

# **CHRISTCHURCH MARKET HARBOROUGH SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Elders of Christchurch Market Harbourough recognise the importance of the church's ministry to children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care.

As part of its mission, Christchurch Market Harbourough is committed to:

- Encouraging children and young people to have a deep relationship with Jesus;
- Supporting parents, carers and children's workers in their roles with children & young people;
- Valuing each member of the church family;
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all Christchurch Market Harbourough staff and volunteers working with children and young people;
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

## **WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO**

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

- all who attend our church
- our trustees and staff(both paid and voluntary)

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

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

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT**

**This church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and to ensuring their well-being.**

- We believe that all children and adults at risk should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our church.
- We respect the personal dignity and rights of children and adults at risk (for example, as set out in the Human Rights Act 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and will ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk.
- We recognise that domestic abuse affects both adults and children and believe

that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.

- We will report any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Adult Services do so for adults at risk.
- We acknowledge that Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) have responsibility for dealing with all allegations and concerns about people working with children, whether paid or voluntary workers.
- We recognise that safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.

#### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO:**

- The establishment of a loving environment, which is safe and caring, and where there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- Following the relevant legislation, statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that we keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with the relevant Voluntary and Statutory Authorities.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a church, everyone works within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Establishing a clear line of accountability through co-ordinators to an Elder with Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk.
- Following safer recruitment principles in the appointment and selection of all those who work with children and adults at risk, be they volunteer or paid staff.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that the children and adults we have contact with know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.

- Reporting any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Supporting all those in our church who are affected by abuse.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to children or adults at risk, implementing contracts of behaviour, whilst bearing in mind the overarching principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- If an assessment is made that someone poses an unmanageable risk to those in need of protection and could not safely attend our church, we will ensure that they continue to be offered pastoral care and will signpost them to appropriate agencies for support.

## **DUTY OF CARE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

## **PREVENTING ABUSE**

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults - (See Appendix 1 for role description)

Activities will be organised so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. Consent forms and records will be kept as appropriate.

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

- asking applicants to complete a recruitment form
- providing workers with appropriate role descriptions
- completion of self declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks wherever legally entitled to do so
- taking up references where appropriate
- agreeing to the 'Code of Conduct' (Appendix 2) and understanding that there may be action taken if this code is not followed.
- safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Elders and Safeguarding Coordinator to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

(See Appendix 3)

## **SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE IN CHILDREN**

(See Appendix 4)

### **THE PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A CONCERN OF ABUSE**

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police will be contacted without delay.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm, the following procedures should be followed:-

- Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse
- The concern must be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator who is nominated by Christchurch Market Harbourough to act on their behalf in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. (see Key Contacts, pg 7&8 for the relevant statutory contacts.)
- In the absence of the Coordinator or if the suspicions in any way involve the Coordinator then the report should be made to Mrs Margaret Madams (hereafter the Deputy Co-ordinator). If the suspicions implicate both the Co-ordinator and the Deputy Co-ordinator then contact CCPAS for advice and/or report to the nearest patch office of Social Services (see Key Contacts section pg 7&8).
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator, the absence of the Co-ordinator or Deputy Co-ordinator should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.
- The person in receipt of any allegation or suspicion should make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child/young person talking to them), writing down exactly what the child/young person said and when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of the events and when the record was made. These notes should then be transferred to the official confidential record sheet. (See Appendix 5) All hand written notes should be kept, even if subsequently typed. All records should be given to the Co-ordinator to be stored securely and, if a referral has been made, a copy should be passed to the statutory authorities. The Elders will be informed and CCPAS contacted.
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at increased risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted before the person is informed.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. If appropriate the Co-ordinator will contact the parents/carers **unless** there is a possibility of them being implicated in the allegation.
- The CCPAS helpline will be contacted if unsure.

- The Elders will be informed of any serious concerns.
- The Elders and leadership of Christchurch Market Harbourough will support the Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although Christchurch Market Harbourough hopes that workers will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Co-ordinator as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that Christchurch Market Harbourough demonstrates its commitment to effective child protection.
- Once a child/young person has talked about abuse the staff member and Co-ordinator should consider whether it is safe for the child/young person to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and /or the Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child/young person so that they do not return home (see Key Contacts section pg 7&8).

The role of the Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

### **ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING A CHURCH STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER**

For any concerns relating to children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this advice. For LADO contact details, see Key Contacts, pg 7&8.

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a different position due to safeguarding concerns.

In such cases, the Charity Commission will also be notified.

### **A QUICK GUIDE TO ACTION - 'The 5 R's'**

- **Recognise** - What are your initial concerns/thoughts?
- **Respond** - What might you say and do?
- **Record** - What do you need to write down?

- **Report** - Who needs to know or who should you tell?
- **Reflect** - Where might you go for support afterwards?

### **Recognise** - How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Please see Appendix 4 for those relating to children. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories of abuse.

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

### **Respond** - What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

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

- stays calm and listens carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.

### **Report and Record**

- Inform the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator)
- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record (using the template in Appendix 5). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

### **Reflect**

- Dealing with something like this can be really difficult, so make sure you seek help and support for yourself. Remember, information shouldn't be shared with just anyone. Speak to your Safeguarding Co-ordinator if you need to debrief.

## **RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT, SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF LEADERS AND WORKERS.**

Christchurch Market Harborough will ensure all those who work with children and young people will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with this Policy and the Christchurch Market Harborough Youth and Children's Code of Practice (See Appendix 6), which was formulated after careful consideration of government guidelines, the Disclosure and Barring Service codes of practice, the CCPAS guidance and Church practice Guidelines.

## **SUPERVISION OF GROUP/CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

Christchurch Market Harbrough will organise, lead and supervise activities in accordance with the principles stated in the Christchurch Market Harbrough Youth and Children's Code of Practice. (Appendix 6)

This policy will be reviewed annually on (date) _____	
Signed _____	Date _____
Print Name _____	Appointment _____
Signed _____	Date _____
Print Name _____	Appointment _____

### KEY CONTACTS

#### Christchurch Market Harbrough

#### CO-ORDINATOR

St Mary's Chambers  
9, St Mary's Road  
Market Harbrough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 7DS

Mrs Ursula Stevens

01858 462272  
07587 174264

#### DEPUTY CO-ORDINATOR

Mrs Margaret Madams

01536 771077  
07376 124149

e-mail - christchurchmh@gmail.com

#### Leicestershire Social Services

Contact First Response Children's Duty. Phone 0116 305 0005

**Leicestershire Police Service** - use the 101 non-emergency police contact number

#### Leicestershire County Council LADO (Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer)

0116 305 7597 & 0116 305 4532

**NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**

0800 028 0285

**NSPCC** - 0808 800 5000

**CCPAS** (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service)

PO Box 133, Swanley Kent, BR8 7UQ.      tel 0303 0031111

[www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)