



## **Guidelines for Prayer Teams**

River Church has a duty of care to ensure that it provides a safe environment for all. This includes both the physical environment and the support and pastoral care that are offered by the church, both formal and informal.

We at River Church are committed to respectful pastoral care of all adults in our community. We are also committed to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people.

As Christians we are charged to love and care for each other. This is particularly true with regards to the most vulnerable in our community.

River Church is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of adults who come to us for prayer. We aim to provide a safe environment for those offering prayer as well as adults receiving prayer. It is the responsibility of all members of River Church to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any abuse we discover or have good reason to suspect.

This short guide is intended to assist leaders and prayer teams in their role; to keep themselves safe, to protect adults from unnecessary harm and provide guidelines to follow when there are concerns regarding the welfare of an adult or child when an allegation is made.

For more detailed information about River Church's policies and procedures for working with children and vulnerable adults please refer to the safeguarding pages on River Church's website.

# Good Practice

## **You should.....**

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Pray in an open public space.
- Aim to pray with people of the same sex, if this is not possible ensure you pray in pairs.
- Ask permission before touching anyone. Keep touch minimal and appropriate.
- Know when you are out of your depth, call someone more experienced to help.
- If necessary, encourage the person to seek out further pastoral input e.g., from their small group, or book a Sozo appointment. Do not feel you have to take on that pastoral responsibility.

## **You should not.....**

- Talk to others about what has been said unless you need to unload or process what has been shared, then speak to your team leader.
- Promise confidentiality where abuse has been disclosed. Say who you will talk to, namely the prayer team leader and/or congregation safeguarding coordinator.
- Put pressure on anyone. Always allow people to make their own decisions.
- Prolong prayers more than is necessary.

## **When praying with children.....**

- If an under 16-year-old asks for prayer, ask them if they wish an adult to come with them, eg. a parent or trusted friend. If they do not want this ensure there are two people from the prayer team present.

# What to do if....

## **A person discloses information about abuse**

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interrogate but question normally without pressure in order to be sure you understand what is being said.
- Do not put words into their mouth.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- Never promise to keep a secret but tell them you must pass the information on, but that you will only tell those who need to know. Tell them who you will speak to.
- Make notes of the date, time, place and what was said and done immediately after the event, not during. Sign the report.
- If you believe the person is in immediate danger, do not let them leave alone, but ask their permission to phone the police.
- Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report immediately to the prayer team leader and/or the congregational safeguarding coordinator or deputy.
- Do not speak to anyone outside the investigation, including members of their family.

## **You are concerned that someone may be suffering from abuse:**

If a person has an unexplained physical injury, or shows signs of neglect or where there are concerns about any other form of abuse:

- Document your concerns, with dates, ideally using the 'Record of concerns' form and body map if appropriate.
- Inform your prayer team leader and/or congregational safeguarding coordinator.
- If the above are not available, contact River Church's safeguarding officer or trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. If none of these are available contact CCPAS for advice.
- Do not speak to anyone outside the investigation, including members of their family.

## **You are concerned a child may be in danger:**

- You **MUST** report your concerns to your congregations safeguarding coordinator/ deputy/ River's safeguarding officer. If none are available, phone Thirtyone:Eight.

## Useful Contacts

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

Rachael Odeniyi                      [safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk)

### **Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding:**

Graham Burgess                      [graham@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:graham@riverchurch.org.uk)

### **Congregational Safeguarding Coordinators:**

#### **Maidenhead:**

Beth Chisnall (Children) [safeguardingmaidenhead@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingmaidenhead@riverchurch.org.uk)

Andrew Green (Vulnerable Adults)

via Rachael Odeniyi:                      [safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk)

#### **Marlow:**

Sue Scott                                      [safeguardingmarlow@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingmarlow@riverchurch.org.uk)

#### **Slough:**

Julie Ioakeim                                      [safeguardingslough@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingslough@riverchurch.org.uk)

#### **The Journey:**

Diana Saunders                                      [safeguardingjourney@riverchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguardingjourney@riverchurch.org.uk)

#### **Thirtyone:Eight**

[www.thirtyoneeight.org](http://www.thirtyoneeight.org)

0303 003 111

**Congregation Prayer Team leaders:**

**Maidenhead**

Robin Vickers

**Marlow**

Anthea Wratten

**Slough**

Mary Porter

**Journey**

Catherine France