private matter'. We need to acknowledge that biblically this is not acceptable and take an active role in challenging domestic abuse as not being consistent with a Christian life.

Contacts for help with domestic abuse

Below there is a list of services and organisations that can support people who are victims of domestic abuse. It is not exhaustive.

Action on Elder Abuse
A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.
Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support
Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk   Tel: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)
A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.
Website: www.avaproject.org.uk   Tel: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK
Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.
Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying Tel: 0808 800 2222

CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.
Website: www.caada.org.uk   Tel: 0117 317 8750

ChildLine
for children wanting to talk to someone.   Tel: 0800 1111

Forced Marriage Unit

The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage.
Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage   Tel: 020 7008 0151

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)
IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.
Website: www.ikwro.org.uk   Tel: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)
Website: www.lawrs.org.uk   Tel: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

ManKind
Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).
Website: https://www.mankind.org.uk/   Tel: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line
Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.   Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline   Tel: 0808 2000 247

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline   Tel: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC
The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child/children)

Police
Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.
Tel: 999 – in an emergency   Tel: 101 – in a non-emergency

Refuge
Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.
Website: www.refuge.org.uk   Tel: 020 7395 7700
24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Respect
Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Website: www.respect.uk.net
They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.
Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored
Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.
Website: www.restoredrelationships.org   Helpline: 020 8943 7706

Southall Black Sisters
For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women
Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk   Help Line: 0208 571 0800 (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)   Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall
Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.   Website: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/

The Hideout
Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.
Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix
Free information and support for under 25s in the UK
Tel: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)
Website: https://www.samaritans.org/   Tel: 116 123

Women's Aid
A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.
Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.
Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS   Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Victim Support
Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.
Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk   Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Signhealth
A charity that supports deaf people's wellbeing with services focused on domestic abuse
Crisis Text Service: Text DEAF to 85258   Website: https://signhealth.org.uk/

Appendix U
Useful Contacts for all forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

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

Police
www.police.uk   Tel: 999 in an emergency
Tel: 101 – provides a service for non-emergency issues and will connect you to your local Police service, wherever you call from in the UK.

Local Authority

Every area of the UK will be covered by a Local Authority which provides services to the community, including statutory services such as Children's Services, Adult Care Services, housing and environment. Your local council will have a website with contact details for your local services.
www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

NHS
The National Health Service can provide advice, guidance, support and signposting to local services for all health issues.
www.nhs.uk/service-search

Citizens Advice
Providing free general advice and guidance around a range of concerns such as benefits, debt, relationships, housing, law, discrimination, tax, money, healthcare and education.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

DBS/PVG checking
DDC (Due Diligence Checking Ltd)
DDC is the registered body that will be processing all DBS/PVG applications for the URC.
https://www.ddc.uk.net/urc   Tel: 0845 644 3298 or 0116 260 3055

Samaritans
A crisis helpline, providing a listening service for any worries or concerns.
www.samaritans.org   Tel: 116 123

Thirtyone:eight
An independent Christian charity providing help to individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Previously known as CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service).
www.thirtyoneeight.org   Tel: 0303 003 1111

Victim Support

Independent charity supporting victims of crime.

www.victimsupport.org.uk   Tel: 0808 168 9111

Children

Action for Children

Action for Children (formerly NCH – National Children's Homes) is a leading children's charity running over 500 projects and working with children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse.   www.actionforchildren.org.uk

AFRUCA: Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Afruca is an organisation that seeks to address through prevention and early intervention the welfare of African children in the UK. Areas it gives information on include female genital mutilation, witchcraft and trafficking.   www.afruca.org

Barnardo's

Protecting, supporting and nurturing the UK's most vulnerable children, including campaigning to end child sexual exploitation. Provides leaflets in both English and Welsh for parents, children, young people and professionals, showing how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to keep safe.   www.barnardos.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

CEOP is a command of the National Crime Agency, which helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It offers guidance, advice and accepts direct reporting.   www.ceop.police.uk

Childline

A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to 19 years

of age.

www.childline.org.uk   Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

Educate Against Hate

A website giving practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.   www.educateagainsthate.com

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)

Resourcing parents, volunteers and workers providing a range of services including 'Positive Boundaries' which focusses on sexual bullying, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and developing positive gender relationships.

www.familylives.org.uk   Tel: 0808 800 2222

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. Working with families that have been affected by sexual abuse and includes adult male and female sexual abusers, young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours, victims of abuse and other family members.

www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

NSPCC

Providing support and advice for keeping children safe from harm and abuse. The website has many useful resources, including research studies and fact sheets.

www.nspcc.org.uk   Tel: 0808 800 5000

Parents Protect

Helping parents and carers to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

www.parentsprotect.co.uk   Tel: 0808 1000 900

Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! is the Lucy Faithfull child sexual abuse prevention campaign and confidential helpline for any adult concerned about sexual abuse. Providing help, advice and support for people who are displaying or considering sexually harmful behaviour or for those concerned about another's behaviour, either a child or adult.

www.stopitnow.org.uk   Tel: 0808 1000 900

Young Minds

A UK charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

www.youngminds.org.uk   Tel: 0808 802 5544

Adults

Action on Elder Abuse

A charity which campaigns against the abuse of older people. Their website includes information and research.

www.elderabuse.org.uk   Tel: 0808 8088 141

Age UK

Support and advice services for the elderly. The website has many useful resources including research studies and fact sheets as well as information on protecting yourself or others from abuse.

www.ageuk.org.uk   Tel: 0800169 6565

Mencap

Supporting and resourcing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The website has specific advice on safeguarding.

www.mencap.org.uk
MOSAC
Supporting non-abusing parents of sexually abused children.
www.mosac.org.uk   Tel: 0800 980 1958

Domestic Abuse

Action on Elder Abuse
A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.
Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support
Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk   Tel: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)
A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.
Website: www.avaproject.org.uk   Tel: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK
Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.
Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying Tel: 0808 800 2222

CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.
Website: www.caada.org.uk   Tel: 0117 317 8750

ChildLine
for children wanting to talk to someone.   Tel: 0800 1111

Forced Marriage Unit
The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage.
Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage   Tel: 020 7008 0151

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)
IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.
Website: www.ikwro.org.uk   Tel: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)
Website: www.lawrs.org.uk   Tel: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

ManKind
Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).
Website: https://www.mankind.org.uk/   Tel: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line
Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.
Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline Tel: 0808 2000 247

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline   Tel: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC
The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child / children)

Police
Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.
Tel: 999 – in an emergency   Tel: 101 – in a non-emergency

Refuge
Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.   Website: www.refuge.org.uk
Tel: 020 7395 7700   24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Respect
Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.   Website: www.respect.uk.net
They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.
Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk   Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored
Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.
Website: www.restoredrelationships.org   Helpline: 020 8943 7706

Southall Black Sisters
For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women
Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk
Help Line: 0208 571 0800 (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)
Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall
Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across
Britain.   Website: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/

The Hideout
Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people
to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.
Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix
Free information and support for under 25s in the UK   Tel: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)
Website: https://www.samaritans.org/   Tel: 116 123

This Is Abuse
A Home Office teen relationship abuse website, which educates, resources and supports
young people, and those working with them, who are in abusive relationships.
Website: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Women's Aid
A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.
Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.
Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS   Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Victim Support
Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England
and Wales.
Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk   Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Survivors

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)
Support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual and
emotional abuse and neglect.
www.napac.org.uk   Tel: 0808 801 0331

MACSAS (Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)

Supporting women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

www.macsas.org.uk   Tel: 08088 01 03 40

One in Four

Specialises in supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse, particularly survivors of child sexual abuse and trauma.   www.oneinfour.org.uk

Rape Crisis England & Wales

An organisation supporting the work of Rape Crisis Centres across England and Wales, and raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse in all its forms.

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

The Survivors Trust

A national umbrella organisation for specialist rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse support organisations throughout the UK and Ireland.

www.thesurvivorstrust.org   Tel: 0808 801 0818

SurvivorsUK

Helping men who have been sexually abused and raises awareness of their needs.

NOTE: Sexual violation includes both childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault/rape.

www.survivorsuk.org   Tel: 0203 598 3898

Survivors Scotland

Scottish government website providing a directory of support for survivors of childhood abuse in Scotland.   www.survivorsscotland.org.uk

Appendix V
Safeguarding and Digital Communication

This section is to be read in conjunction with Appendix W: Social media guidelines for the United Reformed Church.

1.1   Introduction

The digital world has now become part of everyday living, with the ways that we are able to access content online are changing considerably. This presents positive opportunities to support education, aiding creativity and self-expression. Conversely, this also poses a number of risks including cyber bullying, online grooming and identity theft.

When communicating via the internet and mobile phones, people can feel less wary and talk about things far more openly than they might when communicating face to face. Children and adults need to be educated on the safe use of mobile and internet communications.

1.1   Why online safety?

In the past, safeguarding has mainly revolved around the running of children's activities or events within church premises. Today, however, in addition to traditional activities and forms of communication, safeguarding includes online interaction.

Churches should, therefore:
- encourage children to stay safe online and direct them to age-appropriate guidance
- ensure access to the internet on their premises is as safe as possible
- provide workers with policies and procedures for safer online communication with children

1.1.1   Myths about the internet

There are many myths surrounding the internet and how children, in particular, make use of it. In order to increase their own understanding, and to enable them to support children, parents, carers and workers to stay safe when online, it is important that all churches are aware that these myths exist. Myths include:

Myth: Young people are now so 'net savvy' and adults are almost always technologically incompetent in comparison, that adults will never be able to understand e-safety adequately.

Reality: *Adults tend to lead and children tend to follow. 'Facebook' started as an adult social networking site (and is still only officially available for those over the age of 13).*
It is true that children may be able to grasp technology quickly but it must not be forgotten that:

- *children often lack maturity in understanding the dangers and consequences of their actions online*
- *children take risks as a normal part of growing up and this process now takes place online as well as offline*

It is vital that children are well supported as they explore the digital environment.

Myth: Online 'stranger danger' is not real

Reality: Research has shown that in real life (as opposed to virtual), children are most at risk of sexual harm from people already known to them and that 'stranger danger' is less prevalent. However, in the context of the internet this is not the case, particularly when children are befriended online through social networking or gaming sites. A child may believe their new online friend is who they say they are when, in reality, they are an adult posing as a child (known at 'catfishing'). Most concerning is when initial online contact develops into face to face meetings.

Myth: Online 'friends' are the same as real-life 'friends'

Reality: In the online environment and social media platforms, the definition of a 'friend' has changed. Offline, we might consider a friend to be a person who is well known to us and someone we regard with liking, affection and loyalty, whom we have got to know through face to face contact. Over time, through regular digital engagement, people may consider themselves just as much friends with those they meet solely online, even though they may never have met in person, as those they regularly meet with face to face.

Myth: Children don't engage with strangers on social networking sites

Reality: When a young person is aware that their friends are part of a particular online community, they are likely to want to join in – whether it's sharing particular digital content, engaging with specific topics or communicating in a certain manner. However, as already mentioned, dangers can arise, especially when young people feel under pressure to engage with as many people online as possible or are not able to assess what is appropriate for them to share online.

1.1.2   Internet safety for children and adults at risk

No matter how great the internet is for children and adults at risk to explore, there are some areas which are not appropriate for them.

Irrespective of which technology or digital space children or adults at risk use, they need to be aware of:
- Protecting their own safety.
- The risks involved in meeting people online and the danger of being groomed.
- The security of their digital footprints, which can lead to a loss of privacy, identity theft, data misuse and fraud.

- Cyber bullying, online fights, making threats and sexting.
- File-sharing, computer security and copyright law.
- Exposure to dangerous material such as pornography, racist and other hate-focussed materials, self-harm advocacy, drug paraphernalia, suicide and gambling.
- The addictive nature and dangers of overusing technology.

1.3   Potential problems online

1.3.1   Online grooming

Online grooming is when someone uses the internet to trick, force or pressure a child, young person or someone who is vulnerable into doing something sexual – like sending a naked video or image of themselves.

A person who is grooming others online will sometimes build their trust before talking about doing anything sexual. People can be exploited online without any physical contact ever taking place. The abuser, for example, could ask a child to send naked photos of themselves or perform sexual acts transmitted via a webcam.

Online grooming can be faster than grooming in person, due to the anonymity of the internet, resulting in children, in particular, trusting an online 'friend' more quickly than they would in a face to face encounter. People intent on grooming children online often use the same social media platforms which are popular with children and young people. Online grooming is a crime.

Abusers can use a range of techniques to make contact and establish relationships. These include:

- Gathering personal details online from social networking sites, multi-player games and other platforms.
- Offering opportunities for modelling, especially to young girls.
- Promising meetings with celebrities and offering gifts, such as computer games or tickets to concerts.
- Gaining the confidence by offering positive attention or providing a sympathetic response when personal problems are shared.
- Masquerading as a child or assuming another false identity in order to gain the trust
- Bullying, threatening or blackmailing.

Once the abuser has gained trust online, they might suggest meeting up in person.
There are a range of actions which can be taken by parents/carers and workers to prevent the risks of online grooming, including:

- Discuss the potential risks of online grooming with children and adults at risk. Do not wait for something to happen, but instead talk to them now, on a regular basis.

- Visit the National Crime Agency's Thinkuknow[22] website, which has a lot of useful information for parents, children's workers and children of various age groups.
- Highlight that the internet is a public place and that not everyone online is who they say they are.
- Use parental controls and safe-search facilities based on the age and maturity of children or adults at risk concerned. Remember, however, that these may not be 100% effective and are not a substitute for supervision.
- Explain that personal details should never be given out (e.g. Name, address, phone number, school, etc), and personal information should not be shared (including photos and videos) with strangers on any digital platform.
- Strongly encourage people to set their online social media profiles to 'private' so that only friends and family can see them.
- Set rules for the use of webcams, digital cameras and camera phones.
- Remember that people can be vulnerable to online grooming on all digital platforms, including multi-player gaming websites and social networking websites.
- Encourage people to talk about anything which makes them feel uncomfortable online (such as a stranger making contact), and to save emails, messages and any other evidence.
- Look for any unusual signs, such as children hiding their texts or messages, unknown adults contacting them or sending them gifts, or seeing dramatic changes in their behaviour.
- Report any incident of online grooming to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) as well as the police.
- Keep computers in an open room to allow effective supervision, but be aware that most children and adults at risk can access the internet on their phones without easy supervision.

If, as a worker, you are worried about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, you should follow the reporting procedures in ***Section 10: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns*** in Good Practice 5.

1.3.2   Digital footprints

Digital footprint is the term used to describe the virtual trail which people leave behind as they explore the internet. Every time someone does something as simple as visiting a website, information about the visit is stored on their computer and by the website itself. Anything which is posted on social media websites can be easily accessed by others and could remain there forever – even after you think it has been deleted.

Children and adults at risk often don't understand that what they do in the digital world could have huge implications to their reputation in real life over a long period of time, with anything posted online being searched for and retained by other people. Examples include:

- A blog or social networking profile containing comments, photos or videos a young person would not want parents, peers or teachers to see. It is not uncommon for university admissions tutors and employers to look up applicants online.

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[22]   www.thinkuknow.co.uk

- Content and music downloaded and shared illegally, even unwittingly.
- Footage of an individual doing something silly, embarrassing or reckless being published and shared online.
- Intimate or naked photos shared with people via text or instant messaging (sometimes under pressure from their partner) which is passed around a wider group. This can make children and adults at risk, vulnerable to sexual exploitation.
- Nasty comments (often referred to as 'trolling' or cyber bullying) are made which they might regret later.

It is therefore essential that people are helped to understand the potential consequences of their behaviour in the digital world, so that they can protect their reputation in real life.

1.3.3   Digital reputations

It is important to help people think about the implications of posting images and comments online. Things to consider exploring with children and adults at risk:

- Encourage them to make the most of built-in privacy tools.
- Explain that every time they go online, they leave a trail.
- Encourage them, with supervision, to type their name into a search engine so they can see what comes up about them.
- Encourage them to ask permission before publishing any content involving their friends or family (and to ask their friends and family to do the same).
- Explain why it is important to be honest when registering for access to websites and services. Many social networking websites, video-sharing sites and blogs have a minimum age limit.
- Discuss with them the moral and legal issues surrounding the posting of material involving others (e.g. A negative comment about someone could be considered slanderous).
- Talk to them about the consequences of sharing intimate or naked images in the digital world, including through text messages (called 'sexting').

1.3.4   Misleading content

It is useful to explain to children and adults at risk that not all information on the internet is fact. Some of it might be deliberately misleading and/or designed primarily to sell commercial products. Social media Influencers are people with a large number of followers, who make a living from advertising products through their influence and ability to sell their perfect 'lifestyle'. It is not always easy to understand that they are selling products and not simply sharing their favourite brands and products.

Some websites will report 'fake news' or things that aren't completely true. They might do this in order to scare or to make people do something, such as visiting their website – because they make money from people going to their site. In order to spot fake news, check the name of the website and the web address to see if it looks real, and look at the reporting on known and trusted sites to see if they are also reporting it.

1.3.5   Identity Fraud and Phishing

Identity fraud or identity theft is the illegal act of using someone else's personal information without their permission, typically for economic gain.

Phishing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails pretending to be from reputable companies, in order to get individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers. It may not be immediately obvious that identity fraud or phishing is taking place, so it is essential to protect personal financial details at all times (including pin codes and passwords). Look out for the warning signs, too, such as debits on bank statements of which you are unaware.

Some useful tips include:

- Delete suspicious emails without opening them.
- Be aware that offers which seem too good to be true probably are.
- Install security software on all devices and keep it updated.
- Do not use the same password for all websites or services.
- Never respond to any unexpected email requests or callers looking for personal details.
- Do not respond to emails claiming to be from banks asking for personal details (banks never ask clients to submit this type of information by e-mail).
- Refraining from online purchases unless the URL begins with 'https://' and the padlock symbol is displayed beside it.

1.3.6   Cyber stalking

Cyber stalking is the use of electronic communications to stalk, harass or frightening someone. This may include making false accusations, defamation, threats, vandalism, solicitation for sex or gathering information in order to harass, embarrass or threaten.

1.3.7   Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is no different from real life bullying, except that it happens in the digital world – someone being tormented, teased, threatened, harassed, humiliated or embarrassed. Cyberbullying may involve the use of images, text messages, phone calls and social networking profiles, and is just as unacceptable as bullying in real life. The only difference is that it is not restricted by time or physical location, and so it is therefore harder to escape from.

If someone believes they are being cyberbullied or cyberstalked, they should be encouraged to tell a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher or friend. Children should be aware of the Click CEOP button, present on some websites, through which abuse can be reported. Of course, it may also be necessary for the police to be involved.

1.3.8   Sexting

Sexting is the sending of sexually explicit photos, videos or messages. The content depicts someone in a state of nakedness or in sexually provocative or revealing positions. This indecent imagery, which is often self-generated, can be used to bully and blackmail, with the creator not fully understanding the consequences of what they have produced. Once made public, sexts are very difficult to retract and, apart from causing acute embarrassment and distress, such images can have far more serious consequences.

Sexting can occur in a number of scenarios, including:

- Partners exchanging images with each other (either with both partners' consent or with one partner under duress or without their knowledge).
- Partners sharing private images outside of their relationship, such as passing them around school. Ex-partners can be particularly vulnerable to this type of action, which is often referred to as 'revenge-porn'.
- Friends passing on sexting images which they have received.

Young people often start sexting 'for a laugh' but such behaviour could lead to serious consequences for everyone involved. In the digital world, images can be copied, manipulated or sent to other people within seconds – something which starts a private conversation between two people can quickly reach peers and even complete strangers.

Tips to help children understand the dangers of sexting, include:

- Talking to children about sexting, just as you would about any digital safety issue. This is especially important for older teenagers, who might be in a relationship.
- Discussing sexting as part of a wider conversation about relationships.
- Reminding children why it is important to think carefully before they post anything. It is very difficult to retract an image or piece of information once it is uploaded.
- Encouraging children not to pass on these kinds of images, even if they are being urged to do so by their peers.
- Explain that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is illegal for anyone to take, hold or share indecent images of anyone under the age of 18 (even if they are also under the age of 18, and/or the content was created with the consent of that young person).

The police must, by law, record all sexting incidents on their crime system, however they can decide not to take further action against the young person if it is deemed not in the public interest. This is at the discretion of the police.

1.3.9   Exposure to inappropriate and harmful material

Another online risk is exposure to potentially harmful, user-generated content, including violent or pornographic images, gambling websites, self-harm websites or forums, radicalisation websites or forums etc. The content in question might not be illegal, but it could be upsetting, disturbing or otherwise generally unsuitable for children.

Children and adults at risk may come across unsuitable or upsetting content inadvertently, as well as actively looking for content, such as pornography, for example, out of curiosity.

What can workers do about inappropriate and harmful material?

Churches can help to avoid children and adults at risk accessing inappropriate and harmful material in the following ways:
- Children and adults at risk are supervised at all times when using church computers.
- Churches run regular sessions to help educate people about safe internet usage (the Synod Safeguarding Officer can offer advice).
- All people using church computers complete consent and behaviour forms, with expectations of use reinforced.
- Church computers and games consoles have appropriate age controls and safety features in operation.
- Filters on video-sharing websites are operational for church computers.
- The importance of age limits for websites and services are understood by children, as these exist to help protect them from unsuitable content.

1.3.10 Abusive/Illegal Images of Children

As the use of, and accessibility to, the internet has increased, so too has the production of abusive/illegal images of children.

The possession of abusive/illegal images is a form of child exploitation, despite it not necessarily involving direct interaction between the person possessing the images and the child. The terms

'abusive images of children' or 'illegal images of children' are preferred instead of 'child pornography', in order to highlight the seriousness of the offences. It is also important to be aware that pornography is legal (with some exceptions) yet the making, viewing or distributing of sexual images of children is never legal.

1.4   Advice and Support

1.4.1   Church websites

Here are some tips to help when creating, managing and editing your church website:

- Make sure websites are safe and appropriate for all users.
- When designing sites, make clear what is permissible to copy or use in other places.
- Obtain permission from parents, carers or children before using any pictures of children.
- Use group photographs of children, rather than individuals.
- Do not publish the name or location of any child.
- Do not publish personal email addresses, postal addresses or telephone numbers.

- Make web content as accessible as possible to people with disabilities e.g. using fonts which are easier for people with dyslexia to read.
- Appoint a responsible person to monitor the content of the website.
- Placing the CEOP 'report abuse' button on websites along with the link to the 'thinkuknow'[23] internet safety website. This offers effective and age-appropriate advice for children, parents and carers.
- Complete a risk assessment before hosting message boards, forums or blogs and ensure that they are password protected.

Please note: Churches are responsible for all content contained within websites, blogs, social media or any other platforms maintained by them.

1.4.2   Use of Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms provide a range of opportunities for children and churches, such as:

- An attractive and powerful communications environment, albeit one in which children need close advice and guidance
- A strong sense of community
- A marketing tool for promoting the church and its various activities and groups
- An evangelistic platform

Social media platforms also carry a number of risks, including the facilitation of trolling, cyberbullying, cyberstalking and boundary drift when workers befriend children online. Direct messages via social media platforms should be avoided, but where they are used a record of the communication should be kept.

Certain social media platforms have age restrictions and no URC worker should support a child accessing a platform they are too young for.

1.4.3   Workers befriending children online

If workers are to engage with children via social network sites, the advice from CEOP is that this should be done through a public page set up by the church, and not a personal social media account. The benefits of only interacting via a public church page are:
- Transparency.
- Ease of information sharing.
- Ease of management and administration by an individual or team.
- Providing an area for children to interact with each other safely, with supervision and no obligation to interact via their own personal pages.
- Clear boundaries for the worker, and a maintained level of privacy.
- Reduced risk of personal information being used against the worker e.g. bullying.
- Reduced risk of accusations of professional misconduct as boundaries are clearly maintained.
- It is easy to monitor what is being said to a child when communication is all via a public platform.

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[2]   www.thinkuknow.co.uk

1.4.4 Filming and photography

Organisations should take great care in the ways in which they create and use photographs or film footage involving children. This does not mean that pictures or filming should be prohibited, but in order to safeguard children it is recommended that the following steps are taken:

- Permission should be obtained from parents/carers before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded.
- Parents/carers should be asked NOT to take photographs that include any child who is not their responsibility, unless permission has been granted.
- It must be made clear why images or films are being made, what they will be used for, who might see them and where they will be stored.
- Children and young people should be asked if they want to be filmed or photographed.
- Use group photographs of children where possible and ensure that individuals cannot be identified by any personal details such as their name, school badge, age or address.
- All photographs should be appropriate and respectful of the subject.
- Photos and other digital media should be stored in a secure location, ideally on a church computer. If this is not possible it is important to record where the photographs and digital media are stored.
- Consent forms should contain a section covering consent for photography and digital media.
  See Appendix F: Sample Information and Consent Form.

1.4.5 Electronic communication with children and young people

When communicating with children and young people via email, messaging and other forms of electronic communication, it is advised that:

- where possible, communication is via parents rather than directly with children
- parental consent is obtained for electronic communication with children – making it clear what type of communication will be used (e.g. Text messaging, email, social media platforms etc).
- digital communication does not take place with children under the age of 13.
- standardised group communications are used where possible (e.g. group emails and WhatsApp group messages etc).
- communications are transparent and a record is kept of anything which is not visible to others online.
- communications are not at anti-social hours.

1.4.6 Technology Addiction

Children and young people can spend many hours on digital platforms. To help avoid excessive use of technology, clear boundaries are needed for children when using digital

platforms. This might include the length of time they are allowed to spend on computers, the kind of websites they can visit, which games they are permitted play, limiting the amount of data they can download to their mobile phone, etc.

1.4.7   E-Safety, acceptable use policy & safeguarding policy

Within their Safeguarding Policy all churches should have a section on e-safety, including the expectations of workers in their electronic communications with children. It should include an acceptable use policy in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children. See *APPENDIX C: Church Online Safety Policy*, which includes sample forms which children and workers could be asked to sign.