



# Safeguarding Policy

The Love's Farm Church Safeguarding Policy is based on United Reform Church (URC)'s model local church safeguarding policy and supported by the following appendices that are attached to it:

- A1 – Safeguarding policy statement
- S1 – The role of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- C1 – Code of conduct for working with children or young people
- C2 – Code of conduct for working with adults at risk
- F1 – Safeguarding incident recording form
- F2 – Self declaration form
- S5 – Signs and symptoms of abuse

Further useful information in relation to safeguarding can be found in the following URC documents which are interrelated with this policy:

- Guidance leaflet G1: Guidance on safeguarding for Local Ecumenical Partnerships
- Document L1: Contact details for relevant organisations

Both of these documents can be found on the URC website at:  
<https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>



## 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 Trustees and applies to:

- all members of our church
- all those who attend and serve our church and its services
- all those who attend or assist with activities run by our church
- our trustees
- paid staff (both internal and external)
- volunteers

### **Principles Underpinning the Policy**

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put the welfare of children and adults at risk first
- A willingness to be open and listen
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

## 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, is permanently, or for 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 beneficiaries of the church, 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 a Safeguarding Coordinator for safeguarding children and adults and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern.. A job/role description is attached as **Appendix S1**. The church will have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary. Safeguarding will be a regular agenda item for trustee meetings.

Church activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding Good Practice 6 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
- adequate staffing will be in place, including leaders who have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and have agreed to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- 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, including obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for eligible roles and positions. We will treat applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed (see **Appendix P4** for the church policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders) and ensure that safer recruitment-related procedures are followed.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as **Appendices C1** and **C2** 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.

## How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. **Appendix S5: 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 G3: 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 P3: Church online safety policy** should be followed in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children. All workers must sign the forms at Appendix P3 before using church computers and / or using computers during church services and church-run activities. Appendix P3 will be displayed during all activities where children are likely to be using computers or devices with internet access.

## 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 they are implicated in the allegation, inform 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 F1**). 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**, who will decide whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory authorities
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at **Appendix F1**. 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 the 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 4.9 of the United Reformed Church's Good Practice<sup>6</sup> book, which can be found at <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GP6-2023.pdf> 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 (previously known as LADO) will be contacted, using the contact details in the Key Contacts section of this policy. 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.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted using the contact details in the Key Contacts section of this policy.

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS 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.

Depending on the seriousness of incidents or allegations, a report to the Charity Commission will also need to be considered at the 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 people

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, we immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and the Minister.

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 Coordinator should ensure that trustees 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     Marcus Pickering

Email   Marcus@lovesfarmchurch.com



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

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

## 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 Jenny Bishop

Telephone No 07734215015

Email [jenny@lovesfarmchurch.com](mailto:jenny@lovesfarmchurch.com)

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Minister **or one of the trustees** can be contacted:

Name Marcus Pickering

Telephone No

Email [marcus@lovesfarmchurch.com](mailto:marcus@lovesfarmchurch.com)

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name Candice Hart

Telephone No 01223 609846

Email [safeguarding@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urceastern.org.uk)



- **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](mailto: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

- **Designated Officer (DO)**

Telephone No 01223 727 967 (Mon-Fri office hours), 01733 234 724 (out of hours emergencies)

Email [LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

- Statutory contact in the case of a child  
<https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned/professionals-reporting-a-concern>
- Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk  
<https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned/professionals-reporting-a-concern> OR [referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**NOTE:** Guidance Leaflet L1 also includes a list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults, and can be accessed here: <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/L1.pdf>

## Review

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



Date of the most recent review: 10 April 2025

Date of the next review: April 2026

Signed:

(on behalf of the Church Trustees)