



SAFEGUARDING AND CHURCHES

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A Joint CCPAS and Church Growth Trust Briefing Paper



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1.0 Purpose of paper

This briefing paper, which has been produced in partnership with Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), outlines some of the key principles for safeguarding within a church context. It is not intended to cover detailed procedures, policies and protocols or to provide model documents for churches to use. It is intended to highlight issues and signpost churches to the right place(s) to obtain advice.

2.0 What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk and to protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk from abuse and maltreatment;
- preventing harm to children's and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk' health or development;
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children, young people and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk to have the best outcomes.

3.0 Duty of care

Any organisation that has contact or works with children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk has a duty of care to ensure that these particular groups of people are properly cared for and protected. This duty of care is particularly important for churches because churches welcome everyone and require adults and children to work together in close proximity, such as Sunday school sessions, pastoral care, prayer ministry and holiday clubs.

4.0 Policies and protocols

It is expected that churches will have policies and protocols in place so that children are protected and that only adults who have been vetted and appropriately trained will have access to children or adults with care and support needs or adults at risk in closed sessions. Also volunteers will need to know how to respond when issues of abuse are raised, including how to appropriately address situations for both the abused and the abuser.

5.0 Leaders

Churches open their doors to everyone and church leaders can be called upon to help at any time, particularly in a crisis. Usually leaders will know what to do, but sometimes expert guidance is needed, particularly where children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk are involved. It is vital that leaders and workers are trained to know how to work confidently and effectively with children, young people and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk, including when an allegation of abuse is raised or a concern arises.

6.0 Legislation

The legal framework for child protection in this England is the *Children Act 1989* (and 2004) and associated guidance, particularly *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (revised 2015). Legislation for other countries in the UK is slightly different. For adult safeguarding the framework is set by the *Care Act 2014* and associated guidance. With regard to safeguarding in general, churches are seen as part of the voluntary sector and they are expected to work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations in order to protect children, young people and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk. An example may be where an offence has been committed or a serious allegation exists, the church would need to inform and liaise with the police, the local Council's Children's Services, the Charity Commission or DBS. Another example may be where a church needs to work with the Probation Service to ensure the risk an ex-offender potentially poses to the church is well managed and safeguarded.

In each area there are inter-agency boards (including local authorities, health bodies, police and others from the voluntary and independent sectors) to coordinate working together; for children these are called the *Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)* and for adults with care and support needs or adults at risk they are called *Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs)*.

7.0 Charity Commission and Trustees

Although churches are not regulated by government authorities to the same extent as statutory organisations like schools, they are nonetheless accountable to the Charity Commission as part of the voluntary or 'third sector'. The Charity Commission requires every organisation that works with children, including churches, to have a written safeguarding policy and charitable status will not be granted unless a policy is in place.

Charity trustees are ultimately responsible for safeguarding within any charitable organisation and they have a duty to ensure adequate policies and procedures are in place within their organisation and to inform the Charity Commission of any 'serious incident'. It is recommended that there should be a designated lead trustee to take overall responsibility for the charity's safeguarding arrangements.

8.0 Risks

Insurance companies require written policies on safeguarding in order to provide public liability insurance, as risks in relation to abuse and neglect are among the most significant risks facing any organisation. Where churches have condoned poor practice in this area the financial and reputational damage done to churches - not to speak of the lifelong effects on victims of abuse - is incalculable.

9.0 Having a safeguarding policy

It is strongly recommend that every church has a written safeguarding policy that is regularly updated and applied to every aspect of the church's life.

9.1 Ten safeguarding standards

CCPAS have a model safeguarding policy, applicable to churches of all denominations, based on ten safeguarding standards as follows:

- Standard 1 – Safeguarding Policy
Churches should adopt a formal, working safeguarding policy.
- Standard 2 – Developing Safeguarding Awareness and Training
Churches should develop safeguarding awareness and training.
- Standard 3 – Safer Recruitment
Churches should adopt a formal safer recruitment policy for both paid and voluntary workers.
- Standard 4 – Management of Workers
Workers, paid and voluntary, should be appropriately managed, supervised and supported.
- Standard 5 – Working Safely
Churches should ensure they adopt safer working practice, carry out where appropriate risk assessments for organised activities, including outings, transportation, pastoral visiting, discipline, bullying and first aid.
- Standard 6 – Communicating effectively
Churches should ensure that workers know how to talk with, listen and relate to children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk with whom they come into contact.
- Standard 7 – Responding to Concerns
Workers must develop awareness of the issues surrounding abuse, be able to recognise possible signs and symptoms and respond appropriately.
- Standard 8 – Pastoral Care
Churches should ensure pastoral care and support is available to all those affected by abuse.
- Standard 9 – Managing those who pose a risk
Churches must supervise and manage those who pose a risk to others.
- Standard 10 – Working in partnership
Churches working in specialised areas, culturally diverse settings or through partner organisations or agencies must ensure appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.

See the Additional Information section below for details of how to access the 'Staying Safe and Secure' document from CCPAS and the CCPAS Members page on their website.

9.2 Specific policy

The CCPAS model policy mentioned above, which covers both children and adults, is in the form of a generic template that can be customised according to your church's individual requirements. The details of the policy will depend on each church's unique circumstances and the work that the church does with children and adults at risk. Although some churches may be a part of a denomination or network, or may be a church plant from a more established church elsewhere, it is important that each local congregation has its own policy.

9.3 Safeguarding co-ordinator

It is also important for each church to have its own designated person, usually called a safeguarding co-ordinator, who is responsible for overseeing safeguarding within the church and is the point of contact for other agencies and the person who makes a safeguarding referral to the statutory authorities when necessary.

10.0 Good practice in working with children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk

10.1 Making it a priority

Keeping children, young people and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk safe is a priority that needs to be at the forefront of everything that we do in church. Church leaders, staff and volunteers need to have a working awareness of the issues around safeguarding and the safeguarding policy will need to be implemented across the church.

10.2 Be alert

Those working with children and adults with care and support needs or adults at risk should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and neglect and should know who to talk to within their setting about any concerns that arise.

10.3 Safeguarding co-ordinator

The church should have an active and appropriately trained safeguarding co-ordinator and people in the church should know who the person is. He/she usually organise checks and training, as well as being the central point of contact for safeguarding within the church and the person who would make a safeguarding referral to the statutory authorities when necessary.

10.4 Safer recruitment

Those working with vulnerable people will need to be recruited in line with safer recruitment practice. This will include proper procedures for obtaining information from workers, interviewing, taking references and carrying out checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks, previously known as CRB checks) and they will need training, ongoing support and supervision.

10.5 CCPAS Training

CCPAS has a comprehensive suite of training materials that can help churches and these training materials can be delivered face to face by CCPAS trainers, undertaken independently or as a group working online using a DVD and associated workbooks (see the Additional information section below).

11.0 Summary – five essential questions

To summarise some of the issues raised above, it is recommended that churches ask the following questions:

1. Does the church have a safeguarding policy and appropriate forms?
2. Would everyone know what to do if there was a concern about possible abuse?
3. Are you recruiting workers safely, including DBS checks where possible?
4. Are you training and supporting your leaders and children's workers?
5. Do those who attend activities or come to services know what you are doing to keep children and adults safe?

12.0 Additional information

CCPAS offer a wealth of expertise, support, advice and materials to assist churches in dealing with this important aspect of church organisation. Should you wish to utilise their expertise to implement a policy or to improve your current arrangements, they can be contacted via the phone, email or through their website. Their contact details are:

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t: 0845 120 4550

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w: www.ccpas.co.uk

The CCPAS website contains a wealth of information about good practice and their Helpline (0845 120 4550 - option two) is staffed by experienced safeguarding advisers who are available to advise on policy and practice issues.

CCPAS' 'Staying Safe and Secure' document and model policies can be obtained from the Members' area of their website: <http://www.ccpas.co.uk/MembersArea>.

Information on CCPAS training can be seen on their website:
<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/training>.