



BASINGSTOKE COMMUNITY CHURCHES POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM

Version 2.2 | May 2023

BCCs Safeguarding Policy

Section 1 – Details and Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the BCCs Safeguarding Framework and the Code of Conduct.

BASINGSTOKE COMMUNITY CHURCHES (BCCs) incorporating:

Hope Community Church
Hub Community Church
Community Church Tadley
LifeSpring Community Church

The Sarum Hill Centre, Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, RG21 8SR.

Tel: 01256 316000

email: bcc@bccnet.org.uk

Contacts: Contacts for all churches can be found in Section 8 of the framework

Charity Number: 1067316

Company Number: 3476768

Insurance Company: Ansvar

BCCs is a member of Thirtyone:eight and they are available to advise in any safeguarding or suspected safeguarding situation. **BCCs membership number is 984.**

POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM

Covering all meetings, activities, and locations for the above churches.

Who we are.

Basingstoke Community Churches is a group of churches affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance. Meeting in various locations across the Basingstoke, Overton and Tadley areas, we are a registered charity incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

Across our churches we see the need to engage and support everyone, and recognise the additional care and responsibility required when dealing with children, young people, and adults at risk.

We provide a range of activities, particularly for young people, while also providing 1 to 1 support for many adults at risk alongside events such as lunch clubs to allow people to gather and form community.

All activities involving these groups are subject to the guidance in this document.

NB.

In this document “Leadership” generally refers to the corporate leadership across BCCs (Trustees, Core Team and Local Church Leadership Teams). Where appropriate “Local Leadership Teams” have been specified.

Purpose

This policy addresses both the legal and moral requirement to protect and safeguard children and adults at risk of harm. Alongside the framework document, it explains the key values on which the policy is based, links to other relevant policies and the procedures and practices set up to implement the policy. This is an overarching policy and each church will have its own document outlining the details specific to each location.

Our Commitment.

The leadership teams across BCCs recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of abuse and neglect, physically, sexually and emotionally. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

We undertake to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all our workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation (including but not limited to Working Together 2018, The Care Act 2014, Sexual Offences Act 2003), and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support, resource and train the Safeguarding Lead(s) and all those who undertake this work in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- Implement the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and refer concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Section 2

Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution, or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

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

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

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

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

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse affecting children are available here, on the NSPCC website, workers should check this periodically to keep up to date with any changes in definitions or types of abuse:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Types and indicators of abuse regarding adults at risk can be found here:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

Details of how to define and recognise signs of domestic abuse, along with links to where to go for support can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

Details of how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in our policy framework.

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales)(Northern Ireland) for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

Safer recruitment

The local church leadership teams will ensure all workers are appointed, trained, supported, and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed a self-declaration form if not requiring a DBS check
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary. We will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information. (Full details of the DBS process and who requires a DBS check is found in Section 2 of the framework).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant where necessary.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- The applicant will read and sign the Code of Practice and the Code of Conduct in sections 12 & 13 of the BCCs Safeguarding Framework.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training every 3 years.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Management of Workers – Code of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers are required to understand the BCCs code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs which will be provided with this policy and should be familiar with the Code of Conduct which can be found in section 13 of the framework and must be signed by all workers.

Whistleblowing

As a place of worship, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all employees (paid or voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions. Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the safeguarding co-ordinator.

Section 3

Practice Guidelines

As a place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people, and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines regarding our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 4

Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

- A “Cause for Concern” form should be completed within 1 hour of any incident or disclosure
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

The church Designated Safeguarding Lead - DSL (as identified in section 8 of the framework)

The above is nominated by the local Leadership Team to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

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

The church Deputy DSL (as identified in section 8 of the framework)

If neither are available, or the suspicions implicate both the DSL and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

BCCs safeguarding co-ordinator or their deputy (as identified in section 8 of the framework)

In the event of none of the above being available the report should be made in the first instance to:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The DSL should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In an emergency situation when a child, young person or adult at risk of harm is thought to be in immediate danger, while it is encouraged to seek advice, each worker is supported and encouraged to report the situation directly to the relevant authorities.

All contact details are available in Section 8 of the framework

- The church DSL may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:
 - Trustee responsible for safeguarding
 - BCCs Safeguarding Co-ordinator
 - Operations Manager or whoever is responsible for liaising with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, in the absence of the DSL or Deputy, or where there is an immediate risk, the worker should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police and/or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The local Leadership Team will support the DSL/Deputy 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 safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the local Leadership Teams hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
- In a situation where the worker believes that someone is in immediate danger they should act immediately by contacting social care providers directly or the police. Contact details can be found in section 8 of the framework.

The role of the DSL/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and where appropriate, pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect, or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the DSL/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

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

If there is concern about any of the above, DSL/Deputy will:

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

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, DSL will:

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

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

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

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

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

The DSL will:

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

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

Section 5

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Trustees and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position

Date:

A copy of this policy is also lodged with: