

## Safeguarding Policy



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# Contents

1.	Definitions .....	3
2.	Church services and responsibilities.....	3
3.	Mission statement.....	4
4.	Key roles and responsibilities .....	4
5.	Prevention: Understanding abuse and neglect .....	6
6.	Safer recruitment .....	9
7.	Safeguarding training.....	10
8.	Management of Workers.....	10
9.	Whistleblowing .....	11
10.	Responding to allegations of abuse .....	11
11.	Recording, data protection and information sharing.....	15
12.	Pastoral Care: Supporting those affected by abuse .....	15
13.	Pastoral care: Caring for offenders and those who may pose a risk .....	15
14.	Adoption of the policy .....	17
	Appendix 1 - Acceptable touch .....	18
	Appendix 2 - Appropriate Discipline .....	20
	Appendix 3 - Guide on what to do.....	21
	Appendix 4 - Accident and Incident Form .....	22
	Appendix 5 – Helplines/Websites.....	24

# 1. Definitions

1. **Safeguarding:** is the action that is taken to protect both children and adults from harm. This policy will cover our duty as an institution to safeguard both children and adults.
2. **Child:** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines a child as anyone below the age of 18.
3. **Adults with additional Care and Support Needs or Adults at risk:** This group was previously referred to as ‘vulnerable adults’ and although that term is used at times, the Care Act 2014 refers to ‘adults with care and support needs’. These are adults over the age of 18 who need care and support for their daily living. “Adults at risk” refers to any adult over the age of 18 who is at risk at any given time.
4. **Abuse and Neglect:** Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment, caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.
5. **Safeguarding Coordinator:** A designated person elected by the church leadership to be primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children and for putting into place procedures to safeguard children in the organisation.
6. **Workers/volunteers:** For the purpose of this policy, the terms worker and volunteer will be used interchangeably. This refers to any member of HERC that serves the church in a particular department for example, a Sunday school helper.
7. **Leadership:** When referring to leadership in the policy, we are referring to elders within the church.

## 2. Church services and responsibilities

Hackney Evangelical Reformed Church (HERC) seeks for the gospel to reach children and adults. This mission is predominately carried out through the operation of services to children and adults on the premises. There is also a Sunday school and holiday bible club on the premises which is attended by members of the church and the local community. Furthermore, pastoral care is also given in the form of visitation.

The elderly team visit and transport adults with care and support needs as part of their service to the church. Therefore, this safeguarding statement has been adopted in accordance with the Children Act 1989, the Care Act 2014, the Working Together to Safeguard Guidance 2018 and the United Declaration of Human Rights to ensure there are Safeguarding procedures and safe care practices within the church.

### 3. Mission statement

HERC leadership recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. HERC leadership are committed to encourage members to promote the welfare of others. HERC Leadership have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. The Leadership commit to:

- Providing on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensuring the church premises meet the requirements of the Children Act 1989, Care 2014 and other relevant legislation necessary to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring all members have access to the policy.
- Ensuring all members have appropriate safeguarding awareness by providing a safeguarding awareness session for new members and a yearly refreshers seminar.
- Overseeing the recording mechanism that will show all volunteers that have attended training sessions.
- Ensuring that all HERC members are aware their safeguarding responsibilities and are made aware of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and adults.
- Reviewing HERC's safeguarding policy annually or as and when required.
- Ensuring that all HERC members, workers are aware of who the safeguarding co-ordinators are.

### 4. Key roles and responsibilities

#### The Elder

**The elder has a wide variety of responsibilities. In relation to safeguarding, the elder's role is to:**

- ensure all workers operate and practice in line with the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures that comply with safeguarding arrangements.
- provide the necessary support and resources to co-ordinators and workers to keep children, young people and adults safe.
- keep safeguarding as a standard agenda item at the monthly leadership meetings to have an

overview of safeguarding concerns, issues, actions taken and any potential implications for future practice.

- provide support and resources, as necessary, to the co-ordinators and workers involved in managing safeguarding issues, as HERC acknowledges how stressful and emotionally demanding a safeguarding situation can be, for example providing therapy if required.
- review the HERC's safeguarding policy annually.
- ensure that all events are risk assessed by a designated safeguarding co-ordinator.
- Ensure that confidentiality protocols are respected and that information is share with the relevant agencies and personnel
- Ensure that safeguarding practices and procedures promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and adults
- Ensure that volunteers and congregants are aware of who the safeguarding co-ordinators are.

## **The Safeguarding Coordinators**

The lead safeguard coordinator will be the primary contact for safeguarding issues. There will also be a deputy safeguarding coordinator who may only be contacted in the absence of the lead coordinator or if a case is gender sensitive and in need of the opposite gender to be present. Both safeguarding coordinators should be aware and supportive of all safeguarding matters and equally approachable.

Safeguarding Co-ordinators are responsible for:

- responding to concerns and allegations of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter to the statutory authorities.
- liaising with other agencies and professionals as deemed necessary.
- collating and clarifying the precise details of an allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.
- following the safeguarding procedure.
- providing a full written record of any concerns, referrals, and accurate chronology, outlining communication and actions taken.
- ensuring that all records are maintained confidentially, securely and separately from other records.
- providing support and guidance to volunteers on safeguarding issues.
- ensuring that they attend any necessary meetings relating to safeguarding concerns as and when requested to do so.

## Safeguarding department

The Safeguarding department is responsible for:

- Reviewing the safeguarding policy, procedures and code of conduct annually.
- Supporting Coordinators organise training.
- Monitoring DBS and other relevant checks in order to safeguard.
- Ensuring that there is constant reviewing of the church's understanding of safeguarding.

## 5. Prevention: Understanding abuse and neglect

In order to safeguard those in our church we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

For adults, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

All people have a right to be safeguarded from abuse regardless of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Children, adults with support needs and those with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are particularly vulnerable.

A person may abuse by inflicting harm or 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 adult.

### Abuse against children

There are various forms of abuse as set out by the Working Together to Safeguard children guidance. This guidance categorises and defines abuse in terms of:

**Physical abuse:** including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or 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.

**Emotional Abuse:** 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It 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 involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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.

**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. Paying little or no proper attention to a child, young person, be it inadvertent, negligent or willful. Other types of Neglect include:

- medical neglect – failure to provide necessary medical and/or mental health treatment
- educational neglect
- emotional neglect – often defined as a relationship pattern in which an individual's affectional needs are consistently disregarded, ignored, invalidated, or unappreciated by a significant other

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 caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

### **Child sexual exploitation:**

Is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Extremism**

Goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

According to the Care Act 2014, Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and

- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

## **Types of abuse experienced by adults.**

**Physical abuse:** including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Domestic violence:** including psychological, physical, coercive, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

**Sexual abuse:** including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse:** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Modern slavery:** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Discriminatory abuse:** including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Organisational abuse:** including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Self-neglect:** this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

**Note:** that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable or at risk but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.



<b>Some factors that increase vulnerability include:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mental illness, chronic or acute.</li> <li>• A mental illness, chronic or acute</li> <li>• A sensory or physical disability or impairment.</li> <li>• A learning disability.</li> <li>• A physical illness.</li> <li>• Dementia.</li> <li>• An addiction to alcohol or drugs.</li> <li>• Failing faculties of old age.</li> <li>• Those who are homeless.</li> <li>• Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion.</li> <li>• Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood</li> <li>• A permanent or temporary reduction in physical physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma.</li> </ul>
<p>These factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.</p>	

## 6. Safer recruitment

HERC leadership will ensure all appointed workers will be trained, supported and supervised in accordance with Government guidance on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- there is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- those short listed have been interviewed in line with national guidelines.
- safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- satisfactory written or verbal character or employment references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate.
- for positions which require unsupervised contact with children, young people and adults with support needs, a satisfactory disclosure and barring check has been completed received from an authoritative body (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).

- qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- suitable training is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant will be supervised, as necessary, by an appropriate senior HERC member for an agreed period of time.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the HERC's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns

Under no circumstances will HERC consider offering a position of trust to anyone who is barred from working directly with children or adults with support needs.

## **7. Safeguarding training**

HERC leadership is committed to providing on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all church volunteers. All church volunteers who will be working with children will undergo foundational safeguarding training. Specific volunteers will be trained to support adults with care and support needs. Workers will be required to update their training every two years, which will be arranged by the safeguarding department. At present all safeguarding training is provided by Thirty- One Eight an independent Christian charity that specialises in safeguarding services.

HERC leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other concern.

All safeguarding coordinators will acquire up to date training necessary for them to carry out their role. HERC will ensure their safeguarding department has the necessary training that will equip them to review and uphold policies and procedures.

HERC leadership commit to promoting general awareness amongst members e.g. through general conversation, visuals, posters and the procedure for reporting concerns.

### **Codes of Conduct**

In order to promote safe environment with accountability, dignity and respect, HERC will issue a code of conduct to every volunteer. This will detail tolerable behaviour in the Church. The code of conduct will be reviewed yearly by the safeguarding department.

## **8. Management of Workers**

HERC leadership are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers by ensuring they receive support and supervision. Each department has a coordinator and lead deacon who oversees the workers. The deacons report and give feedback to the elder of the church. Furthermore, there are regular departmental meetings where group supervision and support will be given by the department coordinators and deacons.

All workers are encouraged to:

- understand the HERC's safeguarding policy and good working practice
- listen to children, young people and adults.

- respect boundaries and privacy of all children and adults.
- understand that as workers they are still at risk of allegation

Allegations against workers will be taken seriously and the “responding to allegations procedure” detailed later in this policy, will be applied accordingly. If the allegation is in relation to a child, an adult at risk or an adult with care and support needs, children services or adult services along with the police should be contacted before taking further action such as suspension or removed from duties until the outcome of investigation is known. During this time, the worker will be supervised closely without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to the attention of the safeguarding coordinator and the appropriate action being taken.

Suspension is not always the course of action, depending on the level of the allegation. However, serious consideration should be given to this where there is evidence to suggest that further harm may come to children or adults if the volunteer is not removed from duties, even if this is temporary. During any safeguarding investigation, the worker, if not removed from the premises, may have their responsibilities altered to minimise the risk of further harm or distress.

## 9. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which a person can voice their concerns, in good faith, without fear of repercussion.

As a place of worship, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all volunteers will report improper actions and attitudes, omissions or concerns to a co-ordinator or elder. Likewise, whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the safeguarding co-ordinator, deacon or the elder. Further details can be found in the complaints procedure and whistleblowing policy in due course.

## 10. Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or church member carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

All members should listen and note the concern and report it as outlined in the procedure below. All members should follow the procedure below:

- Note the concern
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

**Name:** Floretta West

**Tel:** 07850 882246

**Email:** Floretta.west@btinternet.com

The above is nominated by the Leadership 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.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

**Name:** Remi Adekunle

**Tel:** 07508 912029

**Email:** rl.adekunle@gmail.com

In all cases members can also report concerns directly to the appointed elder.

**Name:** Kehinde Omotayo

**Tel:** 07508 051818

**Email:** kehinde@erc-hackney.com

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding co-ordinators, and the elders then the report can be made in the first instance to: **thirtyone:eight** who have a 24hr helpline Tel: **0303 003 1111**. Thirty- one:eight will provide advice and if necessary make recommend the alternative approaches below.

Alternatively, if there is an immediate risk of harm or danger to a child or adult with support needs and the above options are not adequate, contact children services, adult services or the police (where relevant).

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the lead coordinator, the absence of the safeguarding co-ordinators should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

It is the right of any individual as a citizen to seek advice from thirtyone:eight and follow the advice provided. However, this procedure is available to support HERC members to carefully deal with safeguarding matters.

If, however, the individual, with the concern, feels that the safeguarding co-ordinators and/or elders have not responded appropriately to their concern, they are free to contact an outside agency directly for advice.

**Name of local authority:** Hackney

**Hackney Social Services**

**Tel:** 0208 356 5500

**Email:** [Fast@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:Fast@hackney.gov.uk)

**Out of hours Tel:**0208 356 2710

**Website Address:** <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/children-and-families>

**Adult Social Services**

**Tel:** [020 8356 6262](tel:02083566262)

**Email:** [access@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:access@hackney.gov.uk)

**Website Address:** <https://hackney.gov.uk/get-social-care-support>

**Police Protection Team Tel: 999**

#### **Safeguarding co-ordinator's response to concerns:**

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns will be made by the safeguarding co-ordinator in accordance with these

procedures and kept in a secure place.

- Ensure information is shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the relevant statutory agencies, if necessary, who have a legal duty to investigate.

### **Detailed procedures 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, in cases of deliberate injury, concern about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact thirtyone:eight for advice and discussion and children services and or the police.
- 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.
- where there are concerns, around poor parenting, encourage the 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 with parenting, offer to accompany and support them. The elder may also offer support. In cases of concern, if parents still fail to act in the best interest of their child, contact thirty-one eight and/or Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services or the police.

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

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

- contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team.
- **NOT** speak to the parent/carer or anyone else except those listed above.
- 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.
- remain with a child until appropriate actions have taken place to maintain their safety.

### **Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:**

**Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.**

If there is concern about any of the above, the safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- if appropriate, contact the police. Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse for adults with care and support needs. Alternatively, thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- if the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support.
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

### **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people**

If an accusation is made against a worker (a volunteer or paid member) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the safeguarding co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will:

- liaise with external agencies in regard to the suspension of the worker.
- Make referral to a designated officer, formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- If required make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.
- The coordinator may seek advice and instruction from thirtyone:eight and take appropriate action as necessary.

### **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs**

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for 'no further action' and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

## **11. Recording, data protection and information sharing**

When a concern is reported to the safeguarding co-ordinator this should be recorded by the coordinator under the safeguarding case file. The record should include key contact details, dates of when the information became known and the nature of the concerns. The record should include ongoing actions with dates, other key documents on the case file (e.g. observation notes, reports, consent forms etc.) and the case closure date.

The safeguarding case files, whether electronic or paper, must be stored securely by the safeguarding coordinators. The lead coordinator will be responsible for identifying who should have access to the record. Records in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should be maintained in accordance with the HERC's retention guidance. Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as what is called 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes specific reference to processing data in relation to the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk and allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent.

## **12. Pastoral Care: Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care and working with statutory agencies to provide support to all who have been affected by abuse both in and outside of the church jurisdiction.

This can include:

- follow ups with the elder following the incident or a selected buddy.
- referrals to external agencies such as counselling or support groups.
- arrangements for those affected to feel safe and secure to worship.
- if there is long term physical or mental health consequences, support the affected party through necessary treatment.
- Access to resources for survivors.

It is our aim to ensure all those affected feel safe to worship within the church and feel well supported by the leadership.

## **13. Pastoral care: Caring for offenders and those who may pose a risk**

When someone attending HERC is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults; the HERC Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. HERC will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep without exception. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and in consultation with appropriate parties.

This means that there are likely to be those with criminal convictions for sexual offences, violent offences and other forms of abuse attending the church. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but there are sound reasons for considering that they still might pose a risk to

others. In such cases, their position in the congregation will need to be carefully and sensitively assessed to decide what arrangements are put in place to ensure that these risks are mitigated. In these circumstances it is not only about monitoring individuals but offering support to lead a fulfilled life. As such, the church has a crucial role in contributing to the prevention of future abuse.

### **Actions and Boundaries:**

The safeguarding coordinator should be made aware within 24 hours, if possible, if it is learned by any leader, or member that any of the following people worship in HERC.

- 1. Anyone placed on the sex offenders register, with a violent offence or conviction and/or who is barred from working with children or adults by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 2. Anyone who admits to being an abuser including non-recent abuse/struggling with thoughts of abusing.
- 3. Anyone who is subject to an investigation for suspected abuse, including possession of indecent images of children, and/or is suspended from their usual role.
- 4. Anyone who may pose a risk to other church members due to their behaviour, irrespective of their criminal status.
- 5. Anyone who has an allegation of abuse against a child or adult has been investigated, but the matter has not proceeded to court, or the person has been acquitted, or the matter is currently the subject of proceedings in the criminal or civil courts, but the person may still pose a risk.
- 6. Anyone who has had a complaint or grievance that has been received alleging inappropriate behaviour, which is not criminal.
- 7. Anyone where there have been concerns about alleged abusive behaviour to a previous or current partner.

The safeguarding coordinators and elder will determine the appropriate action to be taken to best safeguard the congregation, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case. The leadership team will provide the known respondent with the following:

- a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to monitor the respondent.
- an agreement to maintain confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement, and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or adult.
- agree with the respondent that he/she worship elsewhere if his/her victim or their family worship in the same church.
- ensure the respondent is never offered an official role in the church or trusted position for example Sunday school helper, or any in which a child or adult with care and support needs, may as a result, place trust in that person.
- consider whether, with the person's agreement and that of any statutory authorities involved, the congregation should be informed.
- meet with the respondent to draft a Safeguarding Agreement, setting out the parameters of expected behaviour in and outside of the church setting.

HERC leadership alongside the safeguarding coordinator will undertake a **risk assessment** and the formation of a risk management plan known as a **safeguarding agreement**.

The Safeguarding Agreement may include the following elements:

- Attend designated services or meetings only.
- Sit apart from children.
- Stay away from areas of the building where children or adults with care and support needs meet.
- Only attend a house group where there are no children or adults with care and support needs.



- Decline hospitality where there are children or adults with care and support needs, in attendance.
- Never be alone with children or adults with care and support needs.
- Never work or be part of a mixed group with children or vulnerable adults.
- Take no role/office in the church which gives him/her status or authority as others.

**If the agreement is breached by the offender, this could result in termination of membership.** If a 'disturbance' is anticipated when asking the member to leave the premises at the time of breach, the police should be notified.

**Safeguarding Agreements will be monitored and reviewed as frequently as necessary. The contents of Safeguarding Agreements will differ according to circumstance.**

## **14. Adoption of the policy**

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: Elder of the church

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Position : Safeguarding Coordinator (Lead)

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

# Appendix 1 - Acceptable touch

Children and adults often need encouraging and sympathetic contact. Some physical contact with children, more-so younger children, is appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Always ask permission or make a suggestion.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Touch should occur in public. For example, a hug in public as opposed to a private room.
- Touch should always be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome upon request (if appropriate) and generally initiated by the child, not the volunteer/church member.
- Do not engage any physical contact that is or could be interpreted as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- ✓ You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs, if you feel comfortable with this.
- ✓ You can allow people you support to hold your hand or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- ✓ You should discourage people from touching your face or other areas of your body. You can offer your hand instead.
- ✓ You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- ✓ You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Church volunteers and members at all levels will be responsible for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. Challenge will be encouraged and promoted amongst all members in our church in order to protect our congregation. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Where there are children activities, in order to minimise risk of abuse or allegations, HERC will adhere to Ofsted regulations in relation to ratio. At present this is as follows:

0 – 2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2 – 3 years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4 – 8 years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9 – 12 years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8
13 – 18 years	1 adult to 10 children	1:10

Each group should have at least two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. In this case, a health and safety risk assessment will take place along with attendance and registration forms.

### **Activities with Adults with care and support needs.**

Visiting adults with care and support needs is a frequent activity. This work is carried out by the elderly department, the leadership and the deacons. Acceptable touch should also take place in these circumstances which requires accountability. Furthermore, at times, the volunteer can be at risk, for example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour.

In order to minimise risk;

- If possible, undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit if the adult is not well known or a member of the church and if there are prior concerns.
- Visit with another church member to increase accountability.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well.

## Appendix 2 - Appropriate Discipline

All HERC volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour may include correcting the child verbally, removing an item, withholding a certain privilege or activity, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time. During correction, a child should never be removed from the public presence and never outside of the sight of others.

Steps of for correction might include (depending on the age of the child):

- (1) removing the child from the situation or problem.
- (2) pointing out the problematic behaviour; talking to the child about his/her fault and need for Christlike conduct and behaviour.
- (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity
- (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended child/children when appropriate.
- (5) Shouting and hitting are not appropriate for volunteers and children.
- (6) volunteers may use a firm tone of voice when appropriate. Volunteers should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.
- (7) volunteers, where possible, should directly call out behaviour and not label children. For example, "That was not nice" over instead of "you are a naughty girl".

Volunteers may remove a child (e.g., having a tantrum) to a safer part of the room if they have had the relevant training that allows them to safely do so. If necessary, the child may be removed from the room.

If a child's behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, the volunteer may have to call for the parent/carer.

If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehaviour, the parent/carer should be called immediately so that the child can be removed.

Volunteers are allowed to physically restrain a child if he/she is physically endangering themselves or other children, but they must be trained in doing so. Should this occur, the incident must be reported to the co-ordinator, leading deacon and /or elder. A meeting may take place with the parent/carer.

## Appendix 3 - Guide on what to do

Everyone and every member of HERC has a part to play in helping to safeguard children, adults with care and support needs and adults at risk within the life of the church:

- if the behaviour of a child or adult at risk gives any cause for concern.
- if an allegation is made in any context about a child or adult at risk being harmed.
- if the behaviour of any individual towards children or adults at risk causes concern.

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to and acknowledge what is being said.</li> <li>• Try to be assuring and remain calm.</li> <li>• Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. For example, inform co-ordinators.</li> <li>• Try to give them a timescale for when and how / you/the co-ordinator will contact them again.</li> <li>• Act – do not ignore the situation.</li> <li>• Be supportive.</li> <li>• Tell them that they're right to tell you.</li> <li>• Be honest.</li> <li>• Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not promise confidentiality</li> <li>• Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval.</li> <li>• Do not minimize what is being said.</li> <li>• Do not ask probing or leading questions or push for more information.</li> <li>• Do not offer false reassurance.</li> <li>• Do not delay in contacting safeguarding co-ordinator.</li> <li>• Do not contact the alleged abuser.</li> <li>• Do not leave the child to return to an alleged abuser.</li> <li>• Do not investigate the incident any further.</li> <li>• Never leave a child or adult at risk waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be.</li> <li>• Do not pass on information to those who do not need to know – not even for prayer ministry.</li> </ul>

# Appendix 4 - Accident and Incident Form

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The worker should discuss with the appropriate leader for the group/activity what follow up action is necessary.

Day, date and time of the incident

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Names, addresses and ages of those involved in the incident

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Where did this incident take place?

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Name of place of worship/organisation:

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Name of the group:

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Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident?

(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? (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and ages if under 16)  
Normally only two witnesses would be needed.

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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 circle)

If yes, 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 circle)  
Is the equipment still safe for your group to use? YES NO (Please circle)  
Who else do you need to inform?

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Have they been informed? YES NO (Please circle)  
If so, when and by whom?

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Have you reported a serious/significant accident or injury to the Local Authority environmental health department? YES NO (Please circle)

Signature of person completing the form

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

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

Signature of person in charge of the group.

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

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

# Appendix 5 – Helplines/Websites

**Police** – 999

**NSPCC** for adults concerned about a child – 0808 800 5000

**Childline** for children and young people – 0800 1111

**Action on Elder Abuse** helpline – 0808 808 8141

**Haven** - 020 3299 6900 (support for survivors abuse) <https://www.thehavens.org.uk/>

**24-hour National Domestic Violence** helpline – 0808 2000 247

**NAPAC The National Association for People and Abused Children** offers support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse – 0808 8010331

## **Sources of support for victims and families of abuse**

**The Survivors Trust** – <http://thesurvivorstrust.org>

**Support Line** – [www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape\\_sexual-assault.php](http://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape_sexual-assault.php)

**Victim Support** – [www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/childhood-abuse](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/childhood-abuse)