



Promoting Safeguarding

Preventing Abuse

Protecting All - children, adults and staff

Safeguarding Policy ***Children & Adults***

Heavitree-Pinhoe United Reformed Church

South Western Synod

(This model policy last updated in January 2021)

Introduction

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Heavitree & Pinhoe United Reformed Church, Exeter, Devon.

We acknowledge both adults and children's right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice.

We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.

We will implement, maintain, and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, who will have specific responsibilities for safeguarding, although we recognise that safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay, or ordained.

We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources, and training, to those who work with children and adults.

We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk.

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

All concerns and allegations of abuse, including domestic abuse, will be responded to appropriately, including referring to the Police and Social Care if necessary, either Adult or Children's.

We will co-operate with the Police, Children's and Adult's Services in any investigation, will follow multi agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

Our statement of safeguarding Principles is attached as Appendix 1

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. They can be contacted as detailed below *(please insert details)*

Name Mrs Lucy Anne Langmead

Contact phone number 01392 466589

Email address Lucy@Langmead-property.co.uk

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator can be contacted as detailed below *(please insert details)*

Name Mrs Barbara Farmer (Pinhoe)

Contact phone number 01392 466326

Email barbara459@talktalk.net

Aim and purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting the vulnerable, children adults and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children and adults within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events.

Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies:

- to those who attend our Church/place of worship;
- to our trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- to organisations which hire our building with agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent United Reformed Church good practice guidance.

Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy, and our procedures.

Children refers to those under the age of 18 years.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to beneficiaries of the charity, either adults or children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

Preventing abuse

The church will appoint safeguarding and deputy safeguarding coordinator(s) for children and adults. A role description is attached as Appendix 2.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with Children, appropriate records will be kept (see URC Record Keeping policy for further details), and adequate insurance will be in place for each event.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Obtaining Disclosure and barring checks wherever legally entitled to do so
- Taking up two references (not family)
- Interviewing candidates

Training in safeguarding will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as Appendix 3) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding personnel and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with children or adults must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this safeguarding policy as a condition of the letting agreement. If they have their own safeguarding policy they will be asked to provide a copy. If they do not have their own safeguarding policy, the church will encourage them to adopt one before agreeing to the hire (e.g. by referring them to www.safenetwork.org.uk for guidance on this). In some cases, the church may agree to a small organisation following the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

What are we protecting from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults. A copy of the definitions relating to children is attached to this policy at Appendix 4. The definitions of abuse in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 5

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. A list of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to children is attached at Appendix 6 and in relation to Adults at Appendix 7. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories.

It is essential to note that these are only **indicators** of **possible** abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for any of these signs and/or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

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

If a child, young person, or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- Stays calm and listen carefully.
- Reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else if a child is at risk of harm.
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Informs the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the deputy or the Synod safeguarding personnel)
- Makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record (using the template in Appendix 8). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police should be contacted.

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

- The concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies (see below for the relevant statutory contacts)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it using the template at Appendix 8. This record will be kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.

- The person about whom the allegation is must not be informed by anyone in the Church if it is judged that to do so would place a child or vulnerable adult at increased risk.

Statutory contact in the case of a Child

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) 0345 155 1071 or email concern to mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0845 6000 388

Statutory contact in the case of a Vulnerable Adult

Care Direct - 0845 155 1007 or

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0845 6000 388

If someone in the church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults

We will inform one of the Synod Safeguarding personnel, so that they can offer advice and support, and we will contact the relevant statutory agency.

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

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation, possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the church should follow this decision. *[Please insert local contact details for your LADO]*

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not work with children because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfied the harm test or has committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

In such cases a report will also be made to the Charity Commission as they deem such a referral as a 'serious incident' and require notification

Sources of advice, guidance, and support

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Jan Murphy 07875 454 064

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 24 hour helpline: Tel 0845 120 4550

(n.b. This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact
Aiyana Gardner-Houghton (Minister) minister@heavitree-pinhoe-urc.org
07825 127998

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

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

Review

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

Date of most recent review: 18.03.2021

Date of next review: March 2022

Signed: *Tony K. Langmead*

Joint Church Secretary

(on behalf of the church Elders)

Appendix 1

Heavitree & Pinhoe United Reformed Church

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the leadership of Heavitree & Pinhoe United Reformed Church

This church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults in need of protection, and to ensuring their well-being.

- We believe that all children and adults in need of protection should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our place of worship.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of children and adults in need of protection (for example as set out in the Human Rights Act 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults in need of protection.
- We recognise that domestic abuse affects both adults and children and believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.
- We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- Adults Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult in need of protection.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Local Authority Designated Officers have responsibility to deal with all allegations and concerns about people working with children and adults in need of protection whether they are interacting with them as paid or volunteer workers and whether they are lay or ordained.
- Safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.

We are committed to:

- Following relevant legislation, statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.

- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with relevant Voluntary and Statutory Agencies.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a place of worship all will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults in need of protection.
- Exercising proper care, following safer recruitment principles, in the appointment and selection of all those who work with children and adults in need of protection, be they volunteer or paid staff, lay or ordained.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the children and adults that we have contact with know that they are valued and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any abuse of children or adults in need of protection that we discover or suspect.
- Supporting all in our place of worship affected by abuse.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to children or adults in need of protection, implementing contracts of behaviour, whilst bearing in mind the overarching principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- If an assessment is made that someone poses an unmanageable risk to those that are vulnerable and in need of protection and could no longer safely attend our place of worship, we will ensure that they continue to be offered pastoral care and will also be signposted to appropriate agencies that could support them

Name: Revd Aiyana Gardner-Houghton
(on behalf of the church leadership)

Signed: *Aiyana Gardner-Houghton*

Date: 31/03/2021

Position held in the church: Minister