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of Great Britain
Encouraging Missionary Disciples



Safeguarding children and young people in the local church



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Safe to Grow was first published in 1994.

This is the second major revision of *Safe to Grow* since its first publication. It incorporates changes in legislation and safeguarding practice, and builds on the experience of local churches in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures.

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Acknowledgments

A publication of this nature inevitably draws upon the wisdom and insight of many. This edition of *Safe to Grow* may look and feel very different to the first edition published in 1994 – it is certainly much longer! Nonetheless the key principles have not changed. We acknowledge our indebtedness to those who pioneered *Safe to Grow* within the life of our denomination, at a time when many questioned its necessity and resisted the need for what was a change of culture in the way in which we work with children and young people in the church.

Baptist churches have not been on this journey alone. All other Christian denominations have shared the journey with us. There has been considerable cooperation in the development of policies and procedures. Denominations have worked closely together in responding to government initiatives, such as the Criminal Records Bureau. This cooperation has led to the establishment of the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding and the Churches' Safeguarding Forum. The Baptist Union is fully involved in these initiatives.

Anyone comparing and contrasting denominational policies and guidelines will very quickly see that they are mutually dependent on each other – we have all drawn on one another's insights as each new edition is published. We would wish to acknowledge our dependence in developing this edition of *Safe to Grow* on the work of our ecumenical partners and other Christian organisations working in this field.

This publication also draws upon the work and insight of many secular agencies and organisations that specialise in safeguarding policy and procedures. Faith communities have been slow to recognise the need to implement safeguarding policies and have been in a game of 'catch up' with other secular bodies. We recognise that we have much to learn from these bodies about what it means to show true love and care to children and young people.

In acknowledging those to whom we have tried to listen in putting together this publication, we confess that this publication is necessary because for too long we have not been ready and willing to listen to the voices and the lives of children and young people who have been seeking our support and protection. It is for their sake that these guidelines are offered to our churches.

FOREWORD

I am delighted to welcome this new edition of *Safe to Grow*. Churches have a joyful Christian responsibility to welcome children, and to do so within an atmosphere of safety and security. It's a wonderful fact that our churches continue to be visited by tens of thousands of children every week. Jesus was always eager to show the importance of children and we need to renew continually our commitment to be his faithful followers by opening to them our hearts and our church buildings.

When *Safe to Grow* first emerged I remember many people complaining about the need for us to have the guidelines. It was often explained to me that such guidelines were only needed by people in large towns and cities. Villages and other close communities wouldn't need such guidance because of the level of trust that they had built up over the years. Sadly it was in a small village church, that I knew very well, that I first saw a Sunday school teacher being sent to prison for abusing a small boy in his class. We need to wake up and recognize that abuse can happen anywhere, and so every single church needs to take active steps to ensure the highest standards of care. It is always tragically sad when things go wrong, but it would be daft for it to come as a surprise to any of us.

Our commitment to *Safe to Grow* lies in the fact that we are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is Good News for everyone. We want to say to our communities that children are safe with us, and that they will be given welcome and respect because long before they were special to us, they were special to God. This publication challenges the ways in which we work, not out of a desire to be officious or meddlesome, but simply because it is our Gospel responsibility to ensure that we are always giving of our very best to those whom we welcome amongst us, and especially the most vulnerable.

I want to place on record my personal thanks for all those who have worked so hard to compile this publication. This edition has built upon the excellent work of the previous editions, and I am conscious of the continual commitment to update the information and guidelines that are provided. This has been extremely demanding work and has been the result of careful collaboration by many people over a number of years. To each one of you I offer you my heartfelt thanks and the gratitude of the Baptist family.

Children are welcome! That's the message, and we need to make every effort to ensure that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we live that out with our lips and in our lives. I have no doubt that this new edition of *Safe to Grow* will do much to encourage that to happen.

Jonathan Edwards

General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain April 2011

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Part 1: Introduction



1 Introducing the new edition of *Safe to Grow*

1.1 The purpose of *Safe to Grow*

Safe to Grow is written as a resource book to enable local churches to adopt policies and procedures that will safeguard all children and young people in their care. *Safe to Grow* is not itself a safeguarding policy. It is rather a set of guidelines or a toolkit that the local church can use to establish and implement policy and practice in its own context.

1.2 Why should churches have safeguards?

In England and Wales the law states that people who work with children have to try to keep them safe. This is set out in The Children Act (1989) & (2004) and features in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the UK is a signatory. This convention sets out the rights of children to be free from all forms of abuse and harm. The UK government, Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authorities also provide guidance for all agencies working with children and young people. For example:

- › *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010) – covering work in England (see p17)
- › *Working Together under the Children Act* (Welsh Assembly Government 2006) (see p17)
- › Local Authorities may also have their own guidance, setting standards for safeguarding policies and explaining how agencies will co-operate locally to safeguard children and young people

Making sure that your church has safeguards in place:

- › protects children and young people from harm and abuse
- › protects workers, both paid and voluntary, from false allegations
- › enables staff and volunteers to know what to do if they are worried
- › shows that your Church is responsible and has pride in its work.

Safeguarding children is vital for all charities,

including churches. Charity trustees/deacons (see p14) have a duty of care towards the children with whom they have contact. Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but it also enhances the confidence of trustees, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public.

1.3 The marks of an effective safeguarding policy

What are the marks of an effective safeguarding policy?

- › the whole church community will be committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and young people
- › there will be a culture of good practice and risk awareness in the church's work with children and young people that creates a safe environment for children and young people to grow and develop
- › all of those working with children and young people in the church will work within an agreed code of conduct
- › procedures will be in place to prevent unsuitable people from holding a position of trust in organisations and activities involving children and young people
- › those working with children and young people will be alert to signs that children are being harmed and will know what action to take whenever concerns are raised about the welfare of a child or the conduct of an adult towards a child.

1.4 Who is *Safe to Grow* for?

Safe to Grow is for all churches, whether or not the church has any formally organised work with children and young people. Because children are welcome to attend any church (at least we hope so!) all churches should have a safeguarding policy in place in readiness for the day when the new family unexpectedly arrives one Sunday morning.

An example of a policy statement and procedures that might be adopted by a church currently with no children attending can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website, www.safetogrow.org.uk

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1.5 What is different about this edition of *Safe to Grow*?

Those familiar with previous editions of *Safe to Grow* will notice some immediate differences.

- › We have adopted a change in terminology. Where previous editions used the term ‘child protection’ this edition has adopted the term ‘safeguarding’ which has a broader meaning than ‘child protection’. The term ‘safeguarding’ is explained on page 13.
- › We have written this edition much more explicitly in the form of a guide to help churches to write their own policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children and young people. All previous editions have been described as guidance for churches in adopting safeguarding policies. However the form of the publication has not always made it clear that churches must adopt procedures to suit their own context. We are concerned that a number of churches have thought that it is sufficient simply to state that they have adopted *Safe to Grow* as a statement of their policy and procedures. Others have recognised that *Safe to Grow* cannot be used in this way, but have not found it easy to understand what they need to do for themselves. The form and structure of this edition of *Safe to Grow* aims to address this issue.
- › As a direct consequence of this we have amended the model policy statement that is offered to churches so that each bullet point in the policy statement is directly related to a set of procedures which describe the way in which that aspect of the policy will be implemented in the church. Each bullet point in the policy statement is also taken up in a separate chapter in *Safe to Grow* outlining the matters that need to be included in the procedures adopted by the local church.
- › We have sought to give greater clarity to the procedures that churches should follow in the event of suspicions arising or allegations being made concerning the well-being of a child or young person.

- › We propose that new terminology is adopted for the significant roles that need to be filled in the church in order to implement a safeguarding policy. In past editions we have used terms such as ‘children’s advocate’ and ‘responsible person’. We propose that new titles are used in future by churches (see 8.4, p27). This is an attempt to bring some consistency across our churches.
- › This edition takes into account government initiatives regarding the barring of unsuitable people from working with children and on-going discussions in government to introduce changes to the criminal records checking regime (see Chapter 5, p18ff).
- › New areas are addressed, such as electronic communication between children and adults (see 13.6, p61) and bullying (see 15.2, p78).
- › We have introduced a system to denote those parts of this guidance that have ‘statutory’ force (in other words are a legal requirement) and those parts that are considered to be ‘good practice’ (see 1.7, p7 opposite). As will be explained at greater length, this does not mean that the ‘good practice’ guidelines are optional.
- › This edition of *Safe to Grow* will also be available on-line which will enable the guidance to be up-dated in line with new developments and initiatives. Go to www.safetogrow.org.uk

1.6 What should churches do?

Safe to Grow has always encouraged churches to conduct an annual review of and re-commitment to their safeguarding policy. With the significant changes that are being introduced we strongly encourage each church to take the opportunity of this new publication to carry out a more thorough review of its Safeguarding Children Policy.

We would encourage each church to

- › adopt the new proposed form of policy statement
- › review and adapt (or write for the first time) their own safeguarding procedures
- › adopt the new terminology for those responsible for overseeing and implementing the church’s safeguarding policy.

1.7 Legal requirements and good practice requirements

One of the frequently asked questions about *Safe to Grow* is, “How much of this is a legal requirement?” Most of the time when this question is asked churches are not trying to absolve themselves of their responsibility with regard to the safeguarding of children, but are trying to clarify where they stand with regard to the law.

The answer to this question is complex but we have tried to adopt a system in this edition of *Safe to Grow* that seeks to offer some clarification.

Legal duty



There are some areas of legislation which directly impact upon churches and which mean that a legal duty has been created or a criminal offence would be committed if a church does not comply with the legislation.

For example, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 it is a criminal offence knowingly to appoint a person to work with children and young people who has been barred from working with children (see Chapter 5, p18ff).

Good practice requirements

Much of what is contained in *Safe to Grow* would come under the definition of ‘good practice’. This does not mean that the guidance should not be taken seriously. In many cases good practice is supported by clear government guidance. While churches would not be committing a criminal offence if they do not follow the good practice guidance there could be circumstances in which churches may be deemed to have been negligent. Along with all other charities and voluntary organisations, churches have a general ‘duty of care’ to those they are seeking to serve. Even if not covered by specific legislation the good practice outlined here is an implementation of that general duty of care and therefore needs to be considered seriously by churches.

However, good practice guidance can be sub-divided into different categories.

Any good practice requirements that are indicated



with this symbol are considered to be non-negotiable. In most cases the good practice in question will be based on clear and explicit guidance that is to be found in government publications. While these publications are not enshrined in legislation they carry a considerable weight of authority.

An example of this would be the requirement to adopt a policy statement on the welfare of children. It would not be a criminal offence for a church not to adopt a Safeguarding Children Policy. However a church would be ignoring explicit guidance from the government if it refuses to do so. If this results in children being placed at risk the trustees/deacons of the church would be answerable for their negligence.



Some good practice requirements have been marked with this second symbol. This indicates that the good practice offered is considered to be the ideal, but that informed decisions could be taken locally to amend the guidance in a church’s own statement of procedures. However, churches should have a clear reason for not following the guidance as stated and it would be wise for those reasons to be considered and recorded by the trustees/deacons.

An example of this kind of good practice advice is the guidance offered regarding the ratios of adults to children. A church could carry out a risk assessment which suggests that it would be ideal to have four adults working with a certain group of children for a given activity. However, only three adults can be found to lead this particular activity. A decision is taken that, with additional safeguards, the activity should proceed with only three adults (see 14.5, p68).



There are some areas in which practitioners take different views as to what should be considered good practice. In writing *Safe to Grow* we offer a standard of good practice in all cases, believing that it is more helpful to present what we believe to be a balanced and sensible approach for the particular context of Baptist churches. However, in doing this we are aware that other organisations come to different conclusions and establish different boundaries.

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Such good practice guidance is marked with a symbol which indicates more 'space' for local application. It is important to note that where guidance is marked in this way it does not mean that it is optional whether or not a church implements the good practice. What is open for the local church to decide is the detail of the guidance that is written into the church's own agreed set of procedures.

An example of this can be found in the guidance regarding the use of electronic communication by leaders (see 13.6, p61). It is important that a church offers clear guidance to its workers in this area. However, different organisations come to widely different conclusions about what guidelines should be offered. Some churches may think it appropriate to be more restrictive in the guidance given to workers than is suggested in *Safe to Grow*.

We have tried to indicate wherever possible the reasons for the assessment that we have made and also given examples of the kind of situations in which a local church may decide to vary the guidance offered.

Please note that it is not necessary, nor would it be wise, for these symbols to be replicated in a local church's policy and procedures document. The symbols are included in this document to enable churches to make informed decisions about the procedures that they adopt. Having adopted local procedures, those procedures should be clear and unambiguous for the workers.

1.8 Case studies

Some case studies have been included. The case studies serve a number of different purposes. Some of the case studies are used to earth the guidance in concrete examples. The case study will illustrate how the guidance should be applied in particular cases.

Other case studies are included to pose questions and prompt thought. Answers are not provided in the text but point to the kinds of issues that arise. They often illustrate the need for policies and procedures to be in place. ♦



For some, *Safe to Grow* has been taken up reluctantly as a necessary response to government legislation and advice. However, from the outset *Safe to Grow* has placed the need to introduce policies for the protection of our children in the context of our desire to promote best practice in all of our work with children and to work in response to the demands of the gospel. The answer to the question, 'Why *Safe to Grow*?' has been from the outset, 'For the sake of our children and for the sake of the gospel.'

2.1 Valuing children

A community that finds inspiration in the life and words of Jesus will wish to value children. Jesus challenged the outlook of his day and society that left children on the edge, having to wait to engage with the things that 'really matter' until they had crossed the threshold into adulthood. He was angered when his disciples tried to save him from the hassle of having to put up with inquisitive and playful children when he had so many more important things with which to deal (Mark 10.13-16). When his disciples were arguing about greatness, he took a child and placed the child in their midst as a new focus for their aspirations. The disciples were invited to 'become like children' (Matthew 18.1-4). We are told that to welcome the child is to welcome Jesus, and so to welcome the one who sent him (Mark 9.37). At the beginning of the last week of his life, Jesus delighted in the praises of the children in the temple (Matthew 21.15-16). A community listening to these words and reflecting on these actions will resist keeping children on the margins of their community life. The child will be welcomed in, recognised as a whole person created in God's image and invited to share in the life of God's people within the reign of God's love. The child will have much to give as well as to receive. Adults need children in their midst to remind them of the nature of the kingdom.

Such a community will be horrified at any harm done to a child, and will wish to offer a child the best environment in which to grow and develop into the person God intends. It will resist the temptation to turn a deaf ear to the appeals for help from a child – because it will create an environment in which children's voices are always

taken seriously. At one point we find powerful and evocative language on the lips of Jesus when he speaks of the consequences of being a stumbling block to 'one of the least of these' (Matthew 18.6-10). Indeed the Christian community will be particularly concerned to stand alongside the child as part of the calling of the people of God to be on the side of the powerless, the vulnerable, the voiceless and the marginalised in the world. Sadly, the Christian church has for too long not wanted to listen to the children in its own midst who are being harmed, let alone stand and speak for those beyond the community of the church. The God whom we worship and serve is the one who 'heals the broken hearted, and binds up their wounds' (Psalm 147.3). This same Psalm goes on to declare that this is the God who 'blesses your children within you' (Psalm 147.13).

2.2 A reflection on the nature of Christian forgiveness and the rehabilitation of those who offend against children

The view that is taken in this publication is that those who have committed any kind of sexual offence against a child in the past should not normally be permitted to hold any position of trust with children or young people in the life of the church. Some find this view a challenge to the Christian gospel of forgiveness and the offer of new life which we find in Jesus.

- Are we denying the Christian gospel of forgiveness?
- Are we calling into question the power of Jesus to transform a person's heart?

These are challenging questions which need to be taken seriously. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the Christian church has used the language of forgiveness and 'second chance' somewhat lightly in the past and has effectively colluded with those who have used their positions of trust in the church to gain the opportunity to harm and abuse children.

Experience has taught us that the perversion that leads to the sexual abuse of children is deeply ingrained into the personality of the abuser. There

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is an addictive character to such behaviour. In the light of this the following reflections can be made.

- › The experience of being forgiven and restored by God is for all of us an on-going process. For all of us there are areas of our lives that are more impervious to the influence of the gospel than others. In living out the prayer ‘lead us not into temptation’ we will all have particular areas of our lives where we know that we need to avoid being in situations that will lead to the kind of temptation that is a particular weakness for us.
- › For those who have harmed children in the past it is wise for them not to put themselves into situations where their weakness can be exploited. The journey towards wholeness will not be helped by being placed in positions of responsibility and trust for children.
- › The gospel of redemption and forgiveness is always lived out in the context of a world that remains broken. Sin has damaging effects that endure in people’s lives. When people are hurt by our sinful actions their pain may endure long after we have discovered the assurance of God’s forgiveness in our lives. The process of being forgiven will involve facing up to the seriousness of our sin and recognising the impact that it has had on others. All of us have to learn to live with the consequences of our sinfulness, and some of those consequences are long term. For those who have abused children and young people one of the consequences will be the discipline of not working with children and young people in the future in recognition of the continuing pain that others have to carry into their future because of the abuse perpetrated in the past.
- › The way of forgiveness always entails risk. When we restore a relationship with someone who has broken trust in the past, we do so at the risk that they will break that trust again in the future, with all of the consequent pain. The risks are taken in order to open out the transforming possibilities of reconciliation. However, to take the risk of placing those who have offended against children in the past in positions of responsibility and care for children in the present

is a risk that we do not have the right to take. We have the right to take the adventurous risk of forgiveness when we ourselves will bear the cost of its failure. We do not have the right to take such risks when the cost of failure will be borne not by ourselves, but by those who are vulnerable and for whom the potential cost is incalculable.

- › While we should not call into question the power of God to transform a person’s heart by the power of the Spirit, such that the heart of a child abuser can be transformed and made whole, we must always be cautious about our own ability to discern when such a transformation is genuine and when it is not. At the very core of the personality of a person who abuses children is the ability to deceive both adults and children – the ability to play the part of someone with genuine concern for children and of a person who can be trusted. It will always be difficult for us to discern when a person’s repentance and healing is authentic. What is more, the person who has been genuinely transformed will recognise that deception has been part of their pattern of behaviour in the past and will accept the need for the church to be cautious and not place children at risk.
- › Those who have abused children in the past should be helped to find a place in the life of the Christian community with that wisdom that holds them on their journey towards forgiveness and wholeness, enabling them to live with the consequences of their past in the light of God’s forgiveness and acceptance. Although service with responsibility for children is not appropriate, there may be other ways in which they can express their service of God and contribute to the life of the church. Such people should not be debarred from all active involvement in the life of the church.

2.3 A community of care for all

A community created and shaped by the risen Jesus will be a community which breaks down barriers, and which embraces people with a wide variety of needs and experiences in a community

of care. The policies that are found in *Safe to Grow* need to be set in the context of a desire to see the church as a community of care. We are called to live out the new commandment of Jesus in our life together: ‘I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another’ (John 13.34). The reality of child abuse, and the enormous harm it inflicts on individuals, on families and on communities, challenges our capacity to create a true community of care within the church. The complex and often painful issues require us to exercise the greatest wisdom in fostering a climate of pastoral care in which the needs of different groups of people are fully met. It can sometimes feel as if the claims for sensitivity and understanding by these groups compete with each other.

There is, first, the demand to create a safe environment for our children. The good practice contained in *Safe to Grow* is not a reluctant response to government guidelines. These are responsible measures to enable our children to grow and develop in a community where they will not be threatened with harm. These proposals are all about the proper and appropriate care of children and young people, allowing them to grow and develop in an environment that engenders trust and security.

Also requiring our pastoral care in this context are those who were themselves abused as children. Many ‘survivors’ of abuse will never have been able to tell their story to others in the church. It would be too painful. They may not know how their story will be heard and received. Their experience may be of people not wanting to know. Those who abused them may have been loved and respected members of the church fellowship. One thing is certain: a church fellowship which speaks too tritely of the forgiveness and restoration of the child abuser will appear to trivialise the deep hurt and pain that survivors carry with them throughout their lives. Similarly, a church fellowship that treats the safeguarding of children and young people as an inconvenience and a hindrance to their work, will give an unwelcome message to the survivors of abuse.

Next there are those against whom accusations are made. Whenever an accusation of child abuse is made the individuals concerned are deeply hurt and a community is often thrown into turmoil. Taking an accusation seriously while offering appropriate pastoral support to the accused is fraught with difficulties. Because all allegations must be followed up with the utmost seriousness it can sometimes feel as if the person who is being accused is being treated as guilty before they have a chance to answer the charges. All of those who work with children in whatever context are vulnerable to this eventuality. When accusations are made appropriate support needs to be available.

Finally, the church also has a responsibility of pastoral care towards the person who has offended in the past, even in the most horrid and degrading ways. Child abuse must not be perceived, through our actions and attitudes, to be the ‘unforgivable sin’. We must find ways of enabling the person who has offended in the past to find their appropriate place in the fellowship of the church. We will also need to help them when they struggle with a sense of vocation to ministries which, because of their past, they cannot pursue.

The challenge to the church is to seek to develop such a community of care that children find in the church a safe community, survivors find in the church a healing community, the accused find in the church a supportive community and abusers find in the church a redeeming community. This will be the distinctive nature of the church – that it works seriously at what it means to love in a broken world and that it works seriously at being a community that is truly inclusive. ‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’ (John 13.35). In this sense *Safe to Grow* is very much about the mission of the church in the context of a world that is sometimes loveless and harmful. ♦

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Child

A child is defined in The Children Act (1989) as a person under the age of 18. This is the definition used throughout *Safe to Grow*. The same meaning applies to the phrase ‘children and young people’ which is used wherever possible to emphasise the age range covered by the guidance.

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are four types of abuse as officially defined in government guidance: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

• Physical abuse

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 or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

Physical abuse shapes and influences the child’s behaviour, and their emotional and educational development. It may vary in degree of injury, whether directly or indirectly, from physical injuries, neurological damage, disability or even death.

• Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse significantly harms a child’s mental health, behaviour and self esteem. It can be particularly damaging in infancy.

• Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Children who have been or who are currently being sexually abused may display a wide range of behaviours, including inappropriate sexual behaviour and sexual knowledge inappropriate to age.

A child’s ability to cope with the aftermath of a discovery or disclosure of sexual abuse is strengthened by the support of a non-abusing adult who believes the child. The reactions of other adults who interact with a child during this time can also have an impact on the child’s ability to cope with what is happening.

• Neglect

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Long term neglect is likely to cause far more developmental delay and impairment than any other form of abuse. In extreme cases severe neglect can lead to the death of a child.

A distinction must be made between neglect caused by financial poverty which can be alleviated by financial help and that caused by emotional

poverty. These may co-exist, but relief of the former does not lead to relief of the latter.

• Spiritual abuse

The term ‘spiritual abuse’ is not one of the official definitions of abuse but is sometimes used to describe some of the particular features of abuse arising within religious organisations. ‘Spiritual abuse’ is increasingly being used to describe those situations where an abuse of power takes place in the context of a faith community. The following is a widely used definition of spiritual abuse:

“Spiritual abuse occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others.”

However, the term is sometimes used more loosely to refer to the ways in which children can suffer harm through the beliefs and practices of a Christian church or other faith community. Lord Laming’s report into the death of Victoria Climbié¹ highlighted the way in which belief in the demon possession of children can lead to harmful and abusive practices in some churches. It is questionable whether it is helpful to categorise this separately as ‘spiritual abuse’. It could be argued that religious belief and practice are being used to justify and condone the physical and emotional harming of children. The Government guidance *Safeguarding Children from Abuse linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession* (HM Government 2007) addresses a very specific aspect of religious practice which can become abusive to children.

There are a number of ways in which practice in churches can lead to the abuse or neglect of children:

- a belief in demon possession resulting in the labelling and naming of a child as ‘evil’ or a ‘witch’
- placing pressure on children to make decisions that are not appropriate to their age or developmental stage
- creating an environment in which children are discouraged from asking questions or holding alternative views.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* (see Chapter 4, p17) requires all county level and unitary local authorities in England to appoint a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has the responsibility to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies in monitoring the progress of any child protection investigations to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. In the same guidance churches are required to report all allegations against people who work with children and young people to the LADO. (NB: This guidance only applies to local authorities in England.)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a relatively new term which has a broader definition than child protection as it includes the important element of prevention. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* defines safeguarding in the following terms:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development, and
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

In this same publication the more narrow term ‘child protection’ is defined as follows:

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children

¹ In February 2000 Victoria Climbié died as the result of severe physical abuse and neglect that had spanned several months. During the months leading to her death, Victoria was known to 12 different services, which included 4 social services departments, 2 hospitals and 2 child protection teams and a church. None of these agencies took steps to protect Victoria from the torture that led to her tragic death, and they failed to work together to identify the full extent of her abuse. Lord Laming’s report into the tragedy led to a number of changes to child protection practice in the UK under the banner “Every Child Matters”.

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who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

The document continues to say that “all agencies and individuals should aim proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.”

It is recognised that an important contributory factor in safeguarding children is the active cooperation between agencies and organisations working with children and young people. In this regard safeguarding has also been described in the following terms:

- › “All agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised; and
- › Where there are concerns about children and young people’s welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies.”²

Social Services

Throughout *Safe to Grow* we have used the generic term ‘Social Services’ to refer to the local authority department that is given the responsibility to respond to concerns about the welfare of children and young people. We recognise that many local authority departments no longer use this term to define the department, and that ‘social services’ tends to refer to a limited range of services offered to vulnerable groups. ‘Social Care’ is now a more commonly used term. However there is not consistency across England and Wales and many people in our churches will continue to use the more colloquial term ‘Social Services’, which is the policy we have adopted here.

Trustees


Safe to Grow highlights the responsibilities of the ‘charity trustees’ of the church in relation to the church’s Safeguarding Children Policy. The charity trustees of the church are sometimes described as the ‘managing trustees’ to distinguish them from the ‘property’ or ‘holding trustees’ (the property or holding trustees will in most cases be either an

Association Trust Corporation or the Baptist Union Corporation). The charity trustees are those people who are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the church. In many Baptist churches the trustees will be the deacons and the minister. Whether or not churches have registered with the Charity Commission all churches have charitable status and those who offer leadership to the church will be the charity trustees and will carry the responsibilities of charity trustees.

At times we have chosen to use the term ‘trustee/ deacon’ in order to indicate the fact that when we are speaking of ‘trustees’ this will translate into ‘deacons’ in many Baptist churches.

However, we have chosen to use the generic term ‘trustee’ for two reasons:

- › There is a growing diversity of leadership structures in Baptist churches. The body that functions as charity trustees can be called by a variety of names – not always ‘deacons’. Indeed in some churches those who are appointed as deacons do not have the responsibility of being the church’s charity trustees. This responsibility is held by another group.
- › We wish to make it clear that those who are serving on the leadership group in a church carry the responsibilities that come with being charity trustees. With increasing legislation in the area of safeguarding, those who are appointed as trustees need to understand the responsibility that they hold. If good practice is followed as outlined in *Safe to Grow* that responsibility should not be onerous or burdensome, but it does need to be affirmed and accepted.

Further information on the role of managing trustees in the life of the church can be found in Baptist Union Corporation guideline documents C6 *Charity Legislation and Churches*, and C17 *Help! I’m a Managing Trustee*. These guideline leaflets can be downloaded from the Baptist Union website: www.baptist.org.uk  ◆

² *Safeguarding Children (2005) The 2nd Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children*

The legislation and government guidance which establishes the framework for safeguarding practice is set out in this chapter in chronological order.

The Children Act 1989

This legislation ensures that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm. The legislation also made provision for certain work with children under the age of 8 years old to be registered. Generally, any sessions of work with children under the age of 8 lasting regularly for more than two hours will need to be registered with OFSTED.

Safe from Harm (1993)

The initial publication of *Safe to Grow* in 1994 was a response to the Home Office publication *Safe from Harm – A Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations* (Home Office 1993). The publication is no longer available in full. The guidelines are summarised in the following thirteen recommendations:

- › Adopt a policy statement on the welfare of children.
- › Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
- › Introduce a system whereby children can talk to an independent person.
- › Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
- › Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
- › Use supervision as a means of protecting children.
- › Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
- › Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant’s paid work or volunteering with children.
- › Explore all applicants’ experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.

- › Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
- › Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
- › Issue guidance on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
- › Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

Police Act 1997

The Police Act 1997 contains the provision to set up the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for England and Wales and gives the opportunity to those appointing people to work with children and young people, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, to check the criminal background of those being appointed.

Protection of Children Act 1999

This legislation creates a framework operating across the different sectors that work with children to identify those considered to be unsuitable to work with children. This includes listing their names on the PoCA (Protection of Children Act) list and the (former) Education List 99. These lists have now been superseded by the list of those barred from working with children held by the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

This Act introduced a new criminal offence to protect children and young people from those who have a history of harming children. The act gave courts the power to bar certain offenders from working with children and made it a criminal offence for anyone barred in this way to apply to work with children even on a voluntary basis. It also made it a criminal offence knowingly to appoint a person to work with children who has been barred under the terms of the Act. The legislation also provides a clear definition of working with children.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

This Act introduces a package of measures to give children protection from sexual abuse. It enacts and extends the abuse of a position of trust offences and creates new offences to tackle grooming.

Guidance for preventing abuse of trust (2003)

Caring for young people and the vulnerable? Guidance for preventing abuse of trust was published by the Home Office in 2003. The guidance encourages voluntary organisations to establish a code of practice which minimizes the occasions in which ‘abuse of trust’ can occur.

Sexual and other forms of abuse take place where the victim **does not or cannot consent to his or her treatment**. Any sexual activity which is not freely consenting is criminal. In contrast, the sexual activity covered by abuse of trust may be ostensibly consensual, but rendered unacceptable because of the relative positions of the parties concerned. This can be seen as undermining the ability of the individual being looked after to give free consent, irrespective of sexual orientation.

We are familiar with such professional codes of conduct in, for example the teaching profession. This Home Office guidance introduces similar codes of conduct to the voluntary sector.

The Children Act 2004

This legislation puts into practice the proposals set out in the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (2003). It creates clear accountability to ensure that all agencies and organisations work effectively together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This Act provides the legal framework for a scheme to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. It makes provision for decisions regarding the barring of people from working with children and vulnerable adults to be made by an independent body, The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The Act enables the Independent Safeguarding Authority to maintain a single list of those who are barred from working

with children and young people together with a separate list of those who are barred from working with vulnerable adults. The Act has not been fully implemented and will be radically revised by the *Protection of Freedoms Bill* which has been introduced into parliament in 2011.

What to do when you are Worried a Child is being Abused (HM Government 2006)

This government publication is aimed at all of those with responsibility for the care and welfare of children to ensure that organisations and agencies work together effectively to safeguard children and young people. The guidance addresses the following issues:

- › what you should do if you have concerns about children in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including those who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm
- › what will happen once you have informed someone about those concerns
- › what further contribution you may be asked or expected to make to the processes of assessment, planning, working with children, and reviewing that work, including how you should share information.

Safeguarding Children from Abuse linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HM Government 2007)

This is non-statutory good practice guidance intended to help agencies apply *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006) to the particular needs of children abused or neglected because of a belief in spirit possession. The guidance makes it clear that “child abuse is never acceptable in any community, in any culture, in any religion, under any circumstances.”

Recruiting Safely (2009)

Recruiting Safely: Safer recruitment guidance helping to keep children and young people safe (Children’s Workforce Development Council 2009) is aimed at anyone responsible for or involved in the recruitment of staff or volunteers who will work with children or young people. It provides guidance in maintaining high standards in

recruitment and appointment practice to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. A CD-Rom resources toolkit is also available to accompany the guidance with a range of sample documents, forms and templates suitable for different settings.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)

The main document that offers guidelines to all agencies working with children and young people in responding to concerns about a child’s welfare is *Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2010). This is an up-dated version of the previous 2006 publication. There is an emphasis on promoting best practice, and working co-operatively as widely as possible for the protection of children. The document makes particular reference to the responsibilities of faith communities and places obligations on faith communities to adopt policies and procedures that will safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The equivalent to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2010) is:

Working Together under the Children Act (Welsh Assembly Government 2006)

This publication offers guidelines to agencies in Wales working with children and young people in responding to concerns about a child’s welfare. There are some significant variations between this document and the English equivalent. ♦



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5.1 Introduction

At the time of completing this edition of *Safe to Grow* (April 2011) government policy on preventing unsuitable people from working with children is in a state of flux. The previous government had enacted legislation (the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*) which would have introduced a scheme requiring all of those working with children and young people to be registered with a government agency, the *Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)*. The scheme was to be known as the *Vetting and Barring Scheme*. Legislation has now been introduced into parliament (the *Protection of Freedoms Bill*) which will make significant amendments to the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006* with the effect of significantly scaling back the *Vetting and Barring Scheme* and impacting the work of the *Criminal Records Bureau*.

It is important that churches remain up to date with legislative changes affecting their responsibilities with regard to criminal records checks and the appointment of those working with children and young people. Changes will be reported in *Transform* and on the *Safe to Grow* website www.safetogrow.org.uk

No changes are expected to come into force until 2012. Current recommended practice with regard to obtaining Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks should continue until changes are introduced.

All churches should ensure that they have sound recruitment practices in place as outlined in Chapter 12, p44ff.

In this chapter we will summarise relevant aspects of the legislation that are under consideration and introduce those elements of the legislation that have already come into force.

5.2 Regulated Activity

The legislation that is already in force and which is being envisaged in the *Protection of Freedoms Bill* introduces a number of legal duties and offences that relate to 'working with children':

- › those found to be unsuitable to work with children can be legally barred from working with children
- › it is an offence for an organisation knowingly to appoint someone who is barred to a position in which they will be working with children
- › the *Protection of Freedoms Bill* proposes to introduce a legal duty on organisations to check the criminal record and barred status of anyone who is appointed to work with children

In order to make it clear what constitutes 'working with children' the legislation speaks of 'regulated activity' and then goes on to define in fairly precise terms what falls within the definition of 'regulated activity'.

One of the key ways in which the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006* is being amended by the *Protection of Freedoms Bill* is by re-defining what falls within the definition of 'regulated activity'.

Because of the current review of legislation, this edition of *Safe to Grow* does not include a definition of 'regulated activity'. Churches need to be aware of the terminology and alert to changes in legislation that will affect their recruitment procedures and practices.

5.3 The Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has been set up to protect children and vulnerable adults by maintaining a list of people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people and a list of people who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults. The ISA is independent of all government departments. The *Protection of Freedoms Bill* proposes that the ISA will be merged with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) (see p19).

Criteria have been established to bar certain people from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. These criteria are administered by a panel of skilled caseworkers and other experts to ensure that the best possible decisions are made about whether to bar people. The decision to bar may be made on the grounds of offences that have been committed and/or other factors that indicate high risk.

People who have committed the most serious offences will be barred automatically as part of their criminal conviction with no rights of appeal through the ISA. Other people who are being considered for barring on grounds other than a serious criminal conviction will have a right to appeal the decision of the ISA.

A person who is barred from working with children and young people is not permitted to work in a regulated activity. It is a criminal offence for someone who is barred from working with children to apply to work in a regulated activity.



It is also an offence for someone knowingly to appoint a person to a regulated activity who has been barred from working with children. If a church knows that a person is on the barred list they should take advice before appointing them to any position in the church that may involve them in working with children and young people.



As from October 2009 it became a legal duty for all organisations who appoint workers in a 'regulated activity' (see p18) to report to the ISA any person who has been removed from a position working with children or vulnerable adults (or would have been removed had they not resigned beforehand) either because they have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult or because they pose a risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults. Guidance on making reports and report forms can be found on the ISA website:

www.isa.gov.org

5.4 The Vetting and Barring Scheme

The *Vetting and Barring Scheme* which was to be introduced by the former government is to be radically scaled back by the present government. Under the *Vetting and Barring Scheme* it would have been necessary for anyone working in a regulated activity to register with the Independent Safeguarding Agency. The criminal records of those registered with the ISA, as well as their barred status would have been continuously monitored to ensure that they are not unsuitable to continue working in regulated activity. The legislation would also have made it a legal requirement for anyone

appointing a person to a position working with children in a regulated activity to check their registered status. The legislation has never been implemented.

The *Protection of Freedoms Bill* makes recommendations that if enacted into law will radically revise this legislation. Amongst other things the intention of the Bill is to:

- › remove the need for children's workers to register with the ISA
- › remove any requirement for the criminal records and the barred status of children's workers to be continuously monitored
- › re-define the scope of regulated activity
- › remove the statutory requirement for organisations to check the registered status of those they appoint to a regulated activity and replace it with a legal duty to check the criminal record and the barred status of all appointed to a regulated activity

What this will mean in practice for churches and what roles will come within the strict definition of regulated activity is not known at the time of publication. Churches must ensure that they remain abreast of the changes in legislation as publicised in *Transform* and on the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk

5.5 The Criminal Records Bureau

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) was established to enable employers to check the criminal records of those they are employing. For most forms of employment the rights of an employer to have access to the criminal record of a worker is limited under the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974* to ensure that those who have a criminal record are not unfairly discriminated against when it comes to employment. Under the ROA, time limits are set on certain convictions after which there should be no requirement for an individual to disclose those offences to an employer. These are known as 'spent' convictions.

However, if someone is to be appointed

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8

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to work with vulnerable groups such as children and young people, employers and organisations who appoint volunteers and paid staff are entitled to check the criminal record of prospective workers to ensure that there is nothing in their criminal record that would make them unsuitable to work with children and young people. In these circumstances the Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 allows all conviction information to be disclosed.



It remains good practice to require an Enhanced Disclosure for all workers.

Organisations such as churches are entitled to require that their workers apply for an 'Enhanced CRB Disclosure' before appointing them to work with children and young people. The Enhanced Disclosure reveals

- › all criminal convictions both spent and unspent held on a person's criminal record by the police (including all police cautions)
- › whether or not the person has been barred from working with children on the list held by the ISA
- › any relevant non-conviction information that a local police force may choose to reveal.



Any organisation using the CRB must adopt an Equal Opportunities Policy. It is vital to assure people who have a criminal record that a criminal record will not in itself prevent them working with children and young people. Only relevant convictions will be taken into account when deciding a person's suitability to work with children and young people.

The following policy could be adopted by a local church:

- › As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, [Name of church] undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information received.
- › We welcome people to serve the church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God, including those who have a criminal record.

- › A CRB Disclosure will be requested in line with our church's recruitment policy only after it has been determined that it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- › A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to a person serving with children and young people. Any decision will be dependent on the nature of the position and the nature and circumstances of the offence(s).

The Baptist Union Corporation Guideline C12 *Employment* contains an equal opportunities policy that can be adopted by local churches.

An application for an Enhanced Disclosure can only be made through a body that is registered with the CRB. The Baptist Union is part of a group of Christian denominations that has established the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) that acts as an umbrella body to administer CRB applications for member churches. While local churches are at liberty to use other organisations to administer their CRB applications, we strongly recommend that Baptist churches use the services of the CAS.

Full details of how to apply for Enhanced CRB Disclosures through CAS can be obtained from www.safetogrow.org.uk



Part 2: Adopting and implementing a Safeguarding Children Policy



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6.1 Why a written policy statement?

At the heart of any effective intention to safeguard children in the life of a local church there will be a written policy statement. The written policy statement is important because it:

- › states clearly the commitment of the church to place a priority on promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people
- › gives confidence to those who act on behalf of the church when action needs to be taken to protect children and young people
- › establishes a clear framework for those entrusted with the care of children in the life of the church
- › gives confidence to parents/carers when they entrust their children to those running activities and groups organised by the church.

It is good practice for all churches to adopt a Safeguarding Children Policy Statement. This should be done for the sake of the children alone. However, churches may also find that they are required to have a written policy for other reasons. For example:

- › if the church is required to register with the Charity Commission
- › if the church applies for charitable or public funding for its work with children and young people
- › for the purposes of its public liability insurance.

It is, however, important to recognise that a written policy statement is not sufficient in itself to safeguard children. A policy statement will not be worth the paper it is written on if:

- › it has been adopted only as a formality to satisfy 'bureaucratic requirements'
- › the policy statement is not supported by clear, written procedures
- › the policy and procedures 'sit on the shelf' and are not reviewed
- › no provision is made to train workers
- › no-one is given responsibility to implement the policy

- › the policy is only 'owned' by the children's and young people's workers and not by the whole church.

6.2 Who needs a Safeguarding Children Policy?

Every church should adopt a Safeguarding Children Policy Statement.

- › A Safeguarding Children Policy is for all churches that work with children.
- › A Safeguarding Children Policy is for any church that does not currently work with children, but hires out its premises to organisations that do work with children.
- › A Safeguarding Children Policy is for any church that does not currently work with children and does not currently hire out its premises to organisations that do work with children because all churches are open to the public, and trustees/deacons should be mindful that, although children may not currently be attending their church, they could do so in future.



ALL churches should adopt a policy statement. If a church decides not to adopt a policy statement, such a decision should be recorded in the minutes of the trustees together with reasons justifying the decision.

6.3 Writing a policy statement

In developing a Safeguarding Children Policy, a church will need to adopt both a policy statement and an agreed set of procedures by which that policy will be implemented. The Safeguarding Children Policy should be a whole church concern. It should therefore be adopted by the Church Meeting and also reviewed annually by the Church Meeting.

A policy statement makes it clear to staff, volunteers, parents and children what the church thinks about safeguarding, and what it will do to keep children safe.

The following guidance on what should be contained in a policy statement is based upon advice given by the NSPCC³.

A policy statement sets out:

- › what the church wishes to say about keeping children safe

³ *Are they safe? Guide Section B* (NSPCC and Children England www.safenetwork.org.uk) and *Safe Communities*

- › why the church is taking these steps
- › how, in broad terms, the church is going to meet this responsibility
- › who it applies and relates to, eg. all staff and volunteers, children and young people up to 18 years of age
- › how the church will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures, eg. taking photographs and videos, recruitment, health and safety.

It should be no longer than one or two sides of A4 paper. The policy statement should also:

- › identify the church, its purpose and function
- › recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- › briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy
- › be signed and dated with a date identified for review.

A model policy statement has been included (see p24/25) which complies with these guidelines and which follows the structure for this edition of *Safe to Grow*. Churches are free to adopt this statement as it stands, although in doing so churches should carefully consider each of the statements and should also be aware that accompanying procedures will need to be developed that are relevant to the church's own particular situation and context.

6.4 Writing procedures

Having adopted a Safeguarding Children Policy Statement each church will need to write and adopt a set of procedures. These procedures spell out in detail how the policy will be implemented in the particular context of your local church.

A guide to the procedures that will need to be adopted is found in *Safe to Grow* Part 3 (see Chapter 10, p32).

6.5 And finally . . .

A policy is only good if:

- › it has formally been adopted by the trustees/deacons and church members at a Church Meeting
- › records (minutes) show the adoption
- › the policy and procedures are signed and dated, with a review date identified
- › trustees/deacons are aware of their responsibilities
- › all staff/volunteers are aware of and understand the policy and procedures
- › training is provided for all staff, volunteers and trustees/deacons
- › regular support and supervision is provided for all workers
- › children and their parents or carers know who to contact if they have any concerns about the conduct of any workers
- › church attendees are aware of their role in safeguarding children within the church
- › the policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. ♦

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8



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The content of the policy statement can be adapted to the local situation but should follow broadly the model suggested.

POLICY STATEMENT

on

Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Church

[Name of church]
(referred to as “the church” in the Policy Statement)

The vision/purpose of the church is:
[insert church’s vision or purpose statement]

In fulfilling this vision/purpose the church

- has a programme of activities with children and young people
- welcomes children and young people into the life of our community
- makes our premises available to organisations working with children and young people

[delete as appropriate]

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children and young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, *Safe from Harm* (HM Government 1994) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010) [or *Working Together under the Children Act* (Welsh Assembly Government 2006)].

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all children and young people associated with the church and will pray for them regularly.

In pursuit of this we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

Safe working practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

A safe community

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

Responsible people

The church has appointed [name]
as the Safeguarding Trustee to:

- oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church’s charity trustees

The church has appointed [name] as the Designated Person for Safeguarding to:

- advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and young people
- take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Policy and procedures

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboard in [location]

Each worker with children and young people whether paid or voluntary will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be required to follow them.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of the church, the parents or carers of any child or young person from the church or any other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.

The policy statement will be read annually at the church meeting in [month] together with a report on the outcome of the annual review.

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8.1 Clarity in assigning responsibilities

The Safeguarding Children Policy must be adopted and owned by the whole church. The policy statement itself should be discussed and formally adopted by the Church Meeting. This is important because safeguarding is everyone's responsibility in the life of the church. However, for the policy to be effective, particular responsibilities have to be assigned to named people. If everyone has responsibility for everything there is a danger that no-one will take responsibility for anything.



This is a statement of the responsibilities that fall to trustees/deacons by virtue of their position within the church.

It is the trustees/deacons who have a duty of care to the children and young people who are involved in the life of the church. Should there be an incident that gives rise to an investigation in the life of the church, it will be the trustees/deacons who will be deemed to be responsible for the outworking of the church's policy and procedures. It will also be the trustees/deacons who will be held responsible for any legal obligations that arise under the revised Vetting and Barring Scheme.

Therefore all trustees should be fully conversant with the church's Safeguarding Children Policy. The trustees should:

- have a mechanism for monitoring or reviewing the policy
- give support to those who are working with children and young people
- ensure that the training needs of workers are met
- make appropriate budget provisions for children's and young people's work, including budget provision for the training of workers
- find ways of communicating the policy to all within the church.

Much of the work involved in implementing the policy can certainly be delegated to others within the church. The trustees can delegate the power to put in place the policy and procedures. However, trustees are not in a position to delegate their responsibility. The ultimate responsibility for the church's safeguarding policy will always remain with the trustees/deacons.

In order to help the trustees meet their responsibilities and keep safeguarding on their agenda it is good practice to appoint one of the trustees to take a lead on safeguarding matters. It is not necessary for this person to have expertise in the area of safeguarding, only an understanding of the church's policy and procedures and a readiness to oversee this area of the church's life on behalf of the trustees.

8.3 Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon are:



Safe to Grow recommends this appointment as a matter of good practice to help trustees/deacons take their responsibility effectively.

- to ensure on behalf of the trustees/deacons that there is a proper process in place to write and update the safeguarding policy and procedures
- to monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the trustees
- to ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually and to present the report of the annual review to the trustees

- to receive reports from the Designated Person for Safeguarding (see below) regarding any safeguarding incidents in the life of the church and to be responsible for keeping the trustees informed as appropriate.

In the event that there is no trustee/deacon named to take on this responsibility it should be assumed that this role will be taken by the Church Secretary.

Please note – it is not being suggested that the person who 'heads up' safeguarding matters in the church must be a member of the diaconate/board of trustees. It is perfectly appropriate for the person who co-ordinates the church's safeguarding policy and practice not to be a trustee/deacon (although, of course, they may be). We are simply recommending that one of the trustees/deacons is identified as the person who will take a particular interest in this area of the life of the church on behalf of the other trustees/deacons.

This appointment can be made by the trustees/deacons and reported to the Church Meeting, although some churches may take the appointment as a recommendation from the trustees/deacons to be ratified by the Church Meeting.



While the job title is not significant it is vital that an organisation working with children identifies one named person to be responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns within the organisation.

8.4 Designated Person for Safeguarding

The church meeting needs to appoint a Designated Person for Safeguarding. This is the person who will take a key role in helping the church to respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised about the safety or well-being of children and young people. This should, as far as possible, be someone with relevant knowledge and skills for the role, or

someone who is willing to develop such skills. The role does not need to be filled by someone with professional experience in safeguarding, but the person who takes it on does need to give time to understanding the principles of safeguarding.

The Designated Person may be the same as the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon, although very often will not be. The Designated Person does not need to be a trustee of the church. Indeed it would be possible for the Designated Person to be a member of another church.

It is possible for the Designated Person to have other responsibilities in the church's work with children and young people, although when this is the case procedures will need to be agreed in the event that there is any suspicion or allegation concerning the conduct of the Designated Person.

The Designated Person can work as part of a team, but one person should take the lead in the team and be the named person for the role.

The Designated Person's role is to:

- receive and record information from anyone who has safeguarding concerns
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to
- consult with outside bodies where appropriate to discuss concerns
 - for example a Regional Minister, the Local Authority Designated Officer (see p13), Social Services or the police child abuse investigation team
- make a formal referral to Social Services or the police if appropriate or as advised
- inform both the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the minister of any referral
- make referrals as appropriate to the Independent Safeguarding Authority
- be the link between the church and the local Baptist Association for safeguarding matters.

More details about the role of the Designated Person in responding to concerns about the welfare of children or the behaviour of adults,

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8

In this section we identify the responsibilities that different people in the church will have under the policy. It is vitally important that everyone knows what their particular responsibilities are. Only if there is clarity in this area can a church be confident that its policy and procedures will be robust.

Please note that in this section we have amended the guidance offered in previous editions of *Safe to Grow*. We strongly encourage all churches to adopt the terminology that we have suggested in this edition for the following reasons:

- There is much to be gained by having consistency of approach across the Baptist family.
 - It will be helpful when representatives of Associations or of the Union are assisting churches with particular issues.
 - It will assist in the development of a new *Safe to Grow* training resource to be used within Associations.
- The terminology that we have adopted in this edition will be recognised by statutory and other bodies in the child care and safeguarding field with whom churches may interact or co-operate from time to time.

8.2 Trustees/deacons

The trustees/deacons of the church (see 3.0, p14) are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and resourced in the church.

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can be found in 11.8, p37.

Although the Designated Person may be the person who co-ordinates the applications for CRB Disclosures, it is not necessary for this administrative work to be carried out by the Designated Person. This piece of work could be taken on by someone else.

We are recommending that the term 'Designated Person' is adopted by all churches wherever possible. We believe that there would be much to be gained by Baptist churches using similar terminology for those who have significant responsibilities for the church's safeguarding policies and procedures. It will help in the development of training packages for Baptist churches and will also aid those in Associations and in the Baptist Union who are offering help and guidance to churches in safeguarding matters. The title 'Designated Person' will also be more readily recognised by other agencies who may interact with churches. We encourage churches to adopt this new terminology.

Many churches will currently use terms adopted in previous editions of *Safe to Grow* such as 'children's advocate' or 'responsible person'. Other churches may use alternative terminology such as 'safeguarding co-ordinator'. If churches, for internal reasons, decide to continue using these other job titles because those in the church have become familiar with them, it would be helpful for churches also to identify this person as the 'Designated Person'.

8.5 The Minister

As a member of the trustee body of the church, the minister shares with all of the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy. The minister will often need to be proactive in ensuring that the church takes seriously its responsibilities in this regard and in helping the church to see this as part of the church's gospel responsibilities.

In addition to the responsibilities that the minister shares with all of the trustees, the minister will have particular pastoral responsibilities. Because of

these responsibilities the minister should:

- be made aware of any safeguarding and child protection issues within the church
- take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate pastoral support is provided in the context of any safeguarding investigation. In these circumstances the minister's responsibility is to offer pastoral leadership to the whole church community. It may not be appropriate for the minister to offer pastoral care directly to those involved, but to ensure that the pastoral needs of all are being met. It is important for the minister to recognise that:
 - it is not possible or appropriate for one person to offer pastoral care to both an alleged victim and an alleged perpetrator of abuse
 - church communities can too easily become polarised in these situations and it is important for the minister to be able to take a role that seeks to hold the church together.

Wherever possible the minister **should not** be the Designated Person for Safeguarding. If the minister is the person in the church responsible for making referrals to the statutory authorities when safeguarding concerns arise, the minister's capacity to offer pastoral leadership that holds the church community together may be compromised. While it would be possible (and on occasions may be necessary) for the minister to take on the role of Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon, wherever possible we would encourage churches to identify another member of the trustee body to take on this responsibility.



This guidance is offered out of the experience of situations that have been made more difficult because the minister has been expected to hold too many conflicting roles.

8.6 Workers with children and young people

All of those who work with children (without exception) should take personal responsibility for implementing the policy. They should each:

- know and implement the guidelines for good practice
- follow the agreed code of behaviour when working with children and young people

- be aware of ways in which children and young people are harmed and possible signs of abuse
- know what to do if a child or young person discloses abuse
- know what to do if an allegation is made about a fellow worker
- know who to speak to if they have any suspicions or concerns.

8.7 Leaders of children's and young people's groups

All leaders of groups will need to know all of the above. They will also need to know:

- how to go about appointing new staff/ volunteers, including CRB checks
- the principles of good supervision
- what to do if one of their workers shares with them a concern about a child or young person

- how to contact the Designated Person
- how to access pastoral support for workers.

8.8 All attendees (church members or non church members)

All church attendees have a part to play. It is the responsibility of all within the church community to ensure there is a welcome for children and young people and an intolerance of all that brings them harm.

All attendees should be alert to situations where children may be vulnerable. All should know who to speak to if they suspect that a child or young person is being harmed. ♦



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9.1 Developing an action plan

When a church first adopts a Safeguarding Children Policy, in order to ensure that the policy and procedures are developed and implemented in a timely fashion, churches should adopt an action plan. The action plan should:

- › identify who is responsible for writing or reviewing the church's procedures
- › state how the church will ensure that everyone (including children) is aware of and understands the safeguarding policy and procedures
- if the church works with people who use a language other than English, who have learning disabilities or other communication difficulties, particular attention will need to be given as to how the policy and procedures are to be communicated
- › specify the timescale over which the work will be completed.

9.2 The annual review

The model policy statement makes provision for an annual review of the policy. The trustees should identify a small group of people who will be responsible for the review. These should include the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Designated Person for Safeguarding. If neither of these is involved in the church's work with children and young people a representative of the children and young people's workers should also be part of the group.

The annual review should consider and report on the following:

- › Has there been any new legislation or guidance which requires the policy and procedures to be amended? (This information will be found in the Baptist Union regular publication *Transform*, sent to ministers, secretaries and treasurers and also on the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk)
- › If there have been any concerns or incidents during the year, have the procedures been

followed appropriately, or do the procedures need to be strengthened?

- › Has the church begun or does the church plan to begin any new work with children and young people which needs to be written into the agreed procedures?
- › Have there been any changes of workers or office holders that affect the procedures?
- › Have all of those who are working with children and young people been appointed under the agreed procedures?
- › What training has been offered in the past year and what training is planned for the coming year?
- › Are all children and their parents and carers aware of the procedures for expressing concerns about the conduct of workers? ♦



SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8



In previous editions *Safe to Grow* recommended only that the policy should be read at the church meeting on an annual basis. *Safe to Grow* now commends a fuller and more meaningful annual review.

Part 3: Writing and implementing safeguarding procedures



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Although some sections of what is written in the following chapters can be adopted by churches as core elements in written procedure documents, we are not able to offer model procedures in the same way as we are able to offer a model policy statement because the circumstances of each church will be different and the procedures need to be made specific to the particular groups and activities that are undertaken by each particular church. However, on the *Safe to Grow* website (www.safetogrow.org.uk) we have offered some fictional samples of procedures that could be adapted to local circumstances. These are watermarked so that churches cannot just lift them off the website. It is vital that churches consider what is required for their own community and so amend them to their own circumstances.

- The policy statement says what the church is going to do.
- The procedure says how the church is going to achieve this. The procedures are an important part of the church's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. The procedures will
 - tell everyone what is expected of them in terms of safeguarding
 - set out the responsibilities of workers and others with specific roles to play

- identify the responsibilities of the church as an organisation.

The following sets of local procedures will need to be adopted:

Prevention and reporting abuse

A set of detailed guidelines will need to be adopted that tells everyone what to do if they have any concerns about the well-being of a child or young person. This is addressed in detail in Chapter 11, p33ff opposite.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers (paid or voluntary)

Each church should set out clearly what process is to be followed before anyone is appointed to work with children and young people. In addition there should be plans in place to make all workers aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and for the support and supervision of workers. Guidance is offered in Chapter 12, p44ff.

Respecting children and young people

A code of behaviour needs to be agreed for all who work with children and young people to ensure that children and young people are respected. For further details see Chapter 13, p55ff.

Safe working practices

A range of procedures will need to be put in place to promote the safety of children and young people. These will relate to record-keeping and risk assessment, and will also tie in with other church policies, such as health and safety and data protection. This is explained in Chapter 14, p64ff.

A safe community

Two sets of procedures are included under this heading. Firstly, churches are encouraged to have a policy to prevent the bullying of children and young people. Secondly churches should know what they would do to protect children and young people should there be someone attending the church who potentially poses a risk to children and young people. These are addressed in Chapter 15, p78ff. ♦

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

11.1 Introduction

We all share the responsibility for promoting the welfare of children and all churches must have procedures in place to show how they are going to achieve this. This is particularly important when it comes to knowing how to respond to concerns about the welfare of children and young people.

Without clear procedures for dealing with allegations staff, volunteers and church members may not know what to do if an allegation is made, or a child discloses that they are being harmed. This can lead them to do nothing. With procedures in place everyone is clear about what to do and to whom to speak.

When written procedures are in place and communicated effectively to all those working with children and young people, workers will have clear expectations placed upon them. Workers will therefore be accountable when they do not follow those procedures and can be challenged by those who supervise their work.

11.2 Understanding abuse and its signs and symptoms



Safe from Harm and Recruiting Safely recommend that all workers should be trained in the prevention of child abuse.

The ways in which children can be harmed through abuse and neglect are set out in Chapter 3, p12ff. Each church should seek to ensure that all of those who work with children and young people in the church attend training courses so that they understand the ways in which children can be harmed. In particular it is important that those who work with children and young people are alert to the indicators that a child

or young person is being abused.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries
- injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to injury
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- changes in behaviour or mood (eg becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illnesses, inadequate care or inappropriate clothing for the weather or time of year.

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why any of the above are occurring – it is not your job to investigate or decide if something is abuse, only to report on what is observed.

Knowing whether a child is being abused or neglected may be difficult to judge. All those who have contact with children and young people should be alert to the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and know how to respond to concerns they may have. All workers should also know to whom those concerns should be reported. Comprehensive training in safeguarding, including modules on recognising the possible signs of abuse should be undertaken by all workers.



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Case study

The minister visits a family during the daytime and finds mum, grandma and two children at home – one of them is a 12 year old. It is term time and a weekday. The 12 year old is alleged to have a cold but is looking after the other child who appears to be undersized for a child of 6. The minister doesn't think that there is anything obviously wrong with the 12 year old.

On a further visit to the family the 12 year old is seen with their leg in plaster. The mother's explanation was that the child's leg "kept collapsing" under the child.

Later, in the middle of the day the 12 year old is seen in the local supermarket doing the family shopping. Once again, it is term time and the child should have been in school.

- What factors in this sequence of events might give cause for concern?
- At what point would it be appropriate for the minister to respond to their concerns?
- What could or should the minister do?

This case study highlights two challenging areas. Firstly, the indications are that the children are being neglected, a form of abuse which can be more difficult to identify at an early stage than other forms of abuse. Secondly, most of us are extremely reticent to interfere in the way in which people run their homes and their families.

There are some disturbing similarities in this case study to the case of Victoria Climbié (see p13). Victoria Climbié was visited in her home shortly before she died. It was recognised that she was undersized for her age. She had sores, was over-dressed for the time of year, and had no toys to play with. She bore little resemblance to the child in the family photograph. No action was taken despite these incongruities because it was thought not to be the visitor's business. Victoria died soon after that visit.

11.3 Who causes harm to children?

It is important to recognise that children and young people can be subject to harm in any and every setting. It is important for those working with

children and young people to be aware that harm may be perpetrated by both males and females and by other children and young people.

The person who brings harm to children and young people:

- › is most often someone known to the child i.e. parent, carer, sibling, other relation, family friend or neighbour
- › is often an adult with whom the child or young person has a valued relationship and may be in a position of trust and responsibility within an organisation to which a child belongs or has contact
- › can be of any background – social, economic, cultural, ethnic etc
- › may act in isolation or together with other adults
- › can be another child or young person.

Children and young people who abuse other children are likely to be children or young people who have considerable needs of their own, sometimes as a result of abuse, neglect, disruption and instability they themselves have experienced. The risk they pose to other children should not be overlooked.

11.4 Ways that harm might be discovered

On occasions an incident or an injury will give cause for concern but often it is a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns which indicate that a child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering harm.

- › Children and young people might share with a trusted adult a concern they have about their safety or disclose that they are being harmed.
- › A child's observed behaviour, their physical appearance, developmental progress and emotional demeanour might indicate that they are being abused or neglected.
- › Sudden changes might be observed in a child's behaviour.
- › There may be a history of concerns noted over a number of occasions.

How adults (parents, carers, leaders, etc) behave around children and young people might also give rise to concerns.

- › There may be indicators that parents/carers are experiencing difficulties which are having adverse and potentially damaging effects on their child e.g. domestic abuse, substance misuse or mental health issues.
- › Observations of an adult's interaction with a child or young person might give cause for concern.

11.5 How can children express their concerns?



Safe from Harm recommends that children should have access to a named person to whom they can express concerns.

Children and young people within the church should be made aware of those people within the organisation who have been given special responsibility to act on their behalf in relation to safeguarding concerns. This is the Designated Person and every church must have a named Designated Person listed on its Safeguarding Children Policy. All children and young people should know how to contact the Designated Person. Churches may also wish to display the details of services such as Childline on notice boards that will be seen by children and young people.

However, children who are being abused will often only talk about what has happened to them to people they trust and with whom they feel safe. All who work with children and young people should know how to respond if a child or young person talks to them about an abusive or harmful relationship.

11.6 When a child expresses a concern... Listen, listen, listen

When a child or young person talks about harm or abuse that they are suffering:

- › create a safe environment in which the child or young person can share their concerns
- › react calmly so as not to further distress the child or young person
- › listen carefully to what the child or young person has to say

- › allow them time to say what they want
- › don't rush or interrupt them or ask more questions than you need to in order to establish whether there is cause for concern or to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- › if you need to ask questions to clarify what the child is saying, always use open questions and not closed questions (e.g. "Who is it you are afraid of?" not "Is it Daddy you are afraid of?")
- › as soon as you believe there is cause for concern allow the child to finish, but do not question them any further. Explain that you will have to tell someone who knows what to do next
- › accept what the child or young person says and take seriously what you are hearing
- › reassure the child or young person, and tell them that you know how difficult it must be to confide in you
- › tell the child or young person that s/he is not to blame and that s/he has done the right thing in speaking to you
- › help the child or young person to understand what is going to happen next – the child should be informed that other people will need to be told about the concerns which have been shared and who those people may be
- › **Do not promise or lead a child to believe that any child protection concern which affects them or other children or young people will be kept confidential**
- › be aware that a child or young person may be frightened and that they may have been threatened if they tell of what has been happening to them
- › remember that most children feel loyalty to their parents and other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things to their detriment
- › make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the child's language and recording any questions that you asked to prompt for a response.

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✓ Do's	✗ Don't's
✓ Listen and clarify	✗ Minimise
✓ Give support	✗ Show shock, alarm or disapproval
✓ Explain what happens next	✗ Question or push for information
✓ Take action	✗ Offer false re-assurance

11.7 What do we do if abuse is suspected or disclosed?

Everyone has their part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people within the church

If the behaviour of a child or young person gives any cause for concern –

If an allegation is made in any context about a child or young person being harmed –

If the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children or young people causes you concern –

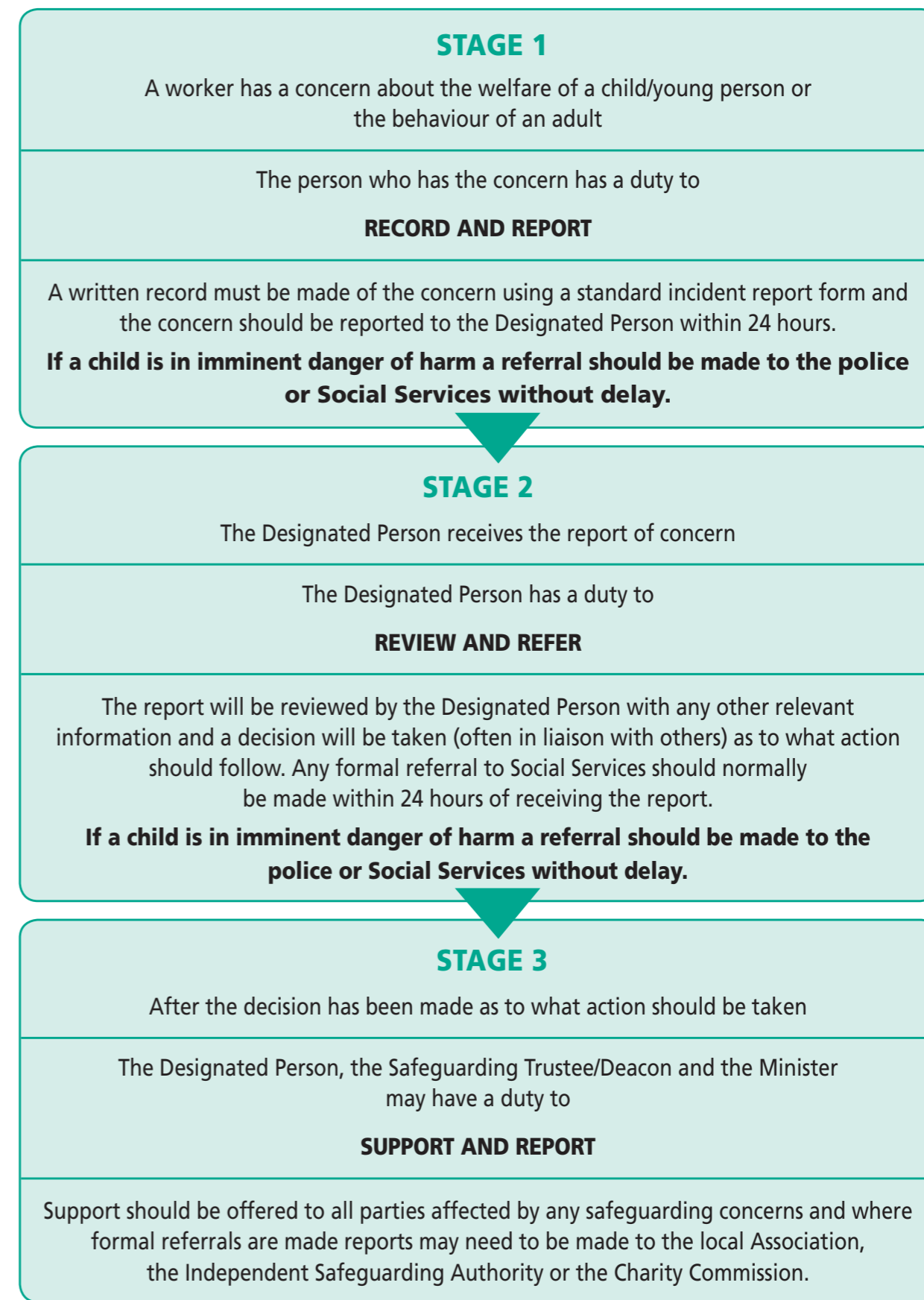
- **Do not** dismiss your concerns
 - in particular do not ignore or dismiss concerns about a professional or a colleague

- **Do not** confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns (the exception to this may be in some situations with colleagues – see 11.9, p41)
- **Do not** take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- **Do not** investigate allegations
- **Do not** act alone
- **Do not** take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have
- **Do** follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

The next section describes a recommended procedure for responding to concerns.



11.8 Recommended procedures for responding to concerns



All churches MUST adopt clear procedures giving guidance on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse. This is one of the recommendations of *Safe from Harm*.



This model is offered as a template for churches to adapt to their situation.

SAFE to GROW

STAGE 1 – RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. The report to the Designated Person should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

The duty to RECORD

As soon as possible after a child or young person tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern, a written record should be made.

The record should:

- › be made as soon as possible after the event
- › be legible and state the facts accurately
 - if hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained
- › include the child’s full name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known)
- › include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
- › include a description of any bruising or other injuries that you may have noticed and the demeanour of the child
- › include an exact record of what the child has said using the child’s words
- › include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported including any questions asked
- › include any action taken as a result of the concerns
- › be signed and dated
- › be kept secure and confidential and made available only to:
 - the Designated Person
 - the church minister as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child/young person concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved

- representatives of the professional agencies.

A template of an incident report form can be downloaded from the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk 

The duty to REPORT

If anyone has a concern about the welfare of a child, that concern should be reported to the Designated Person without delay (within 24 hours). The report can be made in the first instance either in a face-to-face conversation or by telephone, but should always be followed up by submitting a written incident report.

If a child or young person is considered to be in imminent danger of harm a report should be made immediately to the police or Social Services. If such a report is made without reference to the Designated Person (because it was not possible to contact the Designated Person immediately), the Designated Person should be informed as soon as possible after the report has been made.

Case study

A child discloses to a youth worker that her father becomes violent when he gets drunk and sometimes beats both her and her mother. She knows that her father has gone to the pub that evening and she is afraid to go home because she doesn’t know what mood he will be in.

The Designated Person is not available. The youth worker speaks to the leader of the group and they agree that because the child is potentially in imminent danger Social Services or the police should be contacted immediately. If circumstances had prevented the youth worker from talking to the leader of the group this is one of the rare situations when it would be appropriate for the youth worker to act alone and report their concerns to the Social Services or the police.

If concerns arise in the context of a children’s or young people’s group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Designated Person.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a group leader by one of the workers the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report, and will also themselves have a duty to report the concern to the Designated Person.

STAGE 2 – REVIEW AND REFER

The duty of the Designated Person on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

If a child or young person is considered to be in imminent danger of harm a report should be made immediately to the police or Social Services.

The duty to REVIEW

In reviewing the report that is received the Designated Person:

- › should take account of his/her own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children and young people
 - a person who works professionally in safeguarding children and young people will be more competent in making balanced judgments about reports
 - a person without professional expertise will need to take more advice from others with expertise in reviewing reports
- › must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult
- › may speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made
 - such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action and should be fully recorded
- › may consult with their Regional Minister in order to seek guidance from their Association (see 11.13, p43).

› may seek advice from the local Social Services department or police in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

- Social Services will be willing to discuss a case with the Designated Person without the need to divulge names or identities in order to offer guidance to the local church. However without sharing names or identities, information about that child or family known to Social Services and vital to the decision making process may not be considered. If the advice of Social Services or the police is to make a formal referral, this advice should be followed.

The duty to REFER

In reviewing the reported concern the Designated Person must decide to whom the report should be referred.

The Designated Person may:

- › refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child or young person is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation
- › refer the concern to others who work with the child or young person in question asking for continued observation
- › speak directly to the adult about whom the concern has been raised
 - This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children or young people’s workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. In these circumstances, to take the concern to the alleged perpetrator may place the child or young person at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child or young person may be intimidated.
- › make a formal referral to the local police or Social Services Department.

The Designated Person should keep a written

record of all actions taken in reviewing and referring a concern. A template of an incident report form that can be used by a Designated Person can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Designated Person.

STAGE 3 – REPORT AND SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Minister.

The duty to REPORT

Whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services or the police the Designated Person should

- › report the referral to the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon
- › report the referral to the Minister
- › report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association.

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports.



This guidance is contained in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* with an explicit reference to faith communities such as churches.

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children or young people the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see Chapter 3, p13). The LADO is located within Social Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children or young people has:

- › behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or young person
- › possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or young person, or related to a child or young person
- › behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

(Please note that the procedures for making referrals to LADO's only applies in England.)



If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post

(had they not resigned or left the church) because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people there is a statutory duty to report the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Referral forms are available from the ISA website: www.isa.gov.org



The reporting of such incidents is required by the Charity Commission.

If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return by those churches that are registered with the Charity Commission.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy (see 9.2, p30).

The duty to SUPPORT

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected. Even when formal referrals to the statutory authorities are not made, those who make reports will feel uncertain and vulnerable and support will need to be offered to them.

• Child/Young Person

For the child/young person concerned, Social Services and other agencies may provide support and services. However, the church will have a role to play in complementing this support. The Designated Person should seek to work in partnership with other agencies, clarifying with them how best the church may be able to support the child/young person and to ensure that consistent help and support is being offered.

• Other Family Members

The church may similarly be in a position to offer pastoral and practical support to family members who may find they are trying to cope with a variety of feelings.

• Church Worker/Volunteer

Support and counselling should also be offered to those within the church who are involved in the incident. This could be the person who the child or young person shared their concerns with and the

Designated Person. Consideration should be given within churches to ensure that no one person is responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues without the support of others.

• Ministers/ Deacons

Ministers and deacons should know to whom they would turn for support, advice and help when facing the pastoral demands of addressing a safeguarding issue. The local Baptist Association may be particularly helpful in this regard, which is why we recommend that whenever a referral is made to the police or Social Services that a Regional Minister should be informed.

11.9 Responding to concerns about the behaviour of fellow workers



Recruiting Safely makes it clear that all organisations working with children and young people should have clear procedures for managing allegations against workers and that the safeguarding of children must be paramount.

The basic three-stage process outlined above should form the basis for responding to all concerns within the church regarding the welfare of children and young people. If anyone in the church believes that the behaviour of one of the workers is placing children or young people at risk of harm (whether that worker is paid or unpaid, is a relatively new volunteer or is a senior and experienced youth worker) there is a fundamental duty to RECORD and REPORT.

The nature of the behaviour of those who seek to harm children or young people is that they will rationalise their behaviour, they will make themselves extremely plausible and will be looking for ways in which it is possible to cross boundaries. It is therefore extremely difficult to tell the difference between the behaviour of someone who has inadvertently and innocently forgotten best practice for a moment and stepped over the line, and someone who is looking for the smallest opportunity to push at the boundaries. Consequently, it is important that all behaviour that crosses the line of what is acceptable or appropriate is challenged so that children and young people are never put at risk.

It is probably not appropriate or necessary to report all incidents to the Designated Person – particularly if they are one-off events – but churches do need to develop a culture where there will be a proper and proportionate response to situations like these:

A worker takes a child into an empty room on their own to help get some equipment out of the cupboard.

A group of young people are making fun of one of their friends because of their ginger hair. A young youth leader joins in the banter, not realising that the smiles of the young person hide an underlying resentment at the constant teasing.

A group of young children have been misbehaving all evening. One of the children accidentally knocks over a pot of paint. The worker loses their cool and shouts at the child, calling them clumsy and useless.

Workers need to be willing to point out to one another when their actions are inappropriate.

“Did you realise that you just took a child on their own into an enclosed room?”

It is good practice for workers to meet together for a short time to de-brief after each session. This can be an occasion when the leader might remind members of the team about following good practice and highlighting any inappropriate behaviour.

“It’s not a good idea to get involved in banter when N is being teased. He might appear to take it in good part, but you don’t know how he feels about being treated like that. We should be discouraging the other children from teasing.”

It is good practice following each session for the leader to make a note of any incidents such as the worker losing their cool about the spilled paint. This ensures transparency and also keeps a record that might be helpful if this turns out to be part of a recurring pattern of behaviour.

“The children were misbehaving all evening. X lost their cool when a pot of paint was tipped over and shouted calling N clumsy and useless.”

The leader of a group must take seriously their responsibility to supervise the behaviour of the workers in their group and encourage all workers to develop the highest standards in their conduct and in following the agreed code of conduct for workers. If a worker consistently ignores the code

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of conduct the leader should make arrangements for the worker to be more closely supervised until they can demonstrate that they are able to work within the framework of the church's Safeguarding Children Policy.

What should trigger a report being made to the Designated Person?

- › All workers should feel able to make a report if they feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of any fellow worker.
- › All occasions where a worker causes harm to a child or young person or where the actions and behaviour of a worker poses a risk of harm to children and young people should be reported.
- › When a worker repeatedly breaches the code of conduct, whether or not it is thought to be wilful, a report should be made to the Designated Person.

When the Designated Person receives any report expressing concern about the behaviour of a worker, Stage 2 of the procedures for responding to concerns should be followed.

All those working with children and young people should be aware that if an allegation is made against them that is referred to the statutory authorities, they will normally be advised or required to withdraw from their responsibilities while an investigation is carried out. They may even be asked not to attend church during this period.

Whenever allegations are made against those working with children and young people, or action has to be taken because of the risk of harm to children and young people by workers, the Designated Person and the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon should be aware of the church's duty to report such matters to:

- › the LADO (churches in England only)
- › the Independent Safeguarding Authority
- › the Charity Commission.

For further information see 11.8, p40.

Case study

A girl comes home from the church youth club and says that one of the leaders attempted to kiss her. She told her mother about the incident, who then rang the minister. The girl's mother thought that the minister should know what had happened but was also insistent that she wanted no action taken. The minister acceded to the mother's request and did not report the incident.

A couple of years later allegations were made that the same youth leader had attempted sexual relations with a number of the girls from the church. These allegations were reported to the police. At this point the earlier story was revealed.

- If such an allegation is reported to the Designated Person, how should the Designated Person respond to an alleged attempt to kiss?
- Should the earlier allegation have been reported and if so to whom?
- What weight should be given to the mother's request that no action should be taken?

11.10 When the concern involves the Designated Person

The church must have procedures in place to cover the possibility of a concern being expressed about the behaviour of the Designated Person or a member of their family. If this eventuality were to arise, workers and others in the church must know to whom they should speak.

- › In those churches where the Designated Person acts as part of a small team, one of the other members of the team could be named as an alternative.
- › The Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon could be named if this person is felt to be competent to respond to such reports
- › Alternatively reports could be made to the Minister.

Each church's procedures should make it clear who is responsible for receiving reports in these circumstances.

11.11 When concerns are expressed about the Minister

Whenever any concerns are expressed about the Minister the concerns must be taken as seriously as if they were being expressed about any other person connected to the life of the church. Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of your local Baptist Association in addition to following the church's normal procedures.

11.12 The role of the statutory agencies in child protection

Following a referral to Social Services or the police, a decision will be taken about the most appropriate way to respond to the concerns raised.

In some situations, advice will be given about how the issues raised can be dealt with without the involvement of the statutory services and suggestions will be offered about how to access support from other agencies and services.

In circumstances where it is considered that a child is not at risk of significant harm but may benefit from assistance provided by Social Services, this will be acted upon where agreement is given by the parent to this assistance being given.

However, in those situations where a safeguarding concern has been referred, Social Services have a duty in law to make enquiries whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child living in their area has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from abuse or neglect. They work with children, young people, parents and other agencies to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children and young people. The police work closely with Social Services when there are safeguarding concerns and particularly when a serious physical assault or a sexual assault might have occurred, or in cases of serious neglect.

11.13 The role of the local Baptist Association in supporting churches

The thirteen Baptist Associations around the country will each have their own procedures for offering support and guidance to churches that are

faced with a safeguarding issue. They will not all operate in the same way.

The first point of contact within the Association when the church needs help in responding to a safeguarding matter should be a Regional Minister. The Regional Minister may not have the expertise to deal with all situations, but will be able to point the church in the direction of someone who can offer guidance to the church.

Although the Baptist Union has appointed an adviser in safeguarding matters we are requesting that churches approach their Regional Minister in the first instance. Referrals to the Baptist Union's safeguarding adviser should normally only be made through a Regional Minister.

The Regional Minister should always be contacted immediately if any concerns or allegations arise concerning the minister or pastor, whether or not the minister is on the Baptist Union's accredited list of ministers. The Regional Minister will often take a lead in helping the church to respond to such a situation and may need to instigate formal disciplinary procedures if the minister concerned is an accredited minister.

The Regional Minister should always be informed if there is a statutory investigation of one of the members of the church or congregation or of one of the church's youth workers relating to the welfare of children or young people. There are times when such allegations or investigations place a great deal of strain on the fellowship of a church and the Regional Minister may be able to offer support and guidance to the leaders of the church in responding in appropriate ways. It is more helpful for the Regional Minister to be contacted when the allegations first surface than to be brought in only when the church is in some measure of disarray. The Regional Minister should be informed even if the church is obtaining support and guidance from another organisation with regard to the particular safeguarding issue. ♦

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Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

12.1 Why recruitment procedures?

One of the greatest privileges entrusted to a church in its mission and outreach is that of sharing the love of God with children and young people – passing on the gospel of life and hope to the next generation. For this reason alone it is important that the local church should have good procedures in place to ensure that the right people

are appointed to share in this task, and that those people are then trained and supported.

The need to safeguard children and young people only adds to the importance of adopting a robust appointment process and good support structures for those working with children and young people. Not least it is vital to ensure that inappropriate people are

prevented from working with children and young people in the life of the church. To work with children and young people is not a right but a privilege and the need for safety is paramount as we seek to give children and young people the best experience we can of Christian living.

Once appointed it is also important that all of those who work with children and young people in the life of the church continue to receive training in the church's safeguarding policy and procedures, and are properly supervised and supported in their work.

It is important to have very clear procedures in place for the appointment of those who work with children and young people. The kinds of situations that churches should avoid are as follows:

A notice is given out in the church meeting that a Sunday School teacher is urgently required. Someone volunteers, and at the end of the meeting they are asked if they can begin the following Sunday.

A friend of one of the youth club leaders starts attending the youth club with them and somehow drifts into being part of the leadership team, with no formal appointment process.

A new member has transferred their membership from another church. When visited for church membership they say that they have worked with children in their previous church and would be keen to get involved. The visitors decide that they should strike while the iron is hot and introduce the new member to the leader of the mid-week children's club. They join the leadership team two weeks later.

Someone offers to work with children and young people. An enhanced CRB Disclosure is obtained. References are taken up and an informal interview is conducted. However, no job description is ever written and no induction is given into the church's safeguarding policy. After a few weeks the worker begins to organise additional activities for the young people in their group, away from the church premises and with no other adult involvement.

These are examples of poor practice in churches that can potentially put children and young people at risk.

Good recruitment practice has been identified as one of the key measures that organisations should adopt if they are serious about safeguarding children and young people. In his report on the Soham murders Sir Michael Bichard stated, "The harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed...". Such vigilance is as necessary in the local church as in any other organisation working with children and young people.



Recruiting safely makes it clear that robust procedures should be in place for all organisations such as churches working with children and young people. The elements identified here are highlighted as essential in Recruiting safely.

12.2 Appointing volunteers in the local church

The advice given to organisations that appoint volunteers to work with children and young people is that their recruitment processes should be as rigorous as they would be were they appointing paid staff.⁴

This can seem somewhat artificial in the context of a local Baptist church where most of the time churches are appointing volunteers who are already members of the church or congregation. Churches will seek volunteers from within a limited pool of people and those people will normally be well known to them. In addition, not all churches will put out an open request for volunteers; they will often

identify people to approach to undertake particular roles. The 'personal approach' can often be a more effective way of attracting the right volunteers for positions.

It is perfectly acceptable for procedures to be more informal for churches than it would be for those organisations who are seeking volunteers from the general public.⁵ However, this informality can make churches particularly vulnerable. Informality should not be confused with being casual about the importance of safeguarding children and young people.

The following elements should always be part of any recruitment process for volunteers:

- › Write a role description
- › Ask the candidate to complete an application form and sign a declaration that there is no reason why they should not be working with children and young people
- › Conduct a face-to-face interview
- › Take up references
- › Check the candidate's criminal record

⁴ See *Recruiting Safely: safer recruitment guidance helping to keep children and young people safe* published by the Children's Workforce Development Council 2009 offering advice and guidance on recruitment practices for the voluntary sector.

⁵ *Recruiting Safely*, Children's Workforce Development Council (2009) paragraph 1.6, p9

- › Appoint for a probationary period
- › Candidate to sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures
- › Provide an induction programme and initial training.

These elements are outlined in greater detail below with an explanation of why they are important in the context of safeguarding.

Each church should set out clearly in its procedures what process should be followed when the church is looking for a new volunteer for its children's or young people's work. The detail of this will very much depend on the size of the church and the number of appointments that need to be made.

The church's procedures should state:

- › Who is responsible for finding a new volunteer for a post? In other words, who can start the process?
 - The leader of that group?
 - The church's co-ordinating committee for children's and/or youth work?
 - The deacons?
- › Who is responsible for drawing up the role description?
- › How will the church go about letting people know of the need for new volunteers?
 - A notice on the Sunday news sheet or on the church notice board?
 - An announcement in the Church Meeting?
 - Or will personal approaches be made to suitable people? If so, who is responsible for identifying who should be approached?
- › Who will administer the application forms?
- › Who are application forms available from?
- › Who are application forms to be returned to?
- › Who will conduct the interview?
- › What questions are to be used in the interview?
- › Who makes the appointment decision?
- › Does the appointment need to be formally

SYMBOLS

For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8.

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approved by or reported to the trustees and/or the Church Meeting?

- › Who is responsible for taking up references?
- › Who is responsible for obtaining the CRB Disclosure?
- › Who is responsible for the induction programme and the training in the church's Safeguarding Children Policy?
- › Who will carry out the review of the appointment at the end of the probationary period?

Not all of these roles need to be undertaken by the Designated Person for Safeguarding or the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon.

The procedures should make it clear that a leader should not be involved in the appointment decision involving a close family member.

12.3 Writing a role description

A role description should include:

- › the aims of the group or organisation the person will be working for
- › a summary of the responsibilities to be taken on
- › the time commitment anticipated (including, setting up, clearing up, preparation during the week, leaders meeting, training)
- › who the person is accountable to
- › who the person is responsible for
- › where appropriate a statement that the person appointed will be required to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure
- › a statement that the person appointed will be expected to work within the policy and procedures of the church's Safeguarding Children Policy
- › a statement that the person will be required to attend church safeguarding training

A clear role description is important for safeguarding children for the following reasons:

- › research has shown that children are better safeguarded in organisations where those who

are working with children and young people have clearly defined responsibilities and roles

- › volunteers are given confidence that the church takes its work with children and young people seriously when they are given a clear role, knowing to whom they are accountable and for whom they are responsible
- › the role description will enable the church to determine whether the position comes into the definition of a 'regulated position' (see 5.2, p18).

A clear role description enables the church to think through who is suitable for a role, rather than just take on anybody

The role description should be given to any candidate for a position before they complete an application form.

12.4 The application form

Every candidate for a position working with children and young people in the church should be expected to complete an application form. It is important that the church adopts a policy which treats all candidates in the same way, however well they are known.

The application form should request the following information:

- › a full history of work with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary, with dates
- › a full history of church involvement (current and previous), with dates
- › reasons why the candidate wishes to work with children and young people
- › a statement of the gifts and qualities the candidate thinks they would bring to the role
- › a signed declaration that there is nothing in the candidate's past that would call into question their suitability to work with children and young people
- › names and contact details of two referees.

The form should also include:

- › a statement about the church's safeguarding

policy and the need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure and the candidate's consent to this.

The application form is important for safeguarding purposes because:

- › it reinforces the value that the church places on work with children and the seriousness with which the church takes the appointment of workers
- › it gives a clear signal to any who are intent on abusing the trust placed in them that the church is vigilant about the safety and protection of children and young people
- › it provides important information about a candidate's history of work with children and young people and their motivation. This information can be followed up in the face to face interview. If, for example, someone has moved from church to church, each time getting involved in children's and young people's work for only a relatively short time, this is an issue that should be taken up in the interview. Large gaps in the history may prompt questions about the person's background.

A model application form for volunteers can be downloaded from the *Safe to Grow* website:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

12.5 The interview

A face-to-face interview should be held with each person who is appointed to work with children and young people. The interview should be conducted by at least two people.

Neither of those interviewing should be closely related to the candidate.

The interview will inevitably be more informal than an interview for paid employment.

However the conversation should be structured and should help you to decide whether or not the person is suitable to work with children and young people, and whether the candidate has the gifts to work in the particular role and co-operate well with the other leaders of the group.

The interview should explore the following:

- › the candidate's gifts and abilities and their motivation for working with children and young people
- › the candidate's past experience of working with children and young people
- › their experience with the particular age group they will be working with
- › their reasons for moving on from previous work with children and young people
- › anything in the application form (their employment record, gaps in their history, their church involvement etc) that gives rise to question or concern
- › their awareness of the importance of safeguarding policies and practice
- › whether or not the candidate has ever been suspected of harming children or young people in any context or had children removed from their care.

The interview should also provide the opportunity

- › to assess any training and support needs the candidate may have
- › to allow the candidate to ask any questions they may have about the work.

The interview is important for safeguarding reasons because:

- › it reinforces the value that the church places on work with children and young people and the seriousness with which the church takes the appointment of workers
- › it gives an insight into the candidate's motivation for working with children and young people
- › it enables you to explore with the candidate their past experience of working with children and young people which may reveal indicators of concern.

Remember that the interview should be conducted with more than safeguarding matters in mind. It should principally be about discerning the mind of Christ with the candidate to determine whether or not they are called and equipped by God for the task of ministry with children and young people.



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.



Recommended in *Recruiting Safely*.



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.

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12.6 Take up references

Ask the successful candidate to give you at least two referees. At least one of these references should be from outside your church or organisation. These must not be relatives or related by marriage, must be over 18 and at least one of them should be able to talk about the person's ability to work with children and young people (and if possible with the particular age group with which they will be working). This may be because they know them as a baby sitter or because they have seen them with children or young people.

If the person concerned is currently working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has done so in the past, then a reference should come from the employer or organisation concerned. If the applicant has come to you from another church within the relatively recent past, always ask that church for a reference. Do not be afraid to talk to referees when you have read their reference – it will help you to understand better what they have said and may clarify any ambiguity in the reference.

Case study

A church took up references for one of its workers – these were all provided by apparently unrelated people. What had not been checked was whether the referees, who all had different surnames, were in fact related to the applicant by marriage or as blood relatives who had themselves married and thereby changed their names. This was later revealed when allegations of child abuse came to light in another context.

A model letter requesting a reference together with a model reference form can be downloaded from the *Safe to Grow* website:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

Taking up references is important for safeguarding children and young people as it helps a church to establish a more rounded picture of the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.

12.7 Check the candidate's criminal record

The criminal records check should only form one element of a robust recruitment process. However, churches should avail themselves of whatever measures are provided to check the criminal background of those to be appointed to work with children and young people and whether a person has been barred from working with children and young people by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) (from now on this will be termed "barred status").

At the time of publication the criminal records regime has been reviewed by the government and new legislation is passing through parliament. Churches should ensure that they are following current best practice by referring to the *Safe to Grow* website for further information:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

The review may have a number of implications for churches:

- › it may become a legal duty to check the criminal record and the barred status of some workers in regulated activity
- › there may be some restrictions on the roles for which it is permissible to request an Enhanced CRB Disclosure and to check their barred status
- › it is anticipated that procedures will be introduced that will enable CRB Disclosures to be up-dated and 'portable' between different employers



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.

Until the new legislation has been introduced, churches should continue to follow current best practice which means requiring all workers to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure and renewing those disclosures at least every five years (some organisations recommend every three years).

12.8 Agreement to work within safeguarding procedures

On appointment every candidate should receive a full copy of the church's safeguarding policy and procedures and should sign an undertaking to work at all times within the terms of the policy and procedures and to attend relevant training sessions.



Recruiting Safely requires that an organisation's safeguarding policy is clearly communicated to all new workers and that workers are required to endorse the policy.

This practice reinforces the seriousness with which the church takes its commitment to the safeguarding of children and young people.

This agreement can be part of a written statement of the arrangement between the volunteer and the church. A model statement of a volunteer arrangement can be found in the resources on the website:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

12.9 Appoint for a probationary period

By appointing volunteers for a probationary period you have the opportunity to assess their suitability for the role they have taken on in the light of the way in which they



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.

- › engage with children and young people
- › cooperate with other workers
- › engage in training
- › work within the boundaries of the safeguarding procedures.

The probationary period also gives to the candidate a way of withdrawing from the position if it is not what they had envisaged.

During the probationary period the candidate should be observed with a view to ensuring that

- › they are working within the code of behaviour agreed in the church's procedures
- › they are developing healthy relationships with children and young people and understand the need to respect boundaries
- › they are working well with other members of the team.

The probationary period is important for the safeguarding of children and young people because it gives an opportunity to ensure that those who are appointed are suited to the work and provides an opportunity to remove those who are unsuitable.

In addition the probationary period can be used to highlight and identify further training that is necessary.

At the end of the probationary period a structured

informal conversation should be held with the candidate to reflect on her/his experience over the period and to review the appointment.

12.10 Induction and training



Recommended in *Safe from Harm* and *Recruiting Safely*.

An induction programme should be arranged to introduce the candidate to the responsibilities of their role. This should include training in the church's safeguarding policy and procedures.

The initial training should include:

- › recognising possible signs of abuse
- › how to listen to a child or young person without passing judgment in the event that a disclosure is made
- › when and how to report any concerns
- › the name of the Designated Person for Safeguarding in the church and how to contact them
- › the code of behaviour for workers.

If a person is already working with children and young people in the church and has undertaken this training, additional training may be necessary if they are now taking on responsibility for other workers.

As soon as possible after appointment, all workers should have full training in safeguarding children and young people. Ideally this training should be refreshed every three years. Contact your Association to find what training is offered.



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Checklist for appointing volunteers		
Post:		
Name of candidate:		
	By whom	Date
Given copy of role description		
Received signed application form		
Interview	1.	
	2.	
References received:		
Reference 1	1.	
Reference 2	2.	
ISA Registration checked		
CRB Enhanced Disclosure		
Signed undertaking on safeguarding policy		
Induction training completed		
Probationary period completed		

12.11 Appointing and supporting young leaders

The young leaders of today are the adult leaders of tomorrow. They can be valuable members of any youth or children’s team in the local church, providing valuable time, energy and ideas for your group.

If we are going to encourage young leaders we need to ensure they are kept safe, that the children and young people in their care are safe and that they are well supervised and cared for. Often young leaders are from a similar peer group to those with whom they are working, so boundaries become blurred.

Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law, young leaders under the age of 18 are

children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. However neither should they be managed in the same way as the children and young people with whom they are working.

You will have to make a judgement about how involved they will be in planning, running and evaluating the various aspects of your programme. This will depend on how much (or little) they want to do, what they are capable of, and how many other adult helpers you have. It may be best to adopt a step-by-step approach to their involvement, perhaps beginning with some closely supervised activities, and then progressively increasing the amount of involvement and responsibility they are given.

Training and mentoring should be encouraged, to ensure that the young leader is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience. We have a duty to make their time as young leaders both enjoyable and rewarding – they must never be “just another pair of hands”.

Here are some practical issues to consider when working with young leaders:

- A young leader must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of young people or children.
- When considering ratios of staff to children or young people, the young leader needs to be counted as a child, not a leader.
- The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to a young leader just as it does to any other person.
- The permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young leader just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age
- If the young leader accompanies you on a residential activity ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children or young people they are working with.

Careful judgements will need to be made regarding the appointment of young leaders who are under the age of 18. Some may need to be appointed under the full procedures of the church’s

Safeguarding Children Policy, including applying for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure. For others this will not be appropriate. The general rule of thumb is that where a young leader has leadership responsibilities in a group to which they already belong and so is exercising leadership among their peers it will not be necessary to appoint under the full procedures. When a young leader is appointed to another group, the full safeguarding appointment procedures should be followed.

- Young leaders under the age of 18 **will not** need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore **will not** be required to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure if
 - they are asked to take increasing leadership responsibility in a group in which they are a member; and
 - they are always exercising leadership by assisting the adult workers and leaders of that group.
- Young leaders under the age of 18 **will not** need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore **will not** need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure if
 - they are part of a peer-led group and emerge within that group as leaders.
- Young leaders under the age of 18 **will** need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore **will** need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure if:
 - they are appointed to work in a regulated activity with children and young people in a group to which they do not belong.

The following examples will help to illustrate these principles:



Example 1

A seventeen year old member of the Boys’ Brigade Company is promoted to sergeant and increasingly takes on leadership responsibilities. He is a talented musician and takes a leading part in helping to train the band.

Although he is involved in teaching and training boys who are younger than he is, he is doing so as a fellow member of the company and always in the capacity of assisting the officers. He does not need to be appointed under the church’s safeguarding procedures and does not need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure.

Example 2

A church establishes a cell group for the 16 – 18 year olds in the church. No adult leaders are appointed to lead the group. The group is encouraged to develop its own way of working and to release the gifts of those within the group. A seventeen year old emerges as one who increasingly takes responsibility for leading the group’s bible study.

Although teaching would normally be seen as a ‘regulated activity’, and although the group is not under the direct supervision of an adult, because this is a ‘peer-led’ group and the seventeen year old has not been formally appointed by the church to take leadership responsibility for the group, they will not need to be appointed under the church’s safeguarding procedures and do not need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure.

(Please note that the church would be wise to establish some general oversight of a group of this nature to ensure that members of the group are protected from any who would abuse the trust vested in them by the group.)

Example 3

The church starts a midweek club for the 7 – 11 year age group. Two sixteen year olds volunteer to help in the group. They play their full part with the other workers in leading small groups, introducing activities, helping the children with craftwork and teaching the bible stories that are always part of the programme.

Although they cannot be counted in the ratio of adults to children, they are engaging in ‘regulated activity’ and are being presented to the children as being trustworthy. They are not working in a group to which they themselves belong. They should therefore be appointed under the church’s safeguarding procedures, including applying for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure.

Young adult leaders 18 years and over

Leaders aged 18 years and over are adults. They will therefore need to go through the full safeguarding appointment procedures agreed by the church. Care will need to be taken when a young leader turns 18 that their new status is recognised and that the appropriate procedures are followed, including CRB Disclosure, references and training in the church’s safeguarding policy and procedures.

However young adults should still be treated with special care as they develop their leadership skills and learn new responsibilities.

If they are part of a peer group within the church, the boundaries can become blurred if sometimes they are leaders and sometimes they are a member of that peer group. Ideally young adult leaders should not be given supervisory responsibility for the age group directly below them.

Two areas of the code of behaviour will be particularly relevant to this age group:

➤ **Electronic communication**

The use of electronic communication needs to have special consideration here as young adult leaders are more likely to be in touch with young people by text and social networking sites. It is inappropriate to stop this altogether, however we need to ensure they are not putting themselves or others at risk. For more details on electronic communication see 13.6, p61.

➤ **Abuse of trust**

While by no means restricted to young leaders, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other young people who are not much younger than themselves. See 13.5, p60.

It should be noted that the principles regarding peer-led groups outlined in the previous section is equally valid for 18 year olds. In the example of the peer-led cell group, an 18 year old leader who emerges from within the group would not need to be appointed under the church’s safeguarding procedures (see 12.11, p50).

12.12 Volunteers coming from overseas

If a church is going to receive help from volunteers from overseas, for example as part of a mission activity, you should try as far as possible to apply the same principles as you would in appointing a worker locally.

We recommend that the church follows the following procedures whenever using volunteers from overseas.

Before the volunteer arrives in the UK:

- Each volunteer should complete and return a form similar to the church’s normal application form for volunteer workers.
- The sending church or organisation should be asked to obtain declarations from their local police force that there is no known reason why the volunteer cannot work with children or young people. In obtaining this information, you will need to be aware that not all countries work to the same standards for their criminal records and so the information you see may not match with the UK standard.
- Request each volunteer to supply two relevant and appropriate references regarding their suitability for work with children and young people. The church should follow up those references.

Once the volunteer or team has arrived in the UK and before they start work with children and young people, as part of the orientation and induction programme, the volunteers should be introduced to the church’s safeguarding policy and procedures.

Please note that these procedures apply only when those from overseas will be working with children and young people from the UK. If adults from overseas only have responsibility for children and young people that they bring with them in their own party these procedures will not need to be followed.

A group from the USA comes to the UK in order to help a church run their holiday club. The holiday club runs for a week and the Americans take responsibility for leading the programme of teaching. As they are working with children and young people from the UK the church should undertake checks on the suitability of the leaders as outlined above.

A young people’s choir visits the UK from Russia. They tour and perform in a number of churches over a three-week period. Because the leaders of the group only take responsibility for the young people they bring from Russia and are in the UK for less than three months the procedures above will not need to be followed.

12.13 Appointing paid workers



Recommended in Safe from Harm and Recruiting Safely.

The appointment process for paid workers should contain all of the elements of the process described for volunteers, but will inevitably be more formal and will contain some additional elements:

- a full job description and person specification should be drawn up
- the post will be advertised appropriately
- there will be a need to shortlist the applicants
- the interview will be more formal and will often be a ‘competitive interview’, with a number of candidates being interviewed for a single post
- it is important to ensure that there is an exploration of the candidate’s understanding of and commitment to safeguarding procedures within the interview
- check the candidate’s right to work in the UK



- PLEASE NOTE that this is a statutory requirement for all paid employment situations in the UK
- issue a contract of employment (or ‘terms of appointment’ if it is a ministerial appointment)

Advice and guidance on employment matters can be found in the Baptist Union Corporation (BUC) Guideline document (C12) on Employment, which includes a model contract of employment. This can

be downloaded from the Baptist Union website: www.baptist.org.uk

12.14 Supervision of workers

One of the marks of an organisation that is able to respond well to concerns about the welfare of children and young people is that there is a well-defined structure of supervision of those working with children and young people.



Recommended in Safe from Harm and Recruiting Safely.

Please note that the word ‘supervision’ is used here in the general sense of defining a working relationship in which one person is accountable to another rather than literally being present while the person is undertaking their task. We use the term ‘close supervision’ to define this latter situation.

Organisations where there is no accountability structure leave themselves open to situations where workers become casual about safeguarding matters and put children and young people, or themselves, at risk. These organisations are also very attractive to those who are intent on finding opportunities to harm children and young people as their behaviour is less likely to be recognised at an early stage. Organisations where those given leadership responsibilities know that it is their duty to maintain proper standards in safeguarding and to address inappropriate behaviour are much more likely to sustain a culture in which the welfare of children and young people is a priority.

An essential element of any job description will define

- who the postholder will be accountable to; and
- who the postholder will be responsible for.

All new workers will need to be supervised more closely until you are sure that they are working safely and within the code of behaviour that you have adopted.

It is also helpful if a habit of helping one another out in developing best practice can be encouraged. Without being intrusive, workers can help one another maintain the culture of good practice that is the key to safeguarding children and young people.

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Safeguarding issues should be regularly on the agenda of meetings of children's and young people's leaders in the church so that all workers are constantly reminded of the need for vigilance. It is good practice that regular meetings of all workers take place to share thoughts about the children and young people and the activities that you are running. This helps to give encouragement and to exchange concerns about individuals.

A well-defined structure of accountability will help to ensure that if one of the workers is behaving inappropriately that behaviour will be identified and reported promptly to the Designated Person for Safeguarding. All workers will know who they should speak to in the first instance when they see someone behaving inappropriately. (See 11.9, p41).



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Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

13.1 Writing a code of behaviour for the local church

One would hope that within the Christian community among people who profess to be followers of Jesus, it would go without saying that all children and young people, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture, or disability, should always be treated with respect and dignity and that their safety and welfare should be a priority.

Experience tells us that what this means in terms of the behaviour, attitude and actions of those who work with children and young people needs to be carefully thought through and clearly defined.

- What one person sees as a 'harmless joke', another person understands as a form of ridicule that belittles and demeans.
- What one person offers as a gesture of affection and friendship, can be experienced by another as intrusive and threatening.
- Behaviour that is perfectly innocent for most people may in a very few be part of a progressive pattern of behaviour that is about developing an abusive relationship with a child or young person (what is often termed 'grooming').



Recommended in *Recruiting Safely*.

Churches should therefore develop and set out a clear code of behaviour for those who work with children and young people that tries, as far as possible, to make explicit what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The code of behaviour should not only be seen as an important safeguarding measure, but should also be about modelling positive patterns of Christian behaviour to children and young people.

We have outlined in this chapter the elements that

we believe should be part of any code of conduct and have made recommendations about where we believe boundaries can be set to promote the welfare and safety of children and young people. In developing and up-dating any code of behaviour it is a good idea to involve as many of the workers as possible in discussing what is deemed to be acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This will mean that the boundaries are widely owned by those who have to implement them. It is also possible, with some care, to involve the children and young people in some elements of this process.

Good practice is not a straitjacket, designed to stop workers doing things. On the contrary, it is to enable churches to do the things children and young people enjoy in a safe environment. Indeed much of what is presented as good practice is good practice irrespective of safeguarding issues. These are the standards we would want to operate because we strive to do the very best for children and young people.

While the code of behaviour is first and foremost about protecting children and young people it will also help to protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwarranted suspicion.



A code of behaviour is required. These guidelines suggest some of the elements that could form a code of behaviour.

13.2 Respecting children and young people

The following are guidelines for a code of behaviour.

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child or young person.
- Listen well to children and young people. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or young person is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.
- Do not engage in any of the following:

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8.

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- invading the privacy of children or young people when they are using the toilet or showering
 - rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child or young person
 - sexually provocative games
 - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in 'fun'
 - scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.
- › When it is necessary to control and discipline children and young people, this should be done without using physical punishment. (A situation may, however, arise where a child or young person needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.)
 - › Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task.
 - › Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
 - › Workers should not normally plan to be alone with children and young people
 - This should be a key guiding principle for good practice. Further guidance is offered below on how this might work out in practice.

13.3 Guidelines to avoid being alone with children and young people



These guidelines are offered to give further detail to an essential element of the code of behaviour for workers.

All workers should plan their work with children and young people in such a way that they will not normally be alone with children or young people where their activity cannot be seen by others.

This will mean:

- › A worker should never plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people.
- › When there are insufficient leaders and workers to have two for each group doors should be left

- open, or two groups should work in the same room. (Wherever possible all doors should be fitted with glass panels.)
- › At least two people should be present before the doors are opened as children and young people arrive for a group and at least two adults should remain until the last child or young person has left the building or room at the end of a meeting.
 - › A worker should never invite a child or young person to their home alone. It may be acceptable to invite a group if another adult is in the house. Establish that each parent/carer knows where their child is and at what time they should return home.

Case study

A worker befriends a small group of teenage boys whom she invites, from time to time, to come to her house. They listen to music and 'chill out'. Sometimes they play cards. It is later alleged that the worker had sexually assaulted the boys.

No-one from the church was aware of the visits to the worker's house and the amount of time she was spending with this small group of boys. Nothing in the church's safeguarding policies made it clear that this kind of behaviour was inappropriate. The worker herself had grown up in a church where the youth leaders always opened their homes to young people.

- Would the worker's 'open house' approach cause any concern if it came to light in your own context?
- What training on appropriate relationships and boundaries is given to workers in your church?

Unplanned occasions when a worker is alone with children or young people

There may be occasions when, despite careful planning, a worker finds themselves in a situation when they are in sole charge of children or young people in the context of a church activity. In these situations the worker should:



These guidelines are offered to give further detail to an essential element of the code of behaviour for workers.

- › Assess the risks involved in sending the child or children home against the risks and vulnerability of being alone with them.
- › Wherever possible immediately phone another appropriate person to report the

situation. Workers should know who they should phone in such a situation. It could be the Designated Person for Safeguarding or the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon.

- › Make a written report of the situation immediately afterwards and give a copy to the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon. (The report serves two functions. It helps to ensure appropriate accountability for situations where there is increased vulnerability and risk. It also allows for the monitoring of situations where workers are on their own with children and young people. If the same situation keeps recurring, working practices can be reviewed.)

There may be other situations when a child or young person asks to speak to a worker on their own. The most common situation is when a youth worker is offering support or pastoral guidance to a young person where privacy and confidentiality are important.



These guidelines are offered to give further detail to an essential element of the code of behaviour for workers.

The following guidelines should apply:

- › If the worker believes that to speak to the young person on their own would place them in a vulnerable position (for example, because the young person has developed an inappropriate attachment to the worker) the worker should insist that another worker should also be present.
 - › If it is possible for the conversation to be held in a quiet corner of the room where others are present, but where sufficient privacy can be assured, this option should be taken.
- › If this is not possible, the conversation is best held in a room with the door left open or where there is glass in the door so that others can see inside the room.
- › Wherever possible another adult should be in the building and the young person should know that they are there.
- › Another adult should know that the interview is taking place and with whom.
- › A worker should set an agreed time limit prior to the conversation and stick to it! It is the

responsibility of the worker as the adult involved to set this ground rule and to end the session at the designated time. Make another appointed time to continue if necessary.

- › A youth worker should not invite a child or young person to their home alone nor go to the child or young person's home if they are alone.

Children and young people will want to speak to the person they most trust when looking for help and support. It is therefore important that all workers are aware of these guidelines so that they are able to respond appropriately when the situation arises. However it should be recognised that these guidelines are specifically designed for workers to respond to requests made by children and young people. If it is felt to be appropriate for workers to be more proactive in working one to one with young people, the guidelines in the next section should be followed.

Working One to One

Most church youth work takes place within a group setting (youth club, small groups etc), however there are times when one to one work with a young person is a necessary part of a good youth work programme. It would be rare for one to one work to be part of the normal pattern of work with children under secondary school age.



Deacons/trustees should give careful attention to guidance for one to one working.

Working one to one with a young person can come out of a number of different situations:

- › taking time to listen as a young person shares an issue they are facing
- › offering ongoing support and advice
- › a formal agreement involving a mentoring relationship between an adult and young person
- › the need to meet a young person who is facing a crisis in their life
- › discipleship of a young person, including accountability, prayer, Bible study.

We need to find appropriate and safe ways of coming alongside young people in this way and ensure guidelines are in place to safeguard both the young person and the adult. These guidelines

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should be clearly communicated to members, workers and parents.

Young people need to know that those working with them are dependable, reliable and available, while keeping within appropriate boundaries.

• **Recognition**

Although any youth or children’s worker may find themselves in a situation where a child or young person wants to confide in them and a one to one conversation is appropriate (please see previous section) there are some for whom it may be appropriate to work more regularly in one to one settings. Often this is more likely to feature as a component of the work of paid youth workers, but not exclusively so.

We recommend that any who work in this way in the church should

- › have proved their willingness to work within the policy and procedures of the church’s Safeguarding Children Policy
- › have demonstrated their capacity to respect appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children and young people
- › be formally recognised as someone who has the trust of the church to engage in one to one working with young people.

All workers should be aware that they need the specific permission of the church to work one to one as a routine part of their interaction with children and young people.

• **Accountability**

A simple log sheet should be kept regarding who, where and when workers and young people have met. This gives opportunities for other workers to raise a concern about a particular workers’ allegiance to a young person.

Written notes should be made following the meeting, recording the essence of the conversation, advice given or recommendations made and what was agreed.

Notes should be securely stored and young people should be aware that they have a right to see any records kept about them.

• **Supervision**

Supervision of workers should be used to monitor the frequency of appointments as well as the content of meetings, ensuring a worker isn’t getting in over their head, and a young person is not becoming too dependent on the worker.

• **Maintaining distance**

Workers need to maintain a healthy self-awareness when working one to one. Phrases such as, “You’re the only one who understands me,” may be flattering but should ring alarm bells. Is there a possibility of drawing someone else in to work alongside you or having a cooling off period of a few weeks whilst they reflect upon advice given to them?

Workers need to maintain a professional distance, and not be at the beck and call of the individual young person. Workers need to have adequate knowledge of where to refer a young person, if necessary. It is the worker’s responsibility to know what to do with the information given to them and when to involve other agencies.

• **Confidentiality**

Appropriate confidentiality is necessary. When young people share personal information they will need to know that the worker is not going to share that information with others in the church – particularly as the workers can be friends of the young person’s parents. However, workers must understand that if they believe the young person they are talking to, or other young people, are at risk of harm then they have a responsibility to pass that information on. Great care should therefore be taken before promising confidentiality.

What is most important is that the young person knows what the boundaries of confidentiality are. There may be times when the worker believes that it would be helpful to talk to others about the matters that have been shared. In this situation, the worker should talk this through with the young person.

• **Venue**

Any contact with young people should be in a public place, at an appropriate time and in view

of another adult (i.e. early morning, late night or whilst they should be at school is not appropriate).

For example you could meet with a young person in a one to one situation

- › at the end of a youth group event whilst others are clearing up
- › during a youth group session, in a side room with the door open and others knowing that the meeting is taking place
- › at a coffee shop after school.

One to one work can be an essential part of youth work, but there are risks involved with this type of working for both the young person and the youth worker. One to one work must be practised safely, appropriately and within agreed guidelines. Whatever age group we are working with, one to ones must not operate outside of the law.

A good resource for further thinking about one to one working is:

Can We Have a Chat? Working safely with young people one to one
John Langford, Grove Publications, 2006

When offering transport to children and young people



These guidelines are offered to give further detail to an essential element of the code of behaviour for workers.

Vulnerable situations can be created when workers offer lifts to children and young people, either to take them to and from church activities or to take them on planned outings. (For other general advice on offering transport to children and young people, see 14.7, p70.)

Some practices can be adopted to mitigate the risks involved:

- › although it is often impractical, whenever possible two adults should be present in a car with children and young people
- › parents should give permission for their child to be given transport and should be informed at what time to expect their child home
- › where possible workers should avoid giving regular lifts to children or young people on their own to and from church activities
- › if the same group of children are regularly given

lifts, consideration should be given to picking them up or dropping them off in a different order each week so that the same child is not always the first or the last to be picked up or dropped off

- › if a child or young person is travelling alone in the car with a worker, the child or young person should be asked to sit in the back seat of the car
- › workers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a vehicle with a child or young person - long conversations in the car outside church premises or home, or unnecessary diversions should be avoided
- › workers should avoid being alone in a car with a child or young person who is particularly vulnerable; for example, a child with a crush on a leader, or a child whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

Case study

A youth leader regularly gives lifts home to a small group of teenagers after the youth club. Due to the rural nature of the area and the distance between the different homes, the young people are always dropped off in the same order. This leaves the leader alone with a girl at the end of the run. After one occasion she alleged that the youth leader attempted to touch her sexually when leaning over to open the car door. The case was referred to the police although eventually it was decided by the police that the evidence was not strong enough to bring a successful prosecution.

- How does this case highlight the importance of following good practice in transporting children and young people?
- Despite the decision not to prosecute would you allow the youth leader to continue in their role?

13.4 Guidelines for appropriate physical contact with children and young people

It is hard to conceive how you can be a nurturing, caring worker with children and young people without some physical contact happening at least occasionally! For example, if a child or young person is distressed it is natural to put an arm

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Clear guidance needs to be given on the boundaries that must be respected with regard to physical contact with children and young people.

round their shoulder. It could even be thought of as abusive not to respond by touching a child in such circumstances. However, we must be conscious that what to most is an innocent touch may have another, more sinister meaning for children who have experienced abuse. We must also be aware that some people use the opportunity of physical contact with others not as a way of conveying love and support, but as a means of satisfying their own cravings.

The following guidelines are helpful when considering whether or not touch is appropriate in any given situation.

- For whose benefit is this taking place?
 - Is it for the sake of the child or young person or is it for your own benefit?
- If no-one else is present it is always advisable to avoid physical contact.
- Use physical contact in a way that conveys appropriate concern but in a way that is least likely to be misconstrued. For example, an arm around the shoulder standing by the side of a child or young person may be more appropriate than a full 'hug'.
- Remember that not all express friendship or affection in the same way and some people (children included) find excessive touching an infringement of their personal space.
- If you find that the child or young person is cringing or responding in a negative way to being touched, then stop immediately and find an alternative, non-tactile way to convey your concern.
- Workers should be prepared to be accountable to fellow workers for their use of touch and physical contact and should listen to the concerns of others if it is felt that boundaries are being crossed.

13.5 Abuse of trust

Relationships between children or young people and their leaders take many different forms, but all of them can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child or young



Guidance on abuse of trust is required by *Caring for young people and the vulnerable?*

person has placed a degree of trust. The trust may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend. In every case, however, that relationship is not one of equal partners and there is the potential for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the child or young person. It is important for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and thus the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

It is now acknowledged that the imbalance of power that means that it is wrong for a teacher to develop a romantic relationship with a sixth former or for a doctor to enter into a romantic relationship with a patient, can exist in other non-professional contexts. All voluntary organisations are now expected to have a policy which sets out the boundaries of such relationships. Such policies are intended to protect young people over the age of consent but under 18 years of age where a relationship of trust with an adult looking after them exists.

It is always wrong for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person. Whilst young people aged 16 or 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity, they may still be emotionally immature. Their vulnerability could be exploited either deliberately or unwittingly. Where a relationship of trust exists between a young person and a youth leader it does not make any difference whether or not the sexual relationship is consensual. The imbalance of power makes it an abuse of trust and therefore wrong.

However abuse of trust does not only take place when a relationship develops into a sexual relationship. It is also not acceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a young person with whom they have a relationship of trust. Such a romantic relationship (even if consensual) would not be a relationship of equal partners - the leader is always in a position of power over the young person and exploitation is almost inevitable, even if unintentional.

These principles apply irrespective of sexual

orientation. It is important also to recognise that women as well as men may abuse a position of trust.

The inappropriate nature of romantic relationships is obvious where the leader is a mature adult, but less so when the leader is also a young person (e.g. a 19 year old leader with a 16 year old member of the group). However, if such a romantic relationship did occur, there would still be a confusion of the roles of leader and romantic partner. Normally in these circumstances the leader should cease either the relationship of trust or the romantic relationship with the young person.

Policies should make it clear that those taking on work or already working with young people must be aware that they are in a position of trust and the responsibilities this brings with it. The policy should:

- aim to protect the young person from an unequal and potentially damaging relationship
- aim to protect the person in a position of trust by preventing him/her from entering into such a relationship deliberately or accidentally by providing clear and enforceable guidance on what behaviour is acceptable.

The Government-recommended good practice establishes that a clear statement be made that any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the individual or individuals in their care should be avoided; and that any sexual relationship within a relationship of trust is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues.

For further information see, *Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust* (Home Office 2003)



This suggestion is not based on any government guidance. We offer it for the consideration of churches.

We believe that it would be good practice for churches when appointing young leaders to consider not appointing young leaders to lead the peer group immediately below their own, but always to leave a gap of at least one peer group. If this principle were to be followed a sixteen year old being given leadership experience would not be placed in a leadership role with the 13 – 15 year olds, but at least one age group below. A nineteen year

old would not be given leadership responsibility for the 16 – 18 year old group, but always with a younger group of children and young people.

Case study

A group of young people have grown up together within your church. The age profile of the group is between 16 and 20. For a number of years they have 'hung out' together at church and at other social events. Jon is 19 and has started going out with Helen who is 16. Jon is a leader in the youth group that Helen is a member of; however, they have been friends for years because they are in the same friendship group.

- Is there a problem here?
- Is this or could this be abuse of trust?
- What steps can be taken to ensure that there is no abuse of trust?

13.6 Electronic communication



It is important that all churches give clear guidance on the use of electronic communication. We have offered what we believe to be a balanced approach, but local churches will need to come to their own mind on specific guidance to workers.

Within the code of behaviour for workers with children and young people there should be clear guidance on the safe use of mobile phones, e-mail, social networking sites etc to communicate with children and young people.

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance:

- electronic communication is often an extremely informal mode of communication which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood
- because of the informal style of electronic communication, workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children and young people
- some adults who are intent on harming children and young people choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children and young people.

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Case study

"I was having a difficult time at school and spent a lot of time in chat rooms in the evenings. It was somewhere I could talk about how I was feeling. Someone from church saw my profile picture. I recognized him – his name was Andy. He's at church most Sundays. He was really kind; he seemed to understand what I was going through. We chatted now and again to start with, and then it became more regular. I trusted him, so I gave him my mobile number and he used to text me while I was at school to see if I was OK.

One day I texted him to say I was having a really bad day and would he pray for me. At the end of school he was waiting for me at the school gate. He offered to take me home. I said 'No' because I had arranged to go home with a friend. He got really cross and told me he had arranged it with my parents. I knew that wasn't true. A school teacher had to come and intervene."

It came to light that Andy was known to the police for harassing girls. Most of his contacts were made online. As Andy was not involved in the children's or youth work in the church the church had no reason to have any awareness of his background.

This case study illustrates the way in which electronic communication can be used unscrupulously by people who prey on the vulnerability of children and young people.

The only way a church policy on electronic communication might have helped in this particular situation is if the church in question had clearly communicated to its young people that the only kind of electronic communication that it encourages between its members and its young people is electronic communication of a factual nature, giving information about events and activities.. This might have discouraged the girl from entering into the kind of relationship that developed.

It is vitally important to have guidelines regarding the safe use of electronic communication to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children. The church's safeguarding procedures should acknowledge electronic communication as a legitimate means of communicating with children and young people **only as long as strict protocols are followed** concerning the nature of the communication.

Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face-to-face contact with young people.

With the world of electronic communication changing so rapidly, it is not possible to issue guidance that covers all eventualities. However, there are some general principles that can help to ensure that the church's overriding concern is for the well-being of the children and young people.

- parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given
- workers should not put any pressure on children or young people to reveal their email address, mobile phone number etc.
- direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided
- only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed safeguarding procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations
- contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter
- where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
 - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
 - a log kept of when they communicated and who was involved
- workers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role
- workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives

- clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding the use of unnecessary abbreviations
- electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm
- e-mails to young people should include a church header and footer showing this to be an official communication from a youth team member.

Mobile phones

- mobile phone usage should be primarily about information-giving
- 'text language' should be avoided so that there is no misunderstanding of what is being communicated
- 'text conversations' should usually be avoided (that is a series of text messages/emails being sent to and fro between mobile phones)
- the use of the phone camera should comply with the church's policy on photos/videos
- workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone.

Instant Messaging Services (IMS)

- the use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum
- where a child or young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
 - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
 - a log kept of when they communicated and who was involved

Social Networking sites

- if youth leaders are going to communicate via social networking sites consideration should be given to creating a separate profile for the church group
- alternatively youth leaders should consider having a site that is used solely for youth work communications which is totally separate from their own personal site
- if youth leaders are going to use their own personal site they should ensure that all of its content is appropriate for young people to see
- lower age limits of social networking sites should be adhered to (this varies for each site)

- be aware of the content of photos that may be uploaded on to your site
- be aware that children and young people could view photos and communications of other people linked to that social networking site
- all communication with young people should be kept within public domains
- workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny
- copies of communications should be retained and where possible other workers should be copied in on communication.

Case study

A youth worker uses his mobile to communicate with the members of his youth group. He is careful to follow the church's policy and uses text messages only to remind the group of forthcoming meetings and to convey information.

After a meeting of the youth club one evening, after he has arrived home, he receives a text message from one of the young teenage girls who tells him that she is lonely and has no friends. He replies to the text message to try to offer some support to the teenager. The girl responds again, telling him that he is the only person who she can talk to. The youth worker is afraid that if he doesn't respond, the teenager will feel rejected. A series of text messages goes backwards and forwards until nearly midnight.

The girl's mother finds the text messages on her daughter's phone a few days later and is upset at the tone and content of the exchange between her daughter and the youth worker late at night. She contacts the minister and complains about the youth worker's behaviour.

The minister raises the matter with the Designated Person for Safeguarding who is able to inform the minister that the youth worker had recognised that he had allowed the exchange of texts to get out of hand, and had given a transcript of the texts to the Designated Person.

- How should the worker have dealt with the initial text message?
- How does the fact that the worker reported the incident to the Designated Person affect the way in which the church might respond to the mother's complaint?
- Does your church give clear guidance to its youth workers that would help them to act wisely in this kind of situation?

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Safe working practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

14.1 Procedures to promote safe practice

There is widespread concern that the 'Health and Safety culture' that has become part of the modern society has got out of control. Some have become so afraid of taking risks that children and young people are prevented from taking part in activities that bring enjoyment, adventure and challenge into their lives.

However, that same 'Health and Safety culture' has grown up because in the past we have often been careless of risk. Schools, clubs and churches

have organised activities without giving due care and attention to the potential hazards that might cause harm to children and young people – hazards that could have been foreseen. Often very simple measures can be taken that enable children and young people to continue with all of the activities that they were doing, but in a way that minimizes the risk. A very simple example would be

using round-ended scissors rather than scissors with a sharp point.

We are not trying to create the illusion of a risk-free world for children and young people. Indeed that would be unhealthy for children's development. Some degree of risk in life is unavoidable. Part of a child's development is in learning to live in a world that can sometimes be threatening and harmful. However, we should seek to minimize the occasions for unnecessary risk. The law does not expect us to eliminate all risk, but under our duty of care churches are required to protect people as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.

"All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from

a very young age and from their earliest play experiences."⁶

We need to develop a sensible culture of safety when working with children and young people. The best way to do this is to introduce procedures and practices that become 'second nature' to those who are working with children and young people in the church.

14.2 Parental consent



Written parental consent is an essential component of safeguarding procedures.

A key component in developing safe practice with children and young people is to work in partnership with parents/carers. When children and young people are in the care of church organisations it is important:

- › to have the consent of the parent/carer
- › to have a point of contact in the event of an emergency
- › to know key information about the child or young person that may impact on their well-being
- › to provide clear information to parents/carers about the organisation and activities the child or young person is involved in and the safeguarding policy of the church.

All children and young people should be registered and parents/carers should be asked for the following details of their child:

- › Full name
- › Address
- › Home telephone number and alternative contact number(s) in case of an emergency
- › Date of birth
- › Details of any medical conditions the church should be aware of, or of any food or drug allergies etc.
- › Details of any behavioural issues or other matters that might be relevant

In addition consent should be explicitly obtained for the following:

- › emergency medical treatment

⁶ *Managing risk in play provision: a policy statement* Play Safety Forum 2002

- › travel arrangements when transport is being organised
- › taking the child or young person off the church premises for occasional activities (where appropriate)
- › special consent for any overnight event or activity
- › use of the child's photograph in church publicity material or on the church website
- › electronic communication with the child/young person
- › for children up to the age of 7, consent regarding who is entitled to collect the child from a group.

A model parental consent form can be downloaded from the *Safe to Grow* website:

www.safetogrow.org.uk

Parents/carers should be given the following information:

- › name and contact telephone number for the leader of the group/activity attended by the child or young person
- › outline details of the group/activity the child or young person is attending, including the starting time and the time the event ends, together with expectations as to whether children or young people should be collected or whether they make their own arrangements to go home
- › that the church has a Safeguarding Children Policy and that in the event of the parent/carer having any concerns about the welfare of their child in relation to the church, they should contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding
- › name and contact number of the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

The details on the consent form should be available to the leader of the group or activity each time the group or activity meets so that the contact information and medical information etc is readily available in the event of an emergency.

The church's written procedures should make it clear who is responsible in each group for obtaining the parental consent forms and

how these should be stored. The information should be held in accordance with the church's Data Protection Policy. In complying with data protection legislation, churches should ensure that the information they retain is accurate and that information is held only while the information is necessary and relevant. This means that churches should be careful about keeping their records of children and young people up-to-date:

- there should be a policy of requiring parents to complete the consent form annually, ensuring that the contact information is accurate and that any changes in a child's medical condition etc are updated
- the records of any children and young people who have stopped attending should be deleted.

14.3 Children, young people and the church's Health and Safety policy



A Health and Safety Policy is a requirement for all churches.

A desire to safeguard children and young people from harm will mean that we need to be safety conscious. This will begin with the buildings in which the activities take place. Church buildings are not always the safest places for children. Many are old buildings that were constructed before today's greater awareness of health and safety matters. Even

modern church buildings have not always been designed with the best interests of children in mind. Nevertheless, there are ways of protecting all users of the property, but especially children.

Every church should have adopted a Health and Safety policy. Full guidance on adopting a Health and Safety policy can be found in the Baptist Union Corporation guideline C7 *Health and Safety and Fire Precautions*.⁷ The church's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures should refer to the Health and Safety policy. Someone should be designated to work in partnership with the church's named Health and Safety Officer to ensure that the policy is implemented with children in mind.

As an exercise, try going around your church building using 'the eyes of a child', from their height and see what you notice

⁷ Available for download from the Baptist Union website www.baptist.org.uk

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8.

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Furniture

- Is it in a safe condition, child sized etc?

Equipment

- Are potentially hazardous tools, cleaning fluids etc stored in a safe, locked place?

Electrical

- Do you have checks on all electrical equipment and use socket covers when they are not in use?

Lighting

- Is the building well lit internally and externally- especially around entrance points?

Windows in doors

- If there are no windows in doors, could windows be added so that activities in rooms can be seen by others in the building?

Security

- How easy would it be for a child or young person to leave the building during an activity without being noticed?
- How easy would it be for a stranger to get into the building during a children's or young person's activity without being noticed?

First Aid

- Is there a first aid box - is it kept full?
- Are there people who are trained in first aid on site?
- Do you have an accident book for record purposes?

Fire Equipment

- Is there suitable fire fighting equipment over the whole of the premises?
- Has a fire risk assessment been carried out?
- Do you carry out fire drills?
- Do all of the children's and young people's workers know how to respond to a fire alarm?

Under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy every worker should be given clear information about the following:

- their individual responsibility to uphold the church's Health and Safety Policy
- how to report incidents and concerns under the church's Health and Safety Policy

- where the First Aid equipment is kept and how accidents should be reported
- what procedures should be followed in the event of a fire.

14.4 Risk assessments



Safe to Grow is offering this pattern of risk assessment as a model of good practice

As well as assessing the premises for the risks that they may pose for children, all leaders of children's and young people's groups should assess the risks involved in the programme that they are planning.

What is a risk assessment? A risk assessment means looking at what could go wrong and deciding on ways to prevent or minimise that risk. We all carry out informal risk assessments every day:

Is it going to rain? I'll take my coat and an umbrella just in case.

Is it safe to cross the road? Find a safe place to cross, look right and left...

There are a number of ways to carry out risk assessments. The following is a basic, straight-forward method recommended by the Health and Safety Executive. This method is dependent on identifying potential 'hazards' and then assessing the 'risk' that those hazards could pose.⁸

- A hazard is anything that could cause harm.
- The risk is the likelihood (whether high or low) that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Walk around the venue, think through your programme and think about the individual children and young people you are working with (taking into account age, special needs, whether physical, emotional or behavioural etc).

- What/who could reasonably be expected to cause harm?
- Look back at accident records/incidents.
 - What has been a hazard in the past?

⁸ See *Five steps to risk assessment*, Health and Safety Executive 2006

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard think through who might be harmed:

- either groups of people (e.g. children, young people, youth leaders, parents) or
- individuals. (e.g. a child with special needs)

How might they be harmed?

- what type of injury?

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

What can you do about the hazards?

- Can I get rid of the hazards altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Writing down your risk assessment and sharing them with your colleagues helps to ensure everyone understands the risks and subsequent controls.

Risk Assessments can then be reviewed and re-used at a later date.

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

When working with children and young people, the level of risk will vary depending upon the particular individuals you are working with, and the gifts and abilities of your workers. Thus risk assessments should be reviewed when necessary.

General risk assessments and specific risk assessments

A general risk assessment should be done at the beginning of each term or set of sessions, considering the programme and the venue.

Specific risk assessments should be done for activities which are out of the ordinary, for example a trip out, or an activity with particular risk factors (cooking, woodwork etc.).

Example grids for carrying out a risk assessment are shown below:

General Risk Assessment – Activity: Youth Club			
Identify the Hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Evaluate the risk and decide on precautions	Review your assessment and update if necessary
Inadequately supervised children/young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents • Bullying, etc 	Young people Leaders/helpers Parents	Ratio of staff to young people (see 14.5, page 68) All rooms that are being used to be adequately staffed Any young people with special needs? Do they need particular help for certain parts of the programme?	If a volunteer can't come at the last minute, how does that affect the evening's programme?
Accidents playing games	Young people Leaders/helpers	First aid kit and first aider on premises Think through games – are they suitable for the age profile of young people? Access to phone	Playing outdoors away from usual venue Re-assess risk Is field clear of hazards?
Safety of premises	Young people Leaders/helpers Parents	Walk around the premises and consider what could reasonably be expected to cause harm	Another group is sharing the premises on a particular night
Use of kitchen	Young people Leaders/helpers	Young people to stay out of kitchen unless adequately supervised	
Trips out		Separate risk assessment to be done	

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Specific Risk Assessment – Activity: Youth Club			
Visit local park – Meet at church and walk to park			
Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Evaluate the risk and decide on precautions	Review your assessment and update if necessary
Large group of young people walking down road Danger from cars Potential danger from and to public	Young people Leaders/helpers Public	Split young people into small manageable groups Increase staffing levels Previously identify any possible danger areas in advance – avoid those areas	
Use of field for football/rounders	Young people Leaders/helpers Public	Check area for hazards – i.e. broken glass Ensure area is suitable and sufficiently away from public	
Lose young people	Young people	Ensure young people know where they can/can't go alone or with leaders When you leave church building and leave park – roll call	
Sport	Young people Leaders/helpers	First aid kit Mobile phone Permission forms for young people Parent contact information	

14.5 Risk assessment - ratios



Churches must give careful consideration to appropriate ratios in all situations taking account of the needs of any particular group or activity.

An important aspect of any risk assessment is ensuring that you have a suitable ratio of staff to children and young people. A number of factors will come into play in assessing the ratio for any particular activity or group:

The age of the children and young people

- Generally speaking the younger the children the higher the ratio should be of adults to children.

Special needs

- Do any of the children have special needs that will require additional support?

Behavioural issues

- Do any of the children or does the group as a whole present challenging behaviour that can be difficult to control?

The venue

- If your buildings are large and sprawling and it is difficult to contain children and young

people while on the premises it may be necessary to have additional personnel

- Activities that take place away from the church premises normally require a higher ratio of adults to children than those that take place inside.

Covering for emergencies

- How will you manage if someone has an accident and needs immediate medical attention?
- If one of your workers is likely to be 'on call' is there sufficient cover in the event that he/she is called away?

Gender balance

- If you have a mixed group of children and young people it is ideal to try to ensure that you have both male and female workers present. This becomes increasingly important for older age groups.

Recommended minimum ratios

The following table represents recommended

minimum ratios of adults to children. This should be your starting point in calculating appropriate ratios for your groups and activities. If any special factors emerge within your risk assessment you should increase the recommended ratio in order to ensure the safety of the children and young people.

Remember that in calculating the ratios of workers to children you should not include young leaders who are under the age of 18 among your number of adult workers. (For more information on working with young leaders under the age of 18 see 12.11, p50.)



These are recommended minimum ratios and need to be adjusted according to particular needs. In circumstances when the ratio falls below this level procedures should be adopted as outlined below.

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

What happens when ratios fall below the required level?

The ratio of adults to children can fall below the optimum level in two different types of situation.

- › In a one-off situation where a member of the leadership team is unavailable for one session and it is not possible to arrange alternative cover.
- › On a more permanent basis, where it is not possible to find sufficient volunteers to staff a group at the desired level.

The one-off situation

When the first of these scenarios arises the remaining leaders should:

- › Determine whether it is safe to continue with the planned programme
 - Are there ways of working that would reduce the risks?
 - If this is a week when additional staff were required because of the nature of the planned activities should the activities be changed?
- › If children's and young people's safety is being put at unacceptable risk then the event should be cancelled
- › Write a report detailing:
 - the circumstances that led to the reduced staffing levels
 - the actions that were taken to reduce the risk to the children and young people.
- › Give a copy of the report to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

If the reduced staffing will lead to one adult being alone with a child or a group of children or young people then (if there is time) the event should be cancelled. If there is an emergency that leads to this situation, then the worker who is left alone should follow the practice outlined in the code of behaviour (see 13.3, p56).

Case Study

Youth club is due to start in 30 minutes. You have just received a phone call from two of your volunteer team saying there has been an accident on the motorway and they are unable to get home from work.

This means you do not have enough staff for the number of children, particularly utilising the three rooms that you usually use for the youth club. There is not enough time to cancel the club but you have a parent who would stand in for the evening. You give her a ring but she says she doesn't have a CRB Disclosure. You explain that this is not a problem for a one-off evening, as long as she is happy to sign a self-disclosure regarding her criminal record and suitability to work with children and young people.

Continued

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However, as this parent is not trained in youth work and does not know the young people, it would be inappropriate to leave her supervising any activity. Activities are therefore scaled down on this occasion utilising fewer rooms.

The reasons for changing the ratio, and any steps taken to ensure safety should be recorded in an incident report and passed to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

The on-going situation

When insufficient volunteers can be found to staff a particular group at the optimum level a careful assessment of the situation should be made to see if the risks can be reduced or managed in a sustainable way.

- › Are there ways of adapting the programme that would reduce the level of risk?
- › Could the group meet at the same time as another group so that in the event of an emergency additional staff cover is available on the premises?
- › Could a cap be placed on the number of children or young people attending the group to keep the ratio within manageable limits?

Any decision to run a group with staff ratios that are below the recommended level should be taken by the charity trustees of the church.

The decision should be recorded in their minutes together with

- › the reasons why they believe that this decision is justified
- › any measures that have been taken to minimise the risks to children and young people.

In no circumstances should the trustees plan to continue running a group where only one adult will be present with children and young people.

14.6 Including risk assessment in the church procedures

Your written procedures should include a clear indication about

- › When a risk assessment should be carried out

- › General risk assessments
 - should these be ‘termly’ or ‘quarterly’? (set a frequency that is appropriate for the way in which the group runs)
- › Special risk assessments
 - whenever an activity may involve greater risk
 - always if an activity takes place away from the normal venue
- › Who is responsible for carrying out the risk assessment
 - identify clearly for each group who will be responsible for conducting the risk assessment
- › What record should be kept of the risk assessment?
 - How should these be stored?

Within the training and induction programme organised by the church for its children’s and youth workers, a module on risk assessment should be introduced for those who will have this responsibility. A common method of risk assessment should be agreed to be used by all church organisations.

14.7 Risk assessment – procedures for transporting children and young people

Please note that this section should be read in conjunction with the code of behaviour for transporting children and young people (see 13.3, p59).

Giving lifts to children and young people is one of the areas where boundaries can become blurred in the life of the church community. Is the leader of a group offering a lift to a child to attend a meeting as part of her responsibility as an appointed leader in the church, or because she is a friend of the child’s parents, or a relative of the child?

For the sake of clarity it is better to work on the principle that whenever an appointed children’s or youth worker gives a lift to children (other than their own children) to a church-run children’s or young people’s activity they should follow the procedures laid down by the church.

It is important that the church and parents are clear about the nature of arrangements for offering lifts to children to and from church based activities. If the arrangements are informal private arrangements made between parents the following procedures do not need to be applied. However, if the transport arrangements are offered and made by the church or organisation the procedures set out below should always be in place.

When children are transported in cars



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

- › Written permission from the parent/ carer should be obtained. (A model parental consent form can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk)
- › The driver should understand and agree to the church’s code of behaviour when transporting children or young people (see 13.3, p59).
- › The driver should have fully comprehensive insurance which covers voluntary work (or in the case of a paid youth worker or children’s worker, insurance that covers them for transporting others in the course of their employment).
- › Seat belts should always be worn and the proper child seats and child restraints should be used for young children in accordance with the law
- › If a volunteer driver who has not been appointed as a children’s or young people’s worker is used to transport children and young people on church activities, the driver should be appointed following the procedures outlined under the church’s Safeguarding Children Policy.

Churches should not use people as drivers for children and young people when their criminal record shows a record of driving offences that suggests that the person may not be a safe driver.



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

When a mini-bus or coach is used to transport children or young people:

- Many hiring organisations now ask for the driver to have a MIDAS certificate. Further information can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk
- › Ensure that the mini-bus or coach is fitted with seat-belts on all of the seats and that seat-belts are always worn.

- › Ensure that the number of children and adults does not exceed the capacity of the coach or mini-bus so that all can have an allocated seat with a seat-belt.

Case study 1

The parents of youth club members decide to arrange among themselves a rota to pick up their children after the youth club and drop them to one another’s homes. The parents offering to be part of the rota do not need to be appointed under the church’s Safeguarding Children Policy and do not need to apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure. This is a private arrangement made between the parents.

If one of the leaders of the youth club is part of this arrangement (because he is a parent of one of the members) he should comply with the code of behaviour for transporting young people.

Case study 2

Because of concerns about the safety of young people after the youth club, a church decides to arrange a rota of drivers to take youth club members home. Some of the drivers are workers and leaders in the youth club – others volunteer solely to drive the teenagers home. These drivers will need to follow the procedures laid out above and be appointed under the procedures set down in the church’s Safeguarding Children Policy, including Enhanced CRB Disclosures.

14.8 Outings and overnight events



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

For all events when children and young people are taken off the church premises:

- › A special risk assessment should be carried out (see 14.4, p66), including an assessment of the appropriate ratio of adults to children (see 14.5, p68).
- › Parents should be informed in writing of the arrangements.
- › The children and young people should be divided into groups, each with a responsible adult, even if the whole group is to remain together. Each adult should be given a written list of those children or young people for whom they have responsibility.
- › If travelling in several small groups, it is good practice to insist that the same group of children

or young people travel with the same adult on both the outgoing and return journeys. This minimizes the possibility of children or young people going astray because of false assumptions that someone else has taken them.

Overnight events

For overnight events particular care needs to be taken, not least when it comes to making arrangements for sleeping accommodation. It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all situations. However, sensible precautions will minimize the risks for children or young people and workers.

All of the above bullet-points should apply. In addition the following best practice should be followed:

- › Risk assessment:
 - Particular note should be taken regarding the proposed venue and its suitability for providing sufficient rooms for children and adults to sleep, together with arrangements for toilets and washing etc.
 - Are there sufficient fire exits from the sleeping accommodation in the event of a fire?
 - Are all of the workers conversant with the procedures in the event of a fire?
 - Ascertain prior to the event the local telephone numbers and other information that would be needed in the event of an emergency (caretaker or other contact for property if not on site, local doctor, the location of the nearest Accident and Emergency Hospital etc).
- › Parental consent:
 - Separate parental consent should be obtained for each event where the child or young person will be cared for overnight.
 - A contact phone number overnight for the parent/carer should be obtained for the particular night(s) of the event.
 - Parents/carers should be given the address of the overnight venue together with a contact phone number for making contact in the event of an emergency. If giving a mobile

phone number as the main point of contact please ensure beforehand that the signal strength at the venue is sufficient to make and receive calls.

- Ensure that parents/carers have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, and also giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor and consent for emergency medical treatment.
- Consideration should be given to having a meeting with parents/carers prior to the event
 - › Sleeping arrangements
 - Males and females should sleep separately
 - If it is a mixed group of both boys and girls, there must be a mix of male and female adult workers
 - Come to a measured judgement based on the circumstances of the group you are taking away as to whether it is wise for adults to share sleeping accommodation with children or young people. This will depend on the ages of the children, their need of support, the likelihood of older children bullying younger children, and the nature of the venue. If adults share sleeping accommodation with children and young people, children and young people should always be able to dress and undress separately from adults. An adult should never sleep alone in a room with children or young people.



Separate sleeping arrangements for boys and girls is essential



Whether adults and children should sleep separately should be determined according to context.



This checklist is offered by Safe to Grow as a model of good practice.

The following checklist will help to identify a number of important issues that should be considered for the safety and well-being of the children and young people when planning residential events:

- › At least one of the workers/leaders should be responsible for First Aid and should hold an appropriate, valid certificate
- › The person responsible for catering should hold a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate
- › Check the insurance cover of any building in which you will be sleeping. There may be a limit on numbers it accommodates. If you

exceed these, insurance can be invalid.

- › Check the building and know where water, electricity and gas can be turned off.
- › Fire safety
 - Know the fire drill for the building, and make sure you have a fire drill as soon as possible after entering the premises.
 - Know where the fire extinguishers are.
 - A Location Specific Plan should be displayed alongside the Fire Notice in each room.
 - Church halls and rooms used for sleeping larger numbers of people **must** have **two** means of exit.
- › Know where the nearest hospital and doctor are. It is good practice to make contact with a local doctor prior to the event.
- › It is a good idea to notify the local police. This applies if you are sleeping in any building, even if only for one night, and even if it is your own church. Also it is helpful to inform the fire brigade.
- › Ensure that parents/carers have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor and consenting to emergency medical treatment.
- › Residential activities must have safety rules
 - letting adults know where you are
 - not entering the kitchen without asking the cook, etc.
- › Make sure the children have correct clothing for whatever activity they are taking part in. It is useful to issue a 'kit list' for residential activities.
- › Where outdoor activities are concerned, either leaders should have the appropriate qualification, or if the activity is being provided by an outside organisation, then you should check that this organisation is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and has appropriate insurance. Current guidelines suggest that for any camping or hill walking

activity, the basic qualification which should be held is the Basic Expedition Leader Award (BELA) or an equivalent, for example a scout or guiding qualification.

14.9 Welcoming children into an all-age community

We noted in the second chapter that the church community is unlike many other communities that work with children and young people in that the church community is an all-age community (see above p16f). Indeed one of the five core values of the Baptist family is that we believe that we are called to be inclusive communities, with a gospel welcome extended to all.

Where an organisation's sole focus is to work with children and young people, it is possible for that organisation to establish very firm boundaries such that anyone who is thought to be unsuitable to work with children and young people can be excluded from the organisation. While churches are in a position to exclude such people from holding positions of trust with children and young people, churches would want to do everything possible for those people still to find their rightful place within the community of the church.

In addition there are occasions in the life of churches when boundaries become blurred and it is not at all clear whether the church is taking responsibility for the care of children and young people or whether the children, while on church premises, are still in the care and responsibility of their parents. There will be a number of occasions when children and young people will be present on church premises as part of the all-age community of the church where careful consideration needs to be given to what it means to provide them with a safe environment:

- › before and after church services
- › family or all-age services
- › social events that are open to the whole church family
- › rehearsals for productions that might include children, young people and adults.

The greatest difficulty is in defining who is responsible for the children and young people in

these situations, and to what extent responsibility falls to the church to be proactive in taking precautionary measures.

The following examples highlight the dilemmas faced by churches:

Case study 1

A church organises groups for children on a Sunday morning which begin about 20 minutes after the start of the service and which end at the same time as the service ends. The leaders of the groups understand that they are responsible for the children as soon as the children leave the service until the group ends. After the service tea and coffee is served. During this time the children and young people tend to move around the building freely and to entertain themselves in the church halls.

- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children before the group starts, particularly if the children are not accompanied to church by their parents?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children at the end of the service?

Case study 2

A church holds an all-age service. No groups are organised for the children. The service has not been planned by the Junior Church leaders. Many of the children come with their families, but a number of children come unaccompanied.

- Do the Junior Church leaders have any responsibility for the children?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children before the service starts?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children at the end of the service?

Case study 3

A church plans a social event to which all ages are invited, although children and young people are expected only to attend with their parents. Once on the church premises the children and young people take themselves off for some of the time to do their own thing while the adults mingle and enjoy one another's company.

- Can the church assume that the children and young people are the responsibility of their parents at events like this?
- Does the church bear any responsibility for their welfare and safeguarding?

Case study 4

A church puts on a musical or dramatic production. It wants to include the whole church family and encourages the participation of children, young people and adults. The rehearsals and the events themselves entail a large amount of interaction between children and adults.

- Who takes responsibility for the welfare of children and young people in this situation?
- Can measures be taken to ensure that all of the interaction between adults and children is positive and healthy?

Some general points need to be made with regard to all of these situations:

- All of these situations give rise to circumstances where children and young people could be placed in a vulnerable situation should a bully or a potential abuser wish to take advantage.
- These situations highlight the importance of the Safeguarding Children Policy being adopted, owned and understood by the whole church membership. The annual review of the policy should address areas of church life where adults, children and young people come together but where no formal children's or youth activities are being organised. The report of the review should also give an occasion for educating the church meeting and helping all church members and members of the congregation to understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.
- Wherever possible it should be clear when representatives of the church are taking responsibility for the welfare of children and young people and when children and young people on church premises are in the care of their parents/carers.
- Good and clear communication with parents/carers is imperative so that they understand when the church is taking responsibility for their children and when the church understands the children and young people are in the care of their parents/carers.
- Whenever children and young people are on church premises, regardless of whether they are in the care of their parents or of the church, the

church will be responsible for health and safety issues regarding the church premises.

- If the church is aware of hazards affecting the welfare and safety of children and young people in the context of church-organised activities or relating to the church premises, it has a duty to take action to minimize the risks posed by those hazards.

Before and after church services

Sunday services are a time for fellowship. Before the service, members of the congregation greet one another and catch up on the week's news and after the morning service has ended in many of our churches people are encouraged to linger over refreshments. Even churches that do not serve drinks after worship will find that members remain to chat. During this time children and young people are often mingling with the rest of the congregation or taking themselves off to play with friends. It is important that due consideration is given to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people during these times.

It should be clear when workers take responsibility for children and young people and when they hand responsibility back to parents.



This guidance is offered by *Safe to Grow* as a model of good practice.

It is not good practice to allow children under the age of 8 to leave their group or class unaccompanied. Churches with larger groups should have a system in place so that they know that each child has gone with the correct adult. Once the children have been collected from their group the responsibility for each child reverts from the group leaders to the parents or adult who is in charge of collecting them.

If children under the age of 8 attend unaccompanied by any adults either

- their parents/carers should be informed of the level of care that the church is able to take for their welfare (i.e. when they will be in the formal care of workers); or
- the workers in their groups should take responsibility for them from the time they arrive at church to the time they leave. A meeting point and time should be agreed before the service. After the group finishes the worker will

be responsible for the child until the child leaves the church premises

It is not wise for children under the age of 8 to be on church premises unless they are in the care of an adult. Either it should be insisted that children under the age of 8 are accompanied by a parent/ carer (or another adult identified by the parent/ carer) when not part of an organised children's group, or during those times the church should make arrangements for an adult to supervise such young children.

The church should be aware of any particular hazards to children and young people during these periods:

- Are children and young people congregating in rooms in the church with no adult supervision?
- Are there any hazards associated with the serving or preparing of hot drinks?
- Is it possible for young children to wander from the church premises unsupervised onto a road? Is there a canal or riverbank near to the church that poses a potential hazard?
- Are there any areas of the church building that should be out of bounds for children and young people or where children and young people should be closely supervised?
 - The kitchen should normally be out of bounds to children and young people.
- Does the church have an open baptistery?
- If there are any adults in the congregation who pose a risk to children and young people their behaviour should be closely monitored during these times.
 - If your church has a known offender attending it is important that the conditions of the offender's contract are fully enforced and adhered to. (For further information see 15.3, p79.)
- At the end of the service, two people should carefully check that the church building is empty and that all children and young people have left the church premises before the building is locked.

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Family or all-age services

The particular challenge of family or all-age services is that no one may understand themselves to be responsible for the formal care of the children and young people who attend. Indeed some churches may decide to hold an all-age service occasionally or regularly because they are unable to find the volunteers required to lead the children's and young people's groups.

It is imperative that the parents or carers of children and young people understand the basis on which their children are attending the service.



This guidance is offered by *Safe to Grow* as a model of good practice.

› Any parents/carers who are present should know that they are not entrusting their children into the care of others but remain responsible themselves for the welfare of their children.

› Any parents/carers who send their children unaccompanied should understand the level of care and supervision that their children will be given.

› Where children and young people are expected to attend a family service because it is a parade service for a uniformed organisation, the parents or carers will have a proper expectation that their children and young people are in the care of the officers or leaders of the organisation.

› Again, it is not wise for children under the age of 8 to be on church premises unless they are in the care of an adult. Either it should be insisted that children under the age of 8 are accompanied by a parent/carer (or another adult identified by a parent/carer), or the church should make arrangements for an adult to supervise such young children.

One option that is available to churches is to decide that all children up to an age determined by the church should be in the care of a named adult when they attend an all-age service. If children are brought by their parents/carers or by another adult with the permission of their parents/carers, then the parent/carer (or the adult who brings the child) will be assumed to have responsibility for the child. Other adults will then be assigned by the church to take responsibility for any other children who attend the service. This latter group of adults will need to be appointed under the church's approved safeguarding procedures.

An alternative is to make it clear to all parents/carers that the church does not take responsibility for the care of children and young people who attend all-age services and that all children and young people will be deemed to be in the care of their parents/carers or an adult to whom the parent/carer has entrusted their child. If a church adopts this position, contingencies will need to be in place should a child under the age of 8 arrive at church unaccompanied.

Even if it is clear that children and young people are in the care of their parents for a family service, the church will continue to have a duty of care with regard to the wider welfare issues for the members of the congregation including children and young people as highlighted in the previous section.

The multi-generational dramatic or musical production

The experience of putting on a dramatic or musical production that brings the whole church family together can be a powerful way of building relationships across the church family. However, care should be taken that the church's Safeguarding Children Policy is not compromised during the process, thus putting children or young people at risk. However, neither should fears about safeguarding issues make such a project unworkable, because it is thought that everyone who has any kind of contact with children or young people will have to have a CRB Disclosure.

Children and young people will be appropriately protected if the following guidelines are followed:



This guidance is offered by *Safe to Grow* as a model of good practice.

› named people will be responsible for the care and welfare of children and young people during the rehearsals and production

› these people will be appointed under the procedures laid down under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy and will be fully conversant with the church's policy and procedures

› at least two of these named people will be present whenever children and young people are involved in rehearsals and for the production itself

› these named people will be responsible for ensuring the welfare of children and young people and in particular will be vigilant to ensure

that all interaction between adults and children is appropriate and does not pose a risk of harm to children and young people.

14.10 Photography

It is not illegal to take photographs of children, however when taking photographs or video footage we must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Fear of breaching this Act should not be wrongly used to stop people taking photographs or videos of all activities involving children and young people. It is possible to be responsible without being over-restrictive.

The following guidelines are advisable:



This guidance is offered by *Safe to Grow* as a model of good practice.

› Signed consent should be obtained from parents/carers for photographs to be taken at church activities. The consent form should clarify where those photographs are likely to be used (display board, website, press etc).

› Photographing children and young people should be conducted with sensitivity and courtesy. Children generally like having their picture taken, but there may be moments when they would rather not. Consent of the child or young person is just as important as parental permission.

› When photographs are displayed children and young people should not be identified by name, nor should it be possible to infer the identity of individual children and young people from the photograph.

- For example, a photograph of a group of children is accompanied by text which uses the names of only some of the children. If one of the names is of a boy and there is only one boy in the photograph, it would be possible to infer the boy's name.

› Photographic material should be stored safely in a place that has been agreed and minuted by the trustees/deacons.

› Leaders should not store images of children and young people on their mobile phones.

› Any photographs sent to the press must not identify individual children or young people by name, nor should the names of individual children be able to be inferred from an accompanying caption or story.

› Copies of photographs must not be distributed to other individuals without the permission of a parent/carer. This includes digital images.

The model parental consent form found on the *Safe to Grow* website: www.safetogrow.org.uk contains a section on photographic images.

Additional information on the use of photography can be found on the Baptist Union website: www.baptist.org.uk (*TopTips 07 Photography at Church*)

14.11 Other user groups



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

Not all of the groups using the church may be organised and run by church members and buildings are often hired by others (Scouts, Guides, nurseries, dance classes etc).

If you do have outside hirers who are using your building and who work with children or young people, it is good practice to require them to have a safeguarding children policy and procedures in place, based on the Home Office recommendations 'Safe from Harm'.

You should include a clause to cover this in any official hiring agreement that you may use. As evidence of this you would be entitled to request to see a copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures document.

It is not your responsibility to ensure that the safeguarding policy is being properly implemented. This responsibility lies with the group themselves and their trustees. However if it came to light that a group using your premises were not following appropriate safeguarding procedures and that children or young people were being placed at risk, the church should seriously consider terminating the rental agreement.

Some groups using church premises may need to be registered with OFSTED. If this is the case you should request to see their OFSTED registration certificate.

'One-off' private hirers (for example, children's parties) would not be expected to have a safeguarding policy, but they would still need to show due care and attention.

For general information on letting arrangements refer to the Baptist Union Corporation guideline documents available from the Baptist Union website: www.baptist.org.uk

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A safe community

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

15.1 A safe community for children and young people

Safe to Grow has concentrated on the importance of children's and young people's workers being appointed carefully, behaving appropriately, and adopting safe practices in order to promote the safety and welfare of children and young people in the life of the church. However, when children and young people become a part of the life of the church they become part of a far wider community. This wider community life of the church has the potential to enrich their development and growth, but it also brings with it additional risks that need to be addressed.

SYMBOLS



For an explanation of the significance of the symbols used in this chapter please go to pages 7 and 8.

Firstly, this wider community involves the other children and young people. We dare not ignore the fact that children and young people are able to be cruel and unkind to one another. We therefore need to have procedures in place which address in particular the potential for bullying. (Please note that any counter-bullying policy will relate to all forms of bullying and will include the bullying of children by adults and vice versa.)

Secondly, children and young people are often introduced and welcomed into the wider church community. Particularly when children and young people attend church on Sundays (but also on other occasions) they will be on the premises and may interact with a wide range of people who will not have been through any kind of 'vetting' procedure and who may not have any awareness of the church's safeguarding policy and procedures. In this regard a particular issue arises when a person attends the church who is known to have offended against children or young people in the past. As a gospel community that seeks to

be inclusive and that offers forgiveness and new life, a church will wish to do all in its power to enable such a person to find their place within the community of the church. However, this will have to be done in such a way that children and young people are not placed at risk.

15.2 Prevention of bullying

The Government defines bullying as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."

Bullying can take many forms including:

- name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking
- kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating
- unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature or sexually abusive comments
- taking belongings
- inappropriate text-messaging and emailing
- sending offensive or degrading images by phone or over the internet
- gossiping, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups
- 'unofficial' activities such as initiation ceremonies or practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm

Bullies will often pick on a particular feature of a person's appearance or character as a supposed 'reason' for bullying:

- racial difference; disability; sexuality; hair colour; gender

Bullies can be:

- children or young people bullying others in their peer group, or other children and young people either older or younger
- adults bullying children and young people
- children and young people bullying adults.

Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. Many

children and young people affected by bullying believe they have nowhere to turn. They are scared to speak out and often blame themselves. They can become fearful and reclusive.

Some signs that can indicate that a child or young person is being bullied are as follows:

- withdrawal; lack of desire to join activities with certain individuals; drop in school marks; torn clothing; loss of friends; avoidance of church groups and other activities; bruises; need for extra money or supplies.

In order to prevent bullying the following procedures should be adopted:



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

- the children and young people themselves should be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable
- children and young people should know how they can report any incidents of bullying
- all allegations of bullying will be treated seriously
 - details will be checked carefully before action is taken
- the bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible
- the parents of the bully and of the bullied will be informed
- an attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour
- all allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with actions that are taken.

15.3 When a known offender is present

The church should be a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children and young people in the past are to be included in this welcome. However, the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative that the protection of children and young people must be paramount.

There is a very particular challenge when it comes to those who sexually abuse children or young people. Current research suggests that sexual offending can be a kind of addiction whereby patterns of behaviour are deeply ingrained in the character of the person. However old the offence, ex-offenders continue to pose a very real threat to children and young people and this should be borne in mind when welcoming them into the church community.

Experience has also shown that those who abuse children can be very persuasive in expressing remorse and in presenting themselves as people who are now living a different way of life. As abusers are often people who are able to get on well with children and young people and whom children and young people are ready to trust, the Christian community has too often misunderstood what it means to practise forgiveness and has entrusted such people with the care of children and young people.



This is standard guidance that should be followed in order to safeguard children and young people.

When it is known that a person who has been convicted of sexually abusing children or young people is attending your church, it is important that their behaviour within the church community is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced a series of allegations about the sexual abuse of children and young people but has never been convicted (such allegations may be revealed on an Enhanced CRB Disclosure under relevant non-conviction information).

If an offender is on the Sex Offenders' Register they will be monitored under guidelines known as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). In the latest guidance there is provision to require a written contract to be in place if the offender wishes to attend a place of worship.

In determining the details of the contract:

- there should be a discussion about who should be informed of the nature of the offence and the details of the contract
 - the rights of the offender to re-build their lives without everyone knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against

the need to protect children and young people

- the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon, the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the Minister should always be informed
- › the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register
 - if so, the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon should make contact with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that the church should be aware of
- › The Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon should inform and take advice from the Regional Minister in the local Baptist Association.

An open discussion must be held with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract should be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour. The person should be required to sign the contract. The contract:

- › will identify the meetings the person may attend
- › will specify that they will always sit apart from children and young people
- › may ask that they are always accompanied by a befriender on church premises
- › will require the person not to attend small group meetings where children or young people are present
- › will require that the person declines hospitality where there are children or young people
- › will state that the person will never be alone with children or young people while attending church functions
- › will require the person to stay away from areas of the building where children or young people meet.

The contract should be monitored and enforced. Those who offend against children and young people can often be manipulative. If the contract is

broken certain sanctions should be considered.

- › If the initial contract allows the person to attend the morning service where children and young people are present, a new contract might require them only to attend an evening service.
- › If only a few people know of the person's conviction, more people might be told in order to protect children and young people. In doing this a balance has to be made between protecting the civil liberties of the offender, the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the protection of children and young people. Any disclosure of the person's criminal background would need to be the minimum necessary to achieve the aim of safeguarding the children and young people in the church's care.
- › Ultimately, it might be necessary to ban the person from attending the church. If you are concerned that the person might join another church you should not forewarn other local church leaders by giving details of the person concerned to all local churches. Rather you should ask other local church leaders to inform you if any new person joins their church. If the person joins another fellowship it would be appropriate to indicate your concerns to this specific church leader. If the person is on the Sexual Offenders Register the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon should make the offender's Specialist Probation Officer (SPO) aware that they have been banned from the church and reasons for this.

A template for a model contract is on the *Safe to Grow* website (www.safetogrow.org.uk) but churches are strongly encouraged to take advice and guidance from a Regional Minister before implementing any contract.

Some churches, aware of the needs of offenders to be re-integrated into society in a way that protects children and young people, have established what have become known as 'circles of support' for those offenders who are governed by a contract in the life of the church. The organisation Circles UK has worked closely with criminal justice agencies in developing this significant initiative. Contact details for Circles UK can be found in Chapter 16: Resources and Contacts, p81, opposite. ♦

Local contacts

(The local authority and police contact details can be found by searching on the local authority's website.)

Fill in here the contacts for your local area:	Telephone number
Regional Minister of Baptist Association	
Local Authority Child Protection Unit	
– Out of hours Emergency Social Work Service	
– Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	
Local Police Child Abuse Investigation Team	
– Out of hours emergency number	

National emergency helplines

NSPCC Child Protection helpline
0808 800 5000 (free 24 hour service)

Childline (a free 24 hour helpline for children)
0800 1111

Criminal Records Checking and Barring contacts
Independent Safeguarding Authority
0300 123 1111 www.isa.gov.org

Criminal Records Bureau
0870 9090 811 www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk

Churches' Agency for Safeguarding
020 7467 5216 www.churchsafe.org.uk

General safeguarding advice and guidance

Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA)
0844 660 8607 www.afruca.org

AFRUCA promotes the welfare and rights of African children in the UK. It has published a series of booklets offering safeguarding advice addressed to the African community.

Unit 3D/F Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)
0845 120 4550 www.ccpas.co.uk

As well as offering a full advisory service to members CCPAS has a range of resources and publications available for download and purchase.

PO Box 113, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ

Circles UK
0118 950 0068 www.circles-uk.org.uk

Circles UK works to create Circles of Support and Accountability in which sex offenders are enabled to reintegrate responsibly into the community. Circles works in partnership with criminal justice agencies.

Abbey House, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BE

Kidscape

020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk

Parents helpline 08451 205204

Kidscape works to provide individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources to keep children safe from harm. The charity was established specifically to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse. Among other things, it provides a helpline for parents of bullied children.

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

NSPCC

020 7825 2500 www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC offers advice and a range of resources to safeguard children and young people.

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Safe to Grow

www.safetogrow.org.uk

The *Safe to Grow* website includes templates, forms, example policies and procedures and detailed information on the Vetting and Barring Scheme. The website will include updates on safeguarding procedure and practice.

Sanctuary

0845 120 4550 www.ccpas.org.uk/sanctuary/index.html

Sanctuary was an independent charity which is now a project of CCPAS and exists to help churches safely to support sexual offenders.

PO Box 113, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ

The Safe Network

www.safenetwork.org.uk

The Safe Network is jointly managed by NSPCC and Children England and was created as a result of the Government's Staying Safe action plan. The website provides resources to help organisations reflect on their safeguarding policies and procedures and gives access to training for not-for-profit organisations.

Safe to Grow

The abuse of children and young people – physically, emotionally and sexually, is a sad fact of life. It is not new. In recent years we have become more aware of the prevalence of abuse and neglect because we have been more willing to listen to children and young people and to take seriously the harm that they suffer.

All organisations working with children and young people, including churches, are expected to adopt policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people in their care.

Safe to Grow is a resource book for Baptist churches to enable them to implement policies and procedures in their local situation. *Safe to Grow* offers

- clear guidance on government legislation and its implications for the local church
- a model safeguarding policy for the local church
- a guide to procedures that need to be implemented in order to follow best practice in safeguarding.

This completely revised edition, accompanied by a new website www.safetogrow.org.uk, provides churches with the help and resources they will need to offer a safe environment to children and young people entrusted to their care.



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