

# Safeguarding Policy



<b>This is the statement of general policy and arrangements for:</b>	<i>Kingsteignton URC</i>
<b>Overall and final responsibility for safeguarding is that of:</b>	<i>The Elders Meeting</i>
<b>Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to:</b>	<i>Robert Jennings</i>

## 1. **Aim and purpose of this policy**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised.

### **Who this policy applies to**

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

- All members of our church
- All those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- Our Trustees and Elders
- Paid staff (both internal and external e.g. contractors or consultants)
- Volunteers
- Organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

### **Principles underpinning the policy**

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

### **Definitions**

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

### **Duty of care and confidentiality**

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether children or adults.

We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

## 2. **Creating a safer culture**

We are committed to creating a safer culture in our church which will help us to prevent harm from occurring and provide an environment in which all can flourish.

We will:

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles
- Ensure all those working with children and/or adults at risk are given copies of relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in respect of data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings.

### **3. Ensuring safer activities**

Whilst it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, we are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible for activities both on and off church premises.

We will:

- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for buildings and activities
- Consider the implications of data protection and health and safety requirements for specific activities
- Carry out risk assessments for relevant activities or events
- Ensure adequate staffing for activities and that leaders have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and agree to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- Ensure the hirer's agreement is in place for other organisations using church premises
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer for complex or sensitive risks.

### **4. Recognising and responding to concerns**

We acknowledge that, although promoting Safer Culture and Safer Activities will help to protect all those in contact with the church, some concerns will inevitably arise and we are committed to responding well in such circumstances.

We will:

- Promote awareness of different kinds of abuse, other vulnerabilities and types of safeguarding concern
- Seek to create a 'listening culture' and help people develop listening skills to respond appropriately in situations where sensitive information is disclosed
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer as a minimum of any situations where involvement from statutory services is/may be required
- Share information with statutory services as appropriate and co-operate with them during any investigations
- Report any serious safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission and notify the Synod Safeguarding Officer

### **5. Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others**

Where allegations are made against individuals within the Church, we are committed to following all required investigative and regulatory procedures. We will work in collaboration with the Synod, wider Church staff, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations.

We will:

- Co-operate fully with any investigative or disciplinary procedures

- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer immediately on becoming aware of anyone in the church who may present a risk to others
- Work with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and contribute relevant information for risk assessments
- Alert the Synod Safeguarding Officer or statutory agencies to known breaches of a safeguarding agreement.

## 6. Supporting victims and survivors

The key principle underpinning our policy and practice in this area is that all those who have experienced abuse, whether recently or in the past 'will be listened to and offered the pastoral care and support they deem appropriate and relevant, irrespective of type of abuse, context, or when this occurred' (General Assembly policy statement 2021).

We will:

- Recognise that the Elders' meeting has responsibility for provision of pastoral care
- Be aware of local support services that people can be referred or directed to
- Ensure those in relevant roles attend appropriate training
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer about provision of appropriate support when necessary.

## 7. Key contacts

### Kingsteignton Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: Revd Robert Jennings Tel: 07947 607591 email: [robertjennings@gmail.com](mailto:robertjennings@gmail.com)

### Synod Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Claire Partridge Tel: 07875454064 email: [safeguardingofficer@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingofficer@urcsouthwest.org.uk)

**URC Safeguarding Office** This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer: email: [safeguarding@urc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urc.org.uk)

## 8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, updated as required and adopted by the church meeting.

**Date of most recent review:** August 2025 \*\*and change of contact details October 2025

**Date of next review:** August 2026

Signed by: Jessica Ashcroft Townsley [Minister]

(On behalf of the church Elders)

### Appendices attached:

- Signs of possible abuse
- Incident Recording Form



# Appendix

## Signs of Possible Abuse - Adults at risk

### Physical

- No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained falls
- Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- Signs of malnutrition
- Failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP

### Psychological

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes

### Sexual

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Foreign bodies in genital or rectal openings
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- Fear of receiving help with personal care
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

## **Neglect**

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

## **Financial or Material**

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle/pay bills
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property
- Rent arrears and eviction notices
- A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- Unnecessary property repairs

## **Discriminatory**

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic
- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect

## **Institutional**

- Lack of flexibility and choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Poor standards of care
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
- Poor record-keeping and missing documents
- Absence of visitors

- Few social, recreational and educational activities
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet
- Absence of individual care plans
- Lack of management overview and support

### **Domestic abuse**

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation - not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

### **Forced Marriage**

- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Not allowed to work
- Unable to attend business trips or functions.
- Subject to financial control e.g. confiscation of wages / income
- Leaving work accompanied
- Accompanied to doctors or clinic
- Self harm
- Attempted suicide
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Isolation
- Substance misuse
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education

### **Trafficking/Modern slavery**

- Signs of physical or emotional abuse
- Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
- Lack of personal effects or identification documents
- Always wearing the same clothes
- Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of law enforcers

### **Self-neglect**

- Poor environment - dirty or unhygienic
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene

- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- Very poor personal hygiene
- Unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury

**Appendix:**



**INCIDENT RECORDING FORM**

**Basic information**

Date and time of incident: .....

Date on which this report was written: .....

Your full name:  
.....

Full name of child, young person or adult concerned:  
.....

Address, if known.....

Date of birth, if known.....

Location / Situation:  
.....  
.....

Other people present:  
.....  
.....

**Record of incident:**

- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible - do not interpret what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.

Additional page:

**Who has been spoken to about the incident?**

Record below the names of all those with whom you have spoken about your concerns:

Local Church Safeguarding Coordinator : .....

Synod Safeguarding Coordinator: .....

Childrens / Adult Services: .....

Police: .....

NSPCC: .....

Parent/Carer: .....

Child: .....

Other (name, role and organisation): .....

.....

**Feedback and follow up actions:**

**Signed:** ..... **Dated:** .....

**Position held in the church:**.....

**Signed:** (person who wrote this report).....

**Dated:** .....