



your experts in church properties

Protecting people and safeguarding policy

(May 2023)

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

This document sets out Church Growth Trust's (CGT) policy for protecting and safeguarding from harm all who work with CGT, volunteer for it, act as trustee of it or who come into contact with it and its services as, for example, occupiers of its properties, clients, beneficiaries, suppliers, contractors or those with whom it collaborates as organisations or individuals.

The policy has been approved by the trustees of CGT. They take very seriously their obligation in all CGT's operations and activities to protect people from harm and to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs. They therefore require that they themselves, staff, those contracted to provide services on behalf of CGT and volunteers, implement both the spirit and the letter of this policy.

Scope of obligations

CGT recognises that, as a Christian organisation, it is committed to applying in practice the requirements of Scripture including those to love and do good to others and protect them from harm of all kinds, in so far as that lies within the power of the organisation. It recognises its legal obligations under international and domestic law, in particular the United Nations Convention on Human Rights (and subordinate conventions) and the Human Rights Act 1998. It acknowledges that children, young people and adults can be victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. It accepts the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". It also concurs with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." It recognises that its obligation to protect and safeguard from harm and abuse, within its power to do so, extends to all with whom CGT is in contact through its work, not simply those falling within the ambit of statutory obligations to safeguard adults with care and support needs and children, and that the obligation extends to harms, dangers or abuse of all kinds and of whatever origin, whether physical, psychological, emotional or sexual.

Context

In fulfilment of its charitable objects, CGT has a vision to glorify God by securing for Gospel use independent church properties and together with churches making them fit for their God-given purpose. To fulfil this vision CGT holds and accepts independent church properties (as owner or trustee) and blesses churches which occupy its buildings by granting concessionary rents, helping these churches to keep their properties in good condition, (where practical) energy efficient, compliant with legislation and suitable for modern church use, including helping to fund building projects, providing professional property and architectural services and guidance in church practice and governance, including encouraging churches to make best use of their properties and supporting church planting and revitalisation of independent evangelical churches. This involves visits to CGT's properties and clients' properties, meetings with church leaders and trustees, as well as networking with other organisations to help in this work.

Except in very exceptional circumstances, contact with churches and clients will mean that CGT's trustees, staff and volunteers will be dealing with adults and mainly those of more mature years. Meetings with individuals would typically be on church premises or in public premises such as coffee shops. Advice to local church leaders and others does occasionally refer to work with young people, children and those with disabilities and CGT is careful to ensure that appropriate advice, conforming with best practice, is given on

safeguarding in such contexts, including referring them to CGT's briefing paper on safeguarding and to organisations that are designed to help churches with safeguarding. CGT does not, however, work directly with children and adults with care and support needs. If it is necessary to provide activities for children as an adjunct to, for example, conferences and training, CGT ensures that the conduct of the activities is covered by the safeguarding arrangements of collaborating bodies and that there is appropriate insurance cover.

CGT has a head office. It also has employees and occasionally takes on contractors and volunteers, most of whom work from the office and occasionally from their own home. When not using public transport, they use their own vehicles or lease cars provided by CGT on CGT's business.

While CGT has relationship with occupying churches (as well as individual members) and clients, those churches are each free standing, independent legal entities. As independent legal entities, these churches are wholly responsible for the conduct of their own affairs, and CGT has no power over them. They are therefore themselves responsible, so far as their own affairs are concerned, for protecting and safeguarding their own people and those to whom they minister. CGT has no responsibility in that protecting and safeguarding role, and, as stated above, if advice is given on such matters, CGT uses its reasonable endeavours to ensure that that advice is accurate and apt for the circumstances.

Safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs

In view of the character of its work, and the absence of any direct work with those under the age of 18 or with adults with care and support needs, it is the view of CGT that it does not itself need to have specific policies for safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs. However, it commits itself to keeping properly abreast of requirements and best practice with respect to the work of children and adults with care and support needs.

Harms to those with whom CGT works

Given the nature of CGT's activities, as summarised in the 'Content' section above and the fact that those activities normally take place on church premises or public commercial premises (e.g. educational establishments), both those with whom CGT works and CGT's own employees, trustees and volunteers, can be expected to be protected from physical risks by health, safety, fire and similar arrangements of the establishments concerned.

With regard to psychological, emotional or sexual risks to those with whom CGT works from CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers, CGT takes due care in selecting its employees, trustees and volunteers; and the people concerned are personally known to CGT's trustees or Chief Executive on appointment and/or are subject to check with others, including as a matter of character, both generally and with particular relevance to safeguarding. Where meetings take place, one to one, between persons of opposite sexes, it is required that they take place in public view or in public places such as coffee shops, in the interest of protecting both parties. CGT expects its employees, trustees and volunteers at all times to conduct themselves, including towards others, in a manner that would be expected of Christians in good standing, as required by Scripture. In conducting CGT's business, they should not engage in any form of bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), or similar conduct which takes advantage of their standing or link with CGT, nor should they engage in psychological or emotional manipulation. Failure in this respect will be treated as gross misconduct.

Harms to CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers

The chief risks to CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers arise from:

- a. Working alone, whether in the head office, in the field or at home or in other office premises used for CGT's work. CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers are asked to take all appropriate common-sense measures to reduce risk to themselves of all kinds, and in particular that one or

more other people know where they are expected to be at any time, so that such persons can make enquiries if the employee, trustee or volunteer were not to appear when expected. More detailed procedures are found in CGT's Lone Working Policy.

- b. Meetings, where meetings take place, one to one, it is required that they take place in public view or in public places such as coffee shops, in the interest of protecting both parties.
- c. Site visits, particularly in relation to health and safety risks and exposure to harmful substances. CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers are asked to take all appropriate common-sense measures to reduce risk to themselves of all kinds. CGT's Health & Safety Policy sets out more details and should be referred to.
- d. Driving on CGT business. CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers are expected to ensure that their vehicles are road worthy in all respects (including not travelling with loose equipment or other items in the driving compartment); not to use hand-held mobile telephones while driving; to wear a seatbelt at all times; to drive with caution, care, consideration and economy; to observe the requirements and advice of the Highway Code; and to allow sufficient time to travel to and from appointments on behalf of CGT (including observing speed limits). CGT's Driving for Work Policy sets out more details and should be referred to.

Reporting protection and safeguarding concerns

If CGT's employees, trustees and volunteers become aware of any matter relating to the conduct of CGT or the conduct of any other employee, trustee or volunteer of CGT, that is a cause for concern under the terms of this policy, it is the duty of the individual to raise the matter with the Chief Executive who will act as CGT's Safeguarding Officer (or, if it relates to the Chief Executive, with the Chairman, who will act as Safeguarding Lead Trustee). The matter will be handled with due sensitivity, especially to the interests of the person who raised the matter, and the trustees will take appropriate and proportionate action. Information will be disclosed to others (e.g. the police and/or local authorities) if there is a legal duty to do so and/or if the proper handling of the matter requires that.

If a CGT employee, trustee or volunteer becomes aware of any protection or safeguarding matter which lies within the responsibility of an occupying church, church client or other church, they should in the first instance raise any safeguarding matter with the church's safeguarding officer and any other matter with a representative of the trustees of the church. If the knowledge has been acquired in the course of work for CGT, the employee, trustee or volunteer should inform CGT of the matter, on the understanding that CGT may then have legal duties in the circumstances to disclose the information to others, such as the Charity Commission, other regulatory bodies and Government departments or funding bodies, and where there is evidence that criminal activity may have taken place, the relevant and/or safeguarding authorities as appropriate (for example to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Adult Safeguarding Board).

Decisions to report to external authorities will be fully risk assessed and kept confidential by the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Safeguarding Lead Trustee. Reporting will not be avoided on the basis that it may harm CGT's reputation or give rise to litigation and any concerns in relation to data protection will not act as a barrier to reporting, although will be carefully considered to ensure that the disclosure is made within the legal framework for so doing.

CGT renews its membership with Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS) which provides guidance and support relating to any safeguarding concern should this be required.

Commitment

CGT commits to:

- a. Developing a zero tolerance “safety culture” within CGT to create and maintain protective environments.
- b. Ensuring CGT staff, trustees and volunteers are fully cognisant of protection issues and ensuring all staff, trustees and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to report concerns and of steps to take/who to go to in order to report such concerns. Reporting procedures are to be provided within the staff handbook.
- c. Asking occupying churches to provide a copy of their safeguarding policy and encouraging them to ensure that their premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation to make their premises safe, welcoming and inclusive.
- d. Reporting safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns to external authorities and regulators, as appropriate, and in accordance with best practice. CGT will fully risk assess such reporting to ensure that making a report is not likely to cause further harm to the individual(s) to whom harm has already been caused but would always report if required.
- e. Ensuring that it is protecting people and that its policy remains suitably updated, being reviewed annually by a designated Board Committee for CGT’s Board’s approval.

Details of the organisation

Name of the organisation: Church Growth Trust Limited of 1 Manor Farm Barns, Baines Lane, Seaton, Oakham, LE15 9HP.

Telephone number 01536 201339 and email address enquiries@churchgrowth.org.uk.

Chief Executive and Safeguarding Officer: Giles Arnold; telephone 01536 647164, mobile number 07721 666660 and email address giles.arnold@churchgrowth.org.uk.

Safeguarding Lead Trustee: Neil Walker; telephone 01922 454771, mobile number 07725 880152 and email address neil.walker@churchgrowth.org.uk.

Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS): Sue & Paul Harrison; 0116 2184420 and email address contact@thecss.co.uk.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the trustees of CGT on 16 February 2023 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position:

Date: