



# Safeguarding Policy & Handbook

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Signed on behalf of the

Trustees of Liberty Church

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## Preface

Liberty Church has an active ministry to families, including children and young people. As part of our goal to provide spiritual care and teaching to everyone involved in the church, we provide a range of age-appropriate activities that include:

**Please note there are changes to the Children's and Youth Ministries due to Covid-19.**

- Classes are held for school-age children until they reach secondary school age. These usually run from the start of our Sunday meetings, providing age-specific activities and teaching.
- A youth group is available for young people aged 11-18. They meet in their own small group, with a youth service or social event held weekly.

We take seriously our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people involved with these activities and ministries, so we are committed to:

- Valuing and relating effectively to children and young people
- Promoting their social, emotional, and spiritual growth
- Ensuring good practice and recruiting suitable volunteers to work with children
- Supporting parents and families

Accordingly, we have established a Safeguarding Policy and Handbook that relates to:

- The supervision of activities and associated practice issues
- Dealing with concerns over a child's wellbeing or any suspected abuse
- Appointing children and youth workers
- Responding to offenders

We encourage every parent to volunteer to help in one of these ministries and to share both the privilege and joy of caring for the spiritual needs of our children. Before you get involved, please read this policy and accompanying guidelines carefully.

If you have any questions or concerns in relation to child protection at Liberty Church please speak to one of our Child Protection Coordinators or contact me at any time.

Pastor Mark Ritchie

## **Part 1. Our safeguarding statement**

Liberty Church recognizes the importance of its ministry with children and young people and the responsibility to safeguard those entrusted to our care.

We believe that every person has a value and dignity that comes from the creation of male and female in the image and likeness of God. As such, we have a duty to provide care and pastoral ministry and to protect people from harm, particularly those who are vulnerable.

### **We are therefore committed to**

- Select and train all those with any responsibility within the church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- Respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police, local authority or other relevant agency in any investigation.
- Work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him or her an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- Offer pastoral support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice and we will support our Safeguarding Coordinators as they respond to any concerns within Liberty Church. We also undertake to review this statement, policy and handbook regularly to ensure that it remains up to date.

Pastor Mark Ritchie

## People and Contacts

If you have any questions about safeguarding at Liberty Church or have concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, please speak to:

<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	Lucy Waterman	07869 705 070
<b>Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	<b>TBC</b>	

Initial queries, questions or concerns relating to this policy can be referred to:

<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	Lucy Waterman	07869 705 070
<b>Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	<b>TBC</b>	

The first point of contact for the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy to refer all child protection issues or concerns:

<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Marion Morgan	07814166410
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**Thirtyone:eight:** Liberty Church is a member of Thirtyone:eight and is subscribed to their helpline service on:

Telephone helpline	0303 003 1111
Email	<a href="mailto:info@thirtyoneeight.org">info@thirtyoneeight.org</a>
Postal address	PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ

## City and County of Swansea

If a referral needs to be made to the local authority (City and County of Swansea):

**Children's Social Services** 01792 635700 (office hours) / 01792 775501 (out of hours)

**Adult Social Services** 01792 636519 (office hours) / 01792 775501 (out of hours)

**Local Police:** You can reach the police child protection team by contacting:

**Police station (Swansea)** 01792 456999

## Other Helplines

Childline (for children)	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Stop It Now! Helpline	0808 1000 900

## **Part 2. Safeguarding Policy**

### **Our Commitment**

Liberty Church recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We have adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy and handbook in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

#### **We therefore undertake to:**

- Endorse and follow national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, including those relating to the recruitment of workers and volunteers.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for our workers and volunteers
- Regularly review this policy and the guidelines in the attached handbook.
- Ensure that our premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- File a copy of this policy and handbook with the Thirtyone:eight, notifying them of any amendments subsequently published.

The policy and practice guidelines set out in the handbook are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight.

## **Prevention: Safe Recruitment**

At Liberty Church we value the safety of our children and therefore have put in place the following measures to ensure that we have the right people working with our kids. These measures are as per the guidelines provided by Thirtyone:eight and can be found on their website and in their publication, 'Help...I want to recruit workers safely'.

The processes we have adopted for recruitment applies to all staff working with young people both in paid and voluntary positions and is as follows:

1. A clear job description outlining duties, roles and responsibilities will be developed for each position. This will include any qualifications or experience required.
2. An advertisement will be put on the website and in the announcements, providing a brief description of the role and stating Liberty Church's commitment to safeguarding and the need to complete Disclosure checks.
3. All Applicants will be asked to fill out the standard job application form, and complete the self-declaration form.
4. Phone calls will be made to at least one of the referees.
5. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview.
6. Based on all information gathered, a position will be offered to a successful applicant subject to a successful Background check.
7. Training Sessions will be arranged prior to commencement. This will include training in safeguarding.
8. A specified probation period will be put in place, after which a review will take place.

Only volunteers who have been formally appointed may take responsibility for children. Other adults may help with children's groups on an occasional basis but must be accountable to an appointed worker. If they are to join the ministry team on a regular basis they must be properly recruited as above.

### **Code of Practice**

We are committed to supporting all our ministry teams and volunteers, ensuring that they receive adequate guidance and supervision. Those working in relevant areas have been issued with a Practice towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is part of a more detailed handbook that sets out good practice guidelines for working in this area.

### **Other requirements**

In general children's workers will be members of Liberty Church, although this may be waived at the discretion of the leadership in exceptional circumstances.

The church reserves the right to exclude any individual from involvement in working with children or youth where they have concerns over their behaviour, lifestyle, attitude or spiritual commitment. This does not necessarily affect other involvement in the church.

## **Responding to concerns**

### **Understanding abuse and neglect**

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

Given this complexity and to safeguard those in our pastoral care, we have adopted the definitions and descriptions of abuse provided in the government guide 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010). These are set out in detail in the Handbook that follows with clear guidance for our staff and volunteers on possible signs of abuse.

### **Safeguarding awareness**

In addition to providing clear information and guidance in line with national standards and good practice, we are also committed to provide on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers. Our goal is to continue to develop a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues that will help protect everyone at Liberty Church.

Therefore, all our staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will receive induction training. We will also provide recognised safeguarding training to key personnel on a regular basis through Thirtyone:eight or other organisations.

We will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

### **Responding to allegations of abuse**

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which indicates that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed. Following referral to the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy and consultation as needed with external agencies, this response includes co-operating with the police, local authority or other relevant organisation in any investigation that may follow.

Under no circumstances will a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse; instead we have the procedures set out below that are intended to provide effective safeguarding practice.

The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. The leadership team will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy in that role. However, if you feel that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately you are free to contact an outside agency direct to make a direct referral or to seek further advice.



## **Referral Procedures**

1. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator who is nominated by the church leadership team to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
2. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator.
3. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight. Alternatively, where the matter is serious, contact Social Services or the police for advice and direction.
4. The Safeguarding Coordinator will contact Children's Social Services, Adult Social Services or take advice from Thirtyone:eight as required.
5. The Safeguarding Coordinator or their Deputy will then immediately inform the nominated leadership contact of Liberty Church and notify the church insurance company.
6. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those described above. A written record of the concerns and any actions taken will be prepared and kept in a secure place.
7. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

More detailed referral procedures are set out in our Safeguarding Handbook, Part 3 of this publication.

## **Pastoral Care**

### **Supporting those affected by abuse**

We are committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those in Liberty Church who have been affected by abuse. In addition to the general systems of pastoral care available to all church members, counselling by and the involvement of statutory or external agencies may also be appropriate. This can be discussed with Mark Ritchie on behalf of the church leadership team.

### **Working with offenders**

Where someone attending a church is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults, church leadership will offer pastoral supervision but also ensure that clear boundaries for that person that they will be expected to keep.

### **Contract and Accountability**

In accordance with the guidance provided by Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, church leadership would liaise with police, probation services and children's social care and other professional advisors on any issue relating to the safety of children posed by the individual.

Offenders would be asked to meet with church leadership to agree a written contract restricting their activities and ensuring accountability. This may include meeting regularly with others assigned to support them. If this is not adhered to, they may be barred from all church activities and the statutory agencies informed.

### **Restrictions**

Sexual abuse is addictive in nature so even where there has been genuine repentance by an abuser or offender; their involvement in church must not be connected with children or youth. This restriction applies to all activities where they have the opportunity to cultivate a relationship with a child. This includes serving refreshments, greeting people at the door, driving a minibus or attending family group activities. In addition they will not have access to the membership directory nor be permitted to be a key-holder for any church premises.

### **Confidentiality**

The highest levels of confidentiality will be maintained and details about an offender will be shared on a "need to know" basis. This will include only key individuals such as the church leadership and other relevant major responsibility holders. Any information will be conveyed in such a way as to promote understanding and support to the individual but ensuring that members do not allow children contact with the offender involved. Consideration may also be given whether, with the offender's agreement, the congregation should be told.

## Part 3.

### Safeguarding Handbook

#### Summary

This section provides more detailed guidance about safeguarding practice at Liberty Church. The Handbook provides step-by-step instructions and information on areas relating to how we aim to provide a safe environment for all church activities for children and young people.

The guidance is general and is written to cover a wide variety of situations and circumstances not all of which are relevant for every activity or ministry area in Liberty Church. However, it is designed to assist our many volunteers that work in our ministry teams to supplement their training and the supervision provided to their various roles.

- The **Code of Practice** provides guidelines for individual workers and group leaders with sections relating to good practice in maintaining a safe environment for children and young people.
- Also included is **Discipline Policy** so that parents aware of how behaviour will be handled and to provide consistent advice for everyone who is a volunteer or worker with our Children's Ministry team
- The sections **Defining Abuse** and **Signs of possible abuse** are drawn from national or government guidance designed to help individuals understand what is involved or what indicators may suggest abuse.
- **Responding to concerns** describes how to deal with issues relating to child protection or safeguarding, giving help on how to listen effectively and handle conversations appropriately.

The final part describes more detailed **Referral Procedures** for staff and volunteers to follow in specific circumstances where there is evidence or allegations of abuse.

## **Code of practice**

### **1. Guidelines for individual workers**

#### **You should:**

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity;
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful;
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult;
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet; toilet breaks should be organized for young children;
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around;
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child is aware of this and its nature beforehand;
- Ensure that children and youth are properly supervised during camps or other overnight activities and that accommodation is arranged that is age and gender appropriate.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around;
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed;
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group Leader. Sign and date the record;
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding coordinator.

#### **You should not:**

- Invade a child's privacy while washing or toileting;
- Play or initiate rough physical games;
- Play or initiate games that are sexually suggestive;
- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun;
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one child or group;

- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature;
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own or allow strangers to give children lifts
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children or drink alcohol when responsible for young people;
- Invite a child to your home alone or arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organized group occasions;
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;

### **Touch and physical contact**

Church groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people, while avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. However, all volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

Occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming her/himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded, and the information given to the church safeguarding coordinator.

Any physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs - not the needs of the adult. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate, also being sensitive to differences in culture, family background, individual personalities and any special needs.

Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

## **2. Additional guidelines for Team leaders**

### **In addition to the above the Team leader should:**

- Ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to;
- Where necessary, undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept;
- Keep any register and consent forms up to date;
- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present;
- Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally;
- Liaise with the church safeguarding coordinator over good practice for safeguarding;
- Always inform the safeguarding coordinator of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The safeguarding coordinator will then liaise with the representative of the church leadership

### 3. Guidelines for church activities for children and young people

#### Registration and consent

A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who regularly attends church groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address, date of birth,
- Emergency contact details,
- Medical information and details of any special needs, allergies or activities that the child is unable to take part in.
- Consent for emergency medical treatment,
- Notice of photographs and videos (if relevant).

A separate consent should be obtained for special trips away and all personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.

Consent needs to be given by a parent or person with parental responsibility.

#### Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0–2 yrs.	1 person for every 3 children
2–3 yrs.	1 person for every 4 children
3–8 yrs.	1 person for every 8 children
Over 8 yrs	1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children

- Each group should have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.
- Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

## **Venues and meeting places**

- Meeting places should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Electric sockets should be safe and, where very young children are involved, covered.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary and adults should be aware of the fire procedures.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and all accidents must be recorded in the accident book.
- Undertake a risk assessment in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

## **Online Safety**

1. Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
2. If using online or digital technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
3. Do not initiate a relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.
4. Always keep texts, emails, private messages and other forms of digital contact with individuals or groups for reference should the need arise.

## **Special needs**

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

#### 4. Transporting children on behalf of the church

The following general guidance applies where individuals are transporting children formally on behalf of the church.

**Informal arrangements such as parents choosing to share lifts or transport with other parents or others in the church remain the personal responsibility of those involved.**

Staff and volunteers should not be involved in organizing those arrangements, although they may suggest options for parents to pursue.

##### **Drivers**

- All those who drive children on church-organized activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years.
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Team leader and the church Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

##### **Private car**

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers.
- All cars that carry children should be roadworthy and comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional children should not be carried. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver is required to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

##### **Minibus or coach**

- Workers and helpers should position themselves on the bus or coach in a way that ensures adequate supervision at all times.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.

Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.



## **Discipline Policy**

At Liberty Church, we want to create an environment where our children and young people can learn, grow and flourish as we minister to them through our activities and teaching in the classroom. In order to achieve this, we must consistently communicate what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and provide appropriate direction, encouragement and discipline.

The final responsibility for dealing with a child's behaviour belongs to the child's parents. However, our workers and volunteers also need to exercise some degree of discipline as part of their role in leading and supervising activities.

This section gives an outline of our policy and some of the steps that may be taken to address any problems. These are guidelines to help ensure that all discipline serves the well being of the child and to act in his/her best interest as well as contribute to a positive experience for others around them.

### **Respect as an essential issue**

A central value of this policy is to help a child maintain the appropriate respect for God, for others and for the environment around them. When children act in a disrespectful manner toward adults, their peers, themselves or property, disciplinary action must be taken to address the behaviour.

### **Unacceptable behaviour could therefore include:**

- Disrespect shown to others, for example by rude, inconsiderate or aggressive language/actions
- Direct disobedience to a request from a supervising volunteer or worker or by demonstrating belligerent behaviour.
- Disruption by noise, actions, or attitude that interferes with the learning process in the classroom or the activities being undertaken
- Damage to the classroom environment, belongings or other property
- Other situations that are dangerous to the safety of the individual child or of those around them.

### **Exercising Discipline**

Physical punishment or intimidation is never a disciplinary option for workers and volunteers at Liberty Church. Instead, please follow the guidelines below that provide other options depending on the individual circumstances

## Guidelines for Discipline

- Clearly explain rules and expectations at the start of every session. Doing this properly will deal with most behaviour issues.
- Provide positive direction so that a child knows what they should be doing. For example, say, “let’s listen” rather than “stop talking”.
- Correct unacceptable behaviour that continues by directly asking the child to stop doing what he/she is going and again give clear instructions as to what they should be doing instead. Correction only becomes more difficult when the misbehaviour is left unchecked. Open defiance/aggressive behaviour calls for firm, immediate action.
- If misbehaviour continues, the ministry team leader should be made aware of the problem. Where possible the team leader will explain to the child what acceptable behaviour looks like and what the child needs to stop doing. It may be appropriate at this point to give the child a short (not lasting more minutes than the age of the child) time out. Depending on what is going on in the class at the time, the team leader may delegate this to another experienced worker who has some rapport with the child. Have the worker sit with the child. Explain clearly to the child why we need to have a break. “When you did this... it hurt...” Always speak about behaviour, not identity. (For example, phrases like, “You were naughty” are never ok!) Then say something like, “Let’s sit here and take a minute to breathe and calm down, lets think about how we are going to behave once we join our friends again”
- If misbehaviour continues, the team leader will call one of the child’s parents, explaining to them what has happened and what measures have been taken. It is then the parent’s responsibility to deal with the issue in the way they would usually address it at home. Inform the parent that their child is welcome to re-join the class when they are willing to participate in an appropriate manner. Note that it is the responsibility of the team leader to communicate with parents about behaviour issues.
- The volunteer and the Children’s Ministry team leader need to discuss whether contacting the parent(s) is warranted. If a parent is to be contacted, the volunteer observing the behaviour of the child should be available to explain the behaviour to the parent.
- In the case of serious misbehaviour such as biting or otherwise harming another child, a parent will be called immediately and asked to discipline their child. The child will not be allowed to return to the class for the remainder of the session, but will be told that we look forward to seeing them next time.
- If it becomes apparent that the child has no intention of changing continued misbehaviour, a meeting should be scheduled between the child, parent, volunteer and Children’s Ministry team leader. At this meeting the volunteer or team leader should explain why the meeting has been called and stating specific instances of unacceptable behaviour. The parents along with the volunteer and Children’s Ministry team leader should try to agree upon an appropriate course of action, involving a member of the church pastoral leadership if needed.

Each situation will require substantial discretion as to what is an appropriate response and the degree of seriousness of any problem will determine what specific steps are necessary.

## Defining abuse (Statutory definitions)

Child abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse described in the government inter-agency guide 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010), from which the following definitions are taken.

1. **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.
2. **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
3. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
  - Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
  - Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
  - Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
  - Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

## **Special topics**

Within these four broad categories, a wide range of abuse can occur. General descriptions are provided below for information:

### **Internet-related abuse**

Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, digital cameras, mobile phones and the internet generally in order to groom and abuse children. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages in social networking sites and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings. Children themselves can also misuse these facilities, sometimes inadvertently and sometimes with malicious intent.

### **Bullying (abuse by other children)**

There is no clear boundary between bullying and abuse, and a significant number of sex offenders are themselves minors. Young perpetrators of abuse are still children and are entitled to have their needs considered though steps may need to be taken to protect other children. Such cases should always be referred to the local authority children's social care service.

### **Children affected by gang activity**

Such children are at risk of violent crime and are therefore considered vulnerable. Risks include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs. Other risks include increased likelihood of involvement in knife crime, dangerous dogs, sexual violence and substance misuse.

### **Fabricated or induced illness**

Parents and carers can induce or pretend to observe symptoms in a child that lead to unnecessary investigations or treatment.

### **Deliberate self-harm (e.g. overdoses, cutting, misuse of drugs or alcohol)**

Local Safeguarding Children Boards vary in their approach to deliberate self-harm. It will always be appropriate to discuss such a case with the local authority children's social care. Help can also be obtained from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), through the general practitioner (GP) and/or direct access counselling services.

### **Domestic violence or abuse**

The terms 'violence' or 'abuse' are used interchangeably and carry the same meaning. Domestic violence is the abuse of adults within a household. It need not involve physical assault to count as violence, and the adults concerned need not be married or of opposite sexes. If there are children in the household they are witnesses to the abuse and are considered to be emotionally abused at least, whether or not they are in the same room. They may also be directly affected by abuse.

### **Parents who are themselves vulnerable adults**

It is not uncommon for the parents of children who are abused or neglected to be themselves vulnerable adults. Particularly common are problems of mental ill health, domestic abuse and substance abuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol), often in combination. Where someone with such a difficulty is known to be a parent with a child living with them, a referral to the local authority children's social care service may be required.

### **Female genital mutilation**

This is a criminal offence and any suggestion that it is being sought or has been carried out should be referred to the local authority children's social care service or the police.

### **Child trafficking**

Child trafficking is the bringing of children into the country, sometimes without proper immigration arrangements, for a variety of illegal purposes which can include domestic service, illegal adoption, benefit claims or prostitution. The police or local authority children's social care service should be contacted immediately if a church member comes across such a child.

### **Sexual exploitation and involvement in prostitution**

Children can be exploited by being given rewards in return for sexual activities. Internet and other media technology may be used in the abuse. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Regardless of the challenging behaviours they may display, exploited children should be viewed as victims of child sexual abuse, not as criminals.

### **Forced marriage and honour-based violence**

Disclosures of actual or possible forced marriage should not be treated as a family matter or be disclosed to family members. Local authority children's social care or the police should be contacted.

### **Complex (organized or multiple) abuse**

This is abuse which involves one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers may be acting in concert, or in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to abuse children. The Internet may also be used.

### **Spiritual abuse**

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but concerns harm caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, direction or discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries. Any of these could result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Such behaviour should be referred for investigation in cooperation with the appropriate statutory agencies.

**If anyone is uncertain whether or not abuse has taken place, he or she can contact the Safeguarding Coordinator for guidance on how to proceed or can get in touch with the local authority children's social care team.**

## **Possible signs of abuse**

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

### **Physical**

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them or that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc. or injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse (indicators that a child or young person may be self-harming)

### **Sexual**

- Allegations made concerning sexual abuse or excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing or a child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

### **Emotional**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, nervousness, frozen watchfulness, sudden obsessions or phobias
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour; running away/stealing/lying

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment or failure to grow; constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses or other evidence of inadequate care

## Responding to concerns

**Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own.** Always tell your group leader and safeguarding coordinator.

If you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, contact your group leader, the Safeguarding Coordinator or the local authority Children's Social Care Duty Officer.

**Dealing with child protection concerns requires care, listening and responding effectively** to conversations with children or vulnerable adults. There are some useful guidelines to follow:

- Do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk to the statutory agencies; always explain that you may have to get other people to help
- Stay calm, listen to the child attentively and maintain eye contact
- Allow the child to talk, but do not press for information or ask leading questions
- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why - try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand
- Reassure the child that he or she will continue to receive help and support
- **Do not** express surprise, shock or doubt that they are telling the truth

**Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible.** These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible. Try if possible to note from the register the child's full name, age, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign the record and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording. Ensure that all notes are kept in a safe place.

**If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure the safety of the child.** Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care. If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

**If you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused** speak to the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator immediately who will arrange to make an appropriate referral or get further advice.

**In general, this will involve:**

- Making an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care. From the first point of contact it will be clear that this is a child protection referral.
- Describing the event or disclosure and giving information about the child and family, for example the child's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP if known.
- Following up the telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the Local Authority web site) or letter that should be acknowledged within 48 hours.
- Where possible, the child and their family should be informed about and consent to the referral unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.

If you are involved in handling the incident or disclosure either as a volunteer or as the Child Protection Coordinator or Deputy, you will need to be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team. It is important to say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.



## **Referral procedures**

### **1. Where there is a concern about a child**

#### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of: deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- In these most serious of situations, do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

#### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

### **2. Where there is a concern about a vulnerable adult**

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Coordinator/ Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. Additional guidance is available from Thirtyone:eight.

### **3. Allegations about a person who works with children**

An allegation could be made against a church worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) that they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

If so, the Safeguarding Coordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker and making a referral to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Police investigation may also be necessary where a possible criminal offence has been alleged.

It is critical for the Safeguarding Coordinator to keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken, whether by the church or by statutory agencies and decisions reached.

Allegations that fall short of these criteria may nevertheless amount to inappropriate conduct, in which case church leadership will need to consider whether to handle this by way of advice, supervision and training, to use disciplinary processes, or a combination of these.

## **Part 4.**

### **Resources and Supporting Documents**

#### **Our forms and reports**

General consent: Youth & Friday Night Kids Club

Accident and incident report

Suspected abuse report

#### **Our recruitment documents**

Application Form to work with children and young people

Self-disclosure form

#### **Our related Policies**

Handling of DBS Certificate information

Recruitment of people with a criminal record

## Generations Youth

### GENERAL CONSENT FORM

I ..... (Parent/Guardian), give consent for

..... (Name),

...to attend Generations Youth outings from [start date] until the [end date]. This consent covers any travel on the bus, train, or in a leader's car, and attendance at events such as, but not limited to: Ice Skating, Bonfires, BBQs, Sporting Events and Laser Tag.

I understand that while involved, he/she will be in the care of the group leaders and other adults approved by the church leadership. While the staff in charge of the group will take all reasonable care of the youth, they cannot be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered by my child during, or as a result of the activity.

I give permission for my child and the youth workers to be in communication using telephone, email or the Internet for the purpose of arranging youth activities as well as ongoing encouragement and advice within the context of the Generations Youth Community. In an emergency and/or if I am not contactable, I am willing for my child to receive necessary hospital or dental treatment including an anaesthetic.

Yes/No (Please Circle)

Signed.....

Print Name: .....

Contact phone number: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

In Generations Youth we regularly take photos to be used on the walls in the church & on the Facebook and Instagram page as a way of building community and sharing with family some of the fun highlights from our times together.

I (*Parents Name*)..... give consent for photos of my child to be used as described above.

Signed.....

If you have any questions about this consent form, please speak with Rachael McLeay, the safeguarding coordinator for Liberty Church

# Friday Night Kids Club

## Child Registration

### About your Child

First Name:	
Surname:	
Date of Birth:	
Address:	
Post code:	

Please provide a brief description of any relevant medical conditions:


Please provide information regarding any allergies that your child may have:


### About you

Name of Parent	
Contact Telephone	
Mobile Number	
Email address	

### Second contact

Name	
Contact phone number	
Relationship to child	

### Consent

I give consent for my child to leave independently

☐ YES

☐ NO

I will collect my child from inside the church grounds

☐ YES

☐ NO

I give consent for any photos/videos of my child to be placed on the Church Website/Friday Night Kids Club Facebook page

☐ YES

☐ NO

## Accident or incident report

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The worker should discuss with the Child Protection Representative or nominated church leader what follow up action is necessary.

Day, date and time of the incident \_\_\_\_\_

Names, addresses and ages of those involved in the incident

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Where did this incident take place? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the group/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is normally responsible for group? (name, address and telephone number)

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Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident, if different from the above? (name, address and telephone number)

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Which other workers were supervising the group at the time of the incident? (names, addresses and telephone numbers)

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Who witnessed the incident? Normally only two witnesses would be needed. (names, addresses, telephone numbers, and ages if under 16).

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Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given)

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Have you retained any defective equipment?

☐ YES      ☐ NO      ☐ NONE INVOLVED (Please tick)

If so, where is it being kept and by whom?

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What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

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Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use    ☐ YES    ☐ NO    (Please tick)

Is the equipment still safe for your group to use?    ☐ YES    ☐ NO    (Please tick)

Who else do you need to inform? \_\_\_\_\_

Have they been informed?    ☐ YES    ☐ NO    (Please tick)

If so, when and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident/incident

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Form seen by Child Protection Representative/Church Leader

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Suspected abuse report

### CONFIDENTIAL

Name of church/group \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child/young person \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Reporting Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Time of incident \_\_\_\_\_

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

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Action Taken (including person(s) contacted)

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Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Recruitment forms

### Job Application Form

APPLICATION FORM FOR PAID OR VOLUNTARY WORK WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

We ask all prospective workers with children, young people and adults to complete this form. If there is insufficient room to fully answer any question, please continue on a separate sheet. The information will be kept confidentially by Liberty Church, unless requested by an appropriate authority.

#### 1. Personal Details

We will need to see birth/marriage certificates or documents regarding a change of name.

Full Name:

Maiden/Former Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived at the above address? \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

If less than 5 years, please give previous address(es) with dates:

From \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Previous Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Previous Address:

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Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about your Christian experience/experience in the church(es)/organisation(s) you have been involved in, including names, dates and detail of the areas of your involvement.

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Please give details of previous experience of looking after or working with children, young people or adults. This should include details of any relevant qualifications or appropriate training either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

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Have you ever had an offer to work with children, young people or adults, with care and support needs declined? YES / NO (circle as relevant) If yes, please give details below:

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## 2. Employment History

Please tell us about your past and current employment / voluntary work in the table below.

Employers Name and Address	Employed from (Date)	Employed to (Date)	Job Title and Description	Reason for Leaving

## 3. Are you currently working in any other care position in either a voluntary or paid capacity?

If yes please give details:

Name of the organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. References

Please complete the details below of two people who would be willing to provide a personal reference. If you are currently working, (paid or voluntary) one of these should be your present employer. You should also provide details of your leader of place of worship/line manager. We reserve the right to take up character references from any other individuals deemed necessary.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of worship, leader/ line manager**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Please would you complete the attached Self-declaration Form, place it in a sealed envelope with this form and address it to \_\_\_\_\_ with whom you are welcome to discuss any aspects of this procedure.

Please confirm that you understand and agree to a Disclosure Check should we wish to appoint you to a post involving working with adults and/or children. I confirm that the submitted information is correct and complete, I understand and agree to the conditions involving a Disclosure Check.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Self Declaration Form

Supporting documents

### Self-declaration form for a position requiring an enhanced Disclosure

#### Strictly confidential

As a place of worship/organisation we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 General Data Protection Regulations (from 25th May 2018) and all other relevant legislation, and the expectations of the Information Commissioners Office relating to the data privacy of individuals.

All applicants are asked to complete this form, detach it from the Application Form and return it, to the Recruiter detailed below, in a separate sealed envelope

To: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Recruiter/responsible person in place of worship/organisation processing Criminal Records Disclosure checks)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Conviction history

If you have never been convicted of a criminal offence or never received a caution, reprimand or warning then please select 'No' below. If you have been convicted of a criminal offence, or received a caution, reprimand or warning that is now spent according to DBS filtering rules\*, then please select 'No' below.

If you have an unspent criminal offence, caution, reprimand or warning (according to DBS filtering rules\*), please select 'Yes' below.

For exceptions to this legislation or for more information please refer to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the DBS filtering guidance\*.

Having read the above, do you have any unspent convictions; or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation/ pending prosecution?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (please tick)

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences and the dates. Please give details of the court(s) where your conviction(s) were heard, the type of offence and sentence(s) received. Could you also give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to the offence(s). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

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\*links can be found at [thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links](http://thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links)

## Police investigation

Have you ever been the subject of a police investigation that didn't lead to a criminal conviction?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (please tick) If yes, please give details below, including the date of the investigation, the Police Force involved, details of the investigation and the reason for this, and disposal(s) if known.

To your knowledge have you ever had any allegation made against you, which has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services/Social Work Department (Children's or Adult Social Care)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (please tick) If yes, please provide details, we will need to discuss this with you.

Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young people, vulnerable adults?

Please include any disciplinary action taken by an employer in relation to your behaviour with adults.

Yes ☐ No ☐ (please tick) If yes, please give details.

## Declaration

To help us ensure that we are complying with all relevant safeguarding legislation, please read the accompanying notes and complete the following declaration.

I (full name) \_\_\_\_\_ of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

consent to a criminal records check if appointed to the position for which I have applied. I have read the Standard/Enhanced Check Privacy Policy for applicants – [thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links](https://thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links). I understand how DBS will process my personal data and the options available to me for processing an application. I am aware that details of pending prosecutions, previous convictions, cautions, or bind-overs against me may be disclosed along with any other relevant information which may be known to the police

I agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing disclosure applications if I am convicted of an offence after I take up any post within the place of worship/organisation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or vulnerable adults and/or the termination of my employment.

I agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing disclosure applications if I become the subject of a police and/or a social services/(Children's Social Care or Adult Social Services)/Social Work Department investigation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or vulnerable adults and/or the termination of my employment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Those applying for work with children and/or vulnerable adults in positions which fall within the scope of regulated activity please confirm that you are not barred from working with children/vulnerable adults.

I confirm that I am not barred from working with children OR I confirm that I am not barred from working with adults at risk

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NB: Those applying for work with children and/or vulnerable adults in positions which fall outside the scope of regulated activity should not complete the declaration above.

## Legalese – attached notes

The Disclosure of any offence may not prohibit employment. Please refer to our Rehabilitation of Offenders / Model Equal Opportunities Policy.

As this post involves working contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults all applicants who are offered an appointment will be asked to submit to a criminal records check before the position can be confirmed. You will be asked to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (England & Wales) or through Access NI if you are in Northern Ireland or through Disclosure Scotland if you live in Scotland.

As the position is exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act this check will reveal details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as formal convictions not subject to DBS filtering rules. Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this position is exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Orders as applicable within the UK), and you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act with the exception of those that are subject to the DBS filtering rules.

In the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children or vulnerable adults within the church/organisation. This process is subject to a strict code to ensure confidentiality, fair practice and security of any information disclosed.

The DBS Service Code of Practice and our own procedures are available on request for you to read. It is stressed that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to appointment, only if the nature of any matters revealed could be considered to place children or vulnerable adults at risk.

As a place of worship/organisation we agree to abide by the Code of Practice on the use of personal data in employee/employer relationships under the General Data Protection Regulations effective from May 25th 2018, as well as the expectations of the DBS.

### Notes - Children and Young People

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 it is an offence for any organisation to offer employment to anyone who has been convicted of certain specific offences, or included on either of the two barred lists held by the Disclosure and Barring Service where the post falls within the scope of regulated activity (as defined by the DBS, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). An enhanced with barred list check must be completed. Those working with children and / or vulnerable adults in posts which fall outside the scope of regulated activity may still be eligible for an enhanced disclosure WITHOUT a barred list check.

The DBS offers both an enhanced check and for those engaged in regulated activity an enhanced with a barred list check. For applicants in Scotland and Northern Ireland, similar provisions apply.

DBS Eligibility from: [thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links](http://thirtyoneeight.org/dbs-links)



## **POLICY: Handling of DBS Certificate Information**

### **Background**

All organisations using the Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust and who are recipients of DBS Certificate information must comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice.

The Code places an obligation on such organisations to have a written policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS Certificate information. Such information may be received as hard copy and/or be electronically transferred but the Code applies to all DBS Certificate information regardless of format. The following principles contained in this policy ensure compliance with the Code in this respect

### **General Principles**

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Liberty Church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS Certificates and Certificate information.

This policy has been adopted by Liberty Church as a condition of the use of WCVA Criminal Records Unit as DBS Umbrella Registered Body countersigning DBS applications on our behalf.

## **Our Code of Practice**

### **Storage and Access**

Certificate information is kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. DBS Certificate information is never kept on an applicant's personnel file. Where DBS Certificate results are accessed electronically then access must be password protected.

### **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to or accessible by those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Certificates or Certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to, or to share electronic access information with, anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

### **Usage**

Certificate information is used only for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

## **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Certificate information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

## **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). If we use the DBS ebulk service, we only receive certificate information in paper format where anything other than a 'blank' DBS Certificate is recorded and this is disposed as above. Electronic certificate information is received as a record of permitted information that can be kept.

## **Record keeping**

We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a Certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Certificate, the name of the subject, the type of check requested, the position for which the check was requested, the unique reference number of the Certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

## **POLICY: Recruitment of People with a Criminal Record**

### **Background**

The Code of Practice published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997 advises that it is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed. This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders has been prepared in connection with that requirement and a copy is given to DBS applicants as part of the recruitment process.

### **Policy Statement**

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Liberty Church complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Liberty Church can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended) and where appropriate Police Act Regulations (as amended), Liberty Church can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

Liberty Church is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, volunteers and members and a criminal record is not an automatic bar to employment, instead the specific details of each case will be considered on an individual basis. In each case we will determine whether a candidate has the skills and experience for the post, taking account of the impact of the criminal record upon the needs of the role and the context of the church.

To help us make this assessment, applicants for relevant posts such as working with children and vulnerable adults will be asked to make a suitable statement of disclosure at the initial application stage.

An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences, disclosure or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or engagement as a volunteer.

All information received as part of this process will be treated as highly confidential and will be handled in line with our policy on **Handling DBS Information**.

Once a volunteer or worker, an individual's change of circumstance that affects their criminal record status should be notified in confidence to the DBS Officer so that the impact upon their suitability to undertake any current role in Liberty Church can be reviewed.

### **Information on changes regarding conviction information**

On the 29 May 2013, legislation\* came into force that allows certain old and minor cautions and convictions to no longer be subject to disclosure.

In addition, employers will no longer be able to take an individual's old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making decisions.

All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, will remain subject to disclosure. In addition, all convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will remain subject to disclosure, as will all convictions where an individual has more than one conviction recorded.

Applicants may refer to the guidance and criteria on our website which explains the filtering of old and minor cautions and convictions which are now 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers

*\* see Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013; and Police Act 1997 (Criminal Record Certificates: Relevant Matters) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013*