



Safeguarding Adults Policy & Procedures	Approved by: Trustees
Updated: June 2026	Review Date: June 2027

RIVER CHURCH

Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures

River Church has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of adults they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity.

The trustees of River Church are responsible for Safeguarding.

The person within the organisation with lead responsibility for Safeguarding - the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), contact safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk

All staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy and the process for reporting concerns by issuing the policy at induction and having regular safeguarding training.

Our commitment

River Church recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN's *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."*

River Church has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this Safeguarding Policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

"Safeguarding is a priority here."

Informing Trustees

In the first instance, the Safeguarding lead will communicate any reported incidences with the Trustees alongside taking advice from 31:8 about appropriate courses of action. This advice is sent as a secure email and shared with the trustees and an appropriate course of action decided upon. This should be agreed and recorded – a signed email trail. The trustees have a responsibility to report and serious incidents to the Charity Commission. Guidance for this can be found [HERE](#).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must provide a written report to the Trustees at least twice a year; this will be to inform them of the status of Safeguarding within the church eg. training and updates about any safeguarding incidences.

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
 - 1.1 Aims and Principles of Adult Safeguarding
 - 1.2 Aims of River Church Adult Safeguarding Policy

- 2. Abuse of Adults and Safeguarding**
 - 2.1 The Care Act 2014 definition of an adult needing care and support
 - 2.2 Person-led safeguarding

- 3. Recognising Adult Abuse**
 - 3.1 Recognising Adult Abuse
 - 3.2 Where and how abuse might occur
 - 3.3 The main forms of abuse
 - 3.4 Other forms of abuse to consider

- 4. Responding to a disclosure**
 - 4.1 Principles of responding to a disclosure
 - 4.2 Witnessing abuse

- 5. Referring a concern**
 - 5.1 Referring a concern or a disclosure
 - 5.2 Supporting immediate needs
 - 5.3 Sharing information
 - 5.4 Consent
 - 5.5 Mental capacity

- 6. Responding to allegations/concerns against a member of staff or volunteer**
 - 6.1 Reporting abuse for investigation
 - 6.2 Internal investigation for staff or volunteers
 - 6.3 Disclosure & Barring Service – referrals

- 7. Recording Information**
 - 7.1 Using an accident reporting form
 - 7.2 Preserving evidence
 - 7.3 Confidentiality

Appendices

- Appendix 1 How to Report a Concern Flow Chart
- Appendix 2 Safeguarding Adult Incident Reporting Form
- Appendix 3 River Church Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Appendix 4 Declaration
- Appendix 5 Risk Assessment Form
- Appendix 6 Prayer Guidelines

1. Introduction

River Church considers the welfare of any child, young person or vulnerable adult (an adult 'at risk'), who engages with River Church to be of paramount importance, and we are committed to ensuring that they are valued, listened to, and respected within the work that we do.

River Church believes that all adults, no matter their sex, disability, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation, have the right to be in a safe, caring environment.

Everyone working with River Church, including its trustees, employees and volunteers, are responsible for ensuring that any adult 'at risk' is safe.

1.1 Aims and Principles of Adult Safeguarding

River Church will adopt and uphold the Local Safeguarding Adults Board recommended policies and will reflect principles of The Care Act 2014 and River Church Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures.

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned.
- Raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.

The six principles of adult safeguarding are

- **Empowerment** - presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** - it is better to act before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** - proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** - support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** - local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

1.2 Aims of River Church policy

- The adult involved must agree with the proposed actions as River Church adopts a person-led safeguarding process and respects and promotes their rights, wishes and feelings as recommended by current safeguarding guidelines.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within our church projects and the services it provides, avoiding situations where abuse may occur.
- Ongoing training, supervision and support for staff and volunteers to adopt local multi-agency good practice.
- Ensure a Care Plan is in place for vulnerable adults who are part of the Church community, eg. home visits, providing lifts – See **Appendix 5**
- Staff and volunteers who work with adults will be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and the appropriate level of Criminal Records check through the Disclosure & Barring Service.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately, in a timely manner and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the **Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures**.
- Managing allegations against staff or volunteers appropriately and in a timely manner, referring any member of staff or volunteer to the appropriate agencies, including the Disclosure & Barring Service if required.

2. Abuse of adults and safeguarding

Prevention is critical to the vision of the Care Act 2014. The care and support system must work actively together to promote wellbeing and independence rather than waiting to respond once a person has reached a crisis point. Safeguarding involves achieving a balance between protecting people and preserving their right to make decisions for themselves.

2.1 The Care Act 2014 definition of an adult needing care and support

Under the Care Act 2014 the Government expects local authorities and others to help people with care and support needs, who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs, keep them safe. But this must not mean preventing them making their own choices and having control over their lives. Everyone in the community should understand the importance of safeguarding and help keep people safe.

The terminology of what was an adult 'at risk' under 'No Secrets' has changed. A definition now in use is: "Any adult aged 18 or over, who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect." (Care and Support Statutory Guidance, published under the Care Act 2014, Department of Health)

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly or frail
- Has a mental health difficulty
- Has a physical disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness

This may include a situation where a person receives care or is currently unable to protect themselves, for instance, a person who:

- Is misusing substances
- Is in an abusive relationship (this can include women and/or men who are being sexually exploited by a partner)
- Is vulnerable due to context or experience eg. bereavement, poverty, debt.
- Might be suffering from issues of homelessness.

2.2 Person-led safeguarding

Organisations are often wary of intervening in abusive situations if the adult does not want them to do so because of human rights and other issues. These dilemmas are very real for staff and volunteers but can lead to an approach of non-intervention which conflicts with a need to ensure a “duty of care”.

Person-led adult safeguarding follows the principle of ‘**no decision about me without me**’ and means that the adult, their families and carers are working together with agencies to find the right solutions to keep people safe and support them in making informed choices.

As a member of staff or volunteer with River Church we will always ask that you strive to listen to and support the needs and requests of any adult who uses our services. For those adults who may struggle with additional needs and vulnerabilities, who may also be at risk of harm or abuse, this needs to be at the forefront of our care and support.

This person-led approach to safeguarding leads to services which are: person-centred and focused on the outcomes identified by the individual; planned, commissioned and delivered in a joined-up way between different organisations, including River Church which are responsive, and which can be changed when required.

3. Recognising Adult Abuse

3.1 Recognising Adult Abuse

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more. Patterns of abuse may vary and include:

- serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and ‘grooms’ individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse
- long-term abuse in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse; or
- opportunistic abuse such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around.

(Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014, Department of Health)

Abuse is the violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It is the use of power and/or abuse of vulnerability of a person. Abuse can consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented and/or is not able to consent.

3.2 Where and how abuse might occur

Abuse of adults may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, including spouses/partners, relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit people who might be at risk, strangers or the elderly. Mate crime happens when someone is faking a friendship to take advantage of a vulnerable person.

There is often particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of power or authority who uses his or her position to the detriment of the health, safety, welfare and general well-being of a vulnerable person. Abuse can occur in any setting. Abuse and crimes against adults may occur in different contexts. Actual or suspected abuse of persons at risk in any of the contexts below will trigger a safeguarding response in accordance with this policy.

3.3 The main forms of abuse

Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subjected to it. It can take several forms:

- **Physical abuse** eg. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, neglect or abandonment

- **Sexual abuse** eg. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- **Sexual Exploitation** is a type of abuse in which young people/ adults are sexually exploited for survival, money, power or status.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** eg. intimidation or humiliation, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial abuse** eg. theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Discriminatory abuse** forms of harassment, ill-treatment, threats or insults because of an adult's race, age, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexuality, physical or learning disability, or mental-health needs. Discriminatory abuse can also be called 'hate crime'.
- **Personal exploitation** - involves denying an individual his/her rights, to forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- **Violation of rights** e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions.
- **Institutional abuse** e.g. when the routines, systems and norms of an institution compel individuals to sacrifice their own preferred style and cultural diversity to the needs of the institution
- **Neglect and acts of omission** e.g. ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. *Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, wilful neglect and ill treatment become a criminal offence.*

3.4 Other forms of abuse to consider:

Hate crime

Hate crime is defined as any crime that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be racist, homophobic, trans-phobic or due to a person's religion, belief, gender identity or disability. It should be noted that this definition is based on the perception of the victim or anyone else and is not reliant on evidence.

Mate crime

Mate crime happens when someone is faking a friendship to take advantage of a vulnerable person. Mate crime is committed by someone known to the person. They might have known them for a long time or met recently. A 'mate' may be a 'friend', family member, supporter, paid staff or another person with a disability.

Self-Neglect

The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance Chapter 14 recognises self-neglect as a type of abuse. It describes self-neglect as a wide range of behaviours; neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Where self-neglect persists the risks to the individual may increase and could have a significant impact on the person's wellbeing. The Care Act emphasises the importance of early intervention and preventative actions to minimise risk and harm. Central to the Care Act is the wellbeing principle and focusing on decisions which are person-led, and outcomes focused. These principles are important considerations when responding to self-neglect cases.

Carers at risk of harm

Carers experiencing abuse by the person they offer care to, can expect the same response as any person at risk of abuse. Carers also have a legal right to an assessment of their needs. A carer's assessment should be seen as part of the overall assessment process. Sometimes both the carer and the supported person may be at risk of harm.

Abuse between adults at risk

Any organisations supporting these individuals have a responsibility to protect them from abuse as well as preventing them from causing harm to other adults. It is important the needs of the adult causing the harm are taken into consideration in the safeguarding responses for both parties.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.

Controlling behaviour

This is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

This is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim." The Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships (section 76). The offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Domestic Abuse & Violence can be a very difficult area to support where victims of abuse feel unable to leave without putting themselves at greater risk. Specialist support should be sought where risks can be assessed and safeguarding prioritized.

Honour-based violence (HBV)

“Honour-based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or community.” Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they’re bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor. [The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. FGM constitutes a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls and has severe short-term and long-term physical and psychological consequences. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Trafficking & Modern Slavery (TMS)

Human trafficking is essentially the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation, this may include:

- prostitution (or other forms of sexual exploitation)
- forced labour
- slavery
- servitude, or
- the removal of organs

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking.

Practice guidance relating to the national strategy to respond to Modern Slavery and human trafficking includes details of the Duty to Notify and how to refer victims into the National Referral Mechanism.

Exploitation by radicalisers

Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence involves the exploitation of susceptible people who are drawn into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. The aim is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. The Prevent Strategy, launched in 2007, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

Cuckooing

This is a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for criminal activity. Organised criminal groups are increasingly targeting adults with care and support needs in this way, and the level of coercion and control involved with cuckooing often leaves the victims with little choice but to cooperate with the perpetrators.

County Lines

This is the police term for groups who are supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". It can involve child criminal exploitation and using adults who are vulnerable to move drugs and money. Groups establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. The Home Office County Lines guidance describes County Lines as a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons. County Lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation have a devastating impact on young people, adults at risk of exploitation and local communities.

What is Spiritual Abuse?

Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological and emotional abuse. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies to be clear that spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse within a religious context. (https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-vulnerable-adults/42#_ftn1)

We must be aware that spiritual abuse is often an integral element of other experiences of abuse within the Christian and other faith contexts and must be considered when investigating disclosures of other forms of abuse.

In addition to the requirements and advice set out in Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse, in particular in relation to spiritual abuse, we must:

- i) Listen carefully, avoid interrupting and allow a full disclosure without feeling they must defend the Church or the individual.
- ii) Respond in a non-judgemental manner, demonstrating that the disclosure of spiritual abuse is being taken seriously.
- iii) Avoid minimising what they are being told or showing disbelief or denial.

- iv) Be aware that victims may have experienced harmful teaching.
- v) Avoid suggesting the use of Matthew 18 (resolving disputes by speaking directly to the person). It is harmful to suggest that someone speaks to their abuser about their abuse.
- vi) Be aware that a disclosure of spiritual abuse may also be part of a disclosure of other forms of abuse.
- vii) Where abuse has involved use of scripture or prayer, think carefully and be judicious about whether it is appropriate to use this as a first response to a disclosure
- viii) wisdom in communication of what is publicly applauded as a result of remorse and repentance for behaviour that has harmed people

See **Appendix 6**

4: Responding to a disclosure

4.1 Principles of responding to a disclosure

It is important that an adult is given the opportunity to talk, and every effort should be made to ensure this takes place in private. The person at risk may not understand that they are being abused and so may not realise the significance of what they are telling you.

Some disclosures happen many years after the abuse. There may be good reasons for this, for example the person they were afraid of, has left the setting. Therefore, any delay in an individual reporting an incident should not cast doubt on its truthfulness. Often a disclosure can be the 'tip of the iceberg' so it is important to believe the person.

Please take care to follow these recommended points when managing a disclosure:

- assure the person that you are taking them seriously
- listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm, try to get a better picture of what happened, but avoid asking too many questions
- do not give promises of complete confidentiality
- explain that you have a duty to tell your manager or other designated person (if you are an employee/volunteer), and that their concerns may be shared with others who could have a part to play in supporting and protecting them
- reassure them that they will be involved in decisions about what will happen
- explain that you will try to take steps to protect them from further abuse or neglect
- if they have specific communication needs, provide support and information in a way that is most appropriate for them
- record the words of the person at risk and accept the statements as fact; record the full details, including the time, date and location that disclosure was made. All written notes must be made as soon as practicable and kept securely
- do not confront the person alleged to have caused the harm as this could place you at risk, or provide an opportunity to destroy evidence, or intimidate the person alleged to have been harmed or witnesses
- do not be judgemental or jump to conclusions

- staff and volunteers should follow River’s organisational procedures for raising the alert.

4.2 Witnessing abuse

- In situations of immediate danger take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services i.e. Police, ambulance or GP. You may wish to challenge the person who is abusing the individuals and try to persuade them to stop whilst ensuring your personal safety is not compromised. Remember to have regard for your own safety. Leave the situation if it is not safe for you.
- Report the incident to your line manager straight away and/or Safeguarding Lead.

5. Referring a concern

5.1 Referring a concern or a disclosure

These procedures inform all staff and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected vulnerable adult abuse, i.e. response actions. Please see Appendix 1 Flowchart: Dealing with concerns of an adult at risk of harm for an overview.

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case or suspected abuse is ***not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred.***

However, staff and volunteers do have a duty of care to the adult to report ***any suspicions or concerns*** you may have to a line manager/ Safeguarding Lead.

Referring or reporting to other agencies - Alerting Authorities

An alert is a concern that a ‘person at risk’ is suffering, or at risk of, or may be being, abused, neglected or exploited by a third party, or where a person at risk may be being harmed by others usually in a position of trust, power or authority.

Alerts can be made to Adult Services by anyone and should be made when:

- the person is a person at risk and there is a concern that they are being or are at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited
- the person is a person at risk and there is a concern that they have caused or are likely to cause harm to others
- the adult has capacity to make decisions about their own safety and wants this to happen
- the adult has been assessed as not having capacity to make a decision about their own safety, but a decision has been made in their best interests to make a referral
- a crime has been or may have been committed against an adult who lacks the mental capacity to report a crime and a ‘best interests’ decision is made
- the abuse or neglect has been caused by a member of staff or a volunteer

- other people or children are at risk from the person causing the harm
- the concern is about institutional or systemic abuse
- the person causing the harm is also vulnerable / adult at risk

The Safeguarding Lead will ultimately decide whether to alert Adult Services in each case.

If you have any concerns about an adult who may be at risk of harm, contact:

Windsor and Maidenhead	To make a safeguarding referral about an adult at risk in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, or for advice about an adult who may be being abused, report to Adult Social Care Services at the earliest opportunity using our online Safeguarding Report Form . 01628 683744. Emergency Duty Team on 01344 786543 If the adult is not in immediate danger, but the abuse is of a criminal nature, call the Thames Valley Police Non-Emergency number on 101.
Marlow (Bucks)	Safeguarding Adults Team: 0800 137 915 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) * safeguardingadults@buckscc.gov.uk Out of Hours Service can provide help with urgent social care if that is required 0800 999 7677.
Slough	Call 01753 475111 (option 1) Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm Email safeguarding.adults@slough.gov.uk . Emergency duty team on 01344 351999
Englefield Green (Surrey)	Emergency duty team on 01344 351999 Online: Make a safeguarding referral Telephone: 0300 200 1005 Domestic Abuse concern Telephone: 01483 776 822 (available 9am to 9pm, 7 days a week)

If the allegation or suspicion involves either a care home, domiciliary care (home care) agency or NHS hospital trust, contact the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161.

In an emergency, dial 999. If you think a crime has taken place, but it is not an emergency, please call the Police on 101.

***** If someone is deemed at immediate and significant risk, then the Emergency Services (999) should be contacted straight away*****

5.2 Supporting immediate needs

In line with information sharing considerations, River Church may need to take the following actions:

- Make an immediate evaluation of the risk to the person at risk and any others who may be at risk.
- Take reasonable and practical steps to safeguard the person at risk as appropriate.
- Consider referring to the Police if the abuse suspected is a crime.
- If the matter is to be referred to the Police, discuss risk management and any potential forensic considerations.
- Consider the support needs of the person alleged to have caused harm if they are also an adult 'at risk'.
- Arrange any necessary emergency medical treatment; note that offences of a sexual nature will require expert advice from the Police.
- If there is a need for an immediate Safeguarding Plan, we will refer to the relevant Adult Services or Emergency Duty Services if out of hours.
- Consider appropriate action in line with River Church's procedures if a staff member or volunteer is suspected to have caused harm. This would typically involve the person being suspended from their responsibilities until an investigation has been concluded

Other Support Opportunities in River

At River Church we understand that times are difficult, and this has caused hardship for many people. We have a financial support fund (Hardship Fund) to enable us to help those in need, whether this is to help with energy and water bills, buy food, mend or replace broken appliances or help with other wider related essentials. **Grants from this fund need to be nominated by Church leaders.**

Other projects the River churches are linked with which will operate under outworking of this policy:

CAP (Christians Against Poverty): This has its own safeguarding route, but sometimes crosses into church life - River Maidenhead and other River churches

Heads Up – community volunteer services – River Maidenhead

Giving Hope Furniture project – River Slough

Forest Estate Community Hub, Englefield Green – The Journey

5.3 Sharing Information

The law does not prevent the sharing of sensitive, personal information within organisations. If the information is confidential, but there is a safeguarding concern, sharing it may be justified. The General Data Protection Regulations enables the lawful sharing of information. Organisations need to share safeguarding information with the right people at the right time to:

- Prevent death or serious harm.
- Coordinate effective and efficient responses.
- Enable early interventions to prevent the escalation of risk.
- Prevent abuse and harm that may increase the need for care and support
- Maintain and improve good practice in safeguarding adults.
- Reveal patterns of abuse that were previously undetected and that could identify others at risk of abuse.
- Identify low-level concerns that may reveal people at risk of abuse.
- Help people to access the right kind of support to reduce risk and promote wellbeing.
- Help identify people who may pose a risk to others and, where possible, work to reduce offending behaviour.
- Reduce organisational risk and protect reputation.

Frontline staff and volunteers should always report safeguarding concerns in line with River Church's policy – this is usually to your line manager or DSL/SC in the first instance, except in emergency situations.

It is good practice to try to gain the person's consent to share information but if the situation is urgent and high risk and as long as it does not increase risk, staff and volunteers should inform the person if they need to share their information without consent.

5.4 Consent

Wherever practicable, the consent of the adult affected should be sought before reporting a suspected crime to the police. There may of course be circumstances where consent cannot be obtained because the adult lacks the capacity to give it, but it is in their best interests to contact the police.

Whether or not the adult has the capacity to give consent, the police will need to be informed if other people are already or would be at risk. The police should also be informed where it is in the public interest due to the seriousness of the alleged criminal offence. In certain circumstances an adult's right to confidentiality is overruled.

Information about a suspected crime should be shared with the police in the following circumstances:

- If others are, or may be, at risk of abuse or neglect.

- Where there are legal or professional responsibilities of staff who have become aware of the concern, for example, if this relates to a breach of regulation, professional code of conduct, or an offence appears to have been committed.
- Where the adult to whom the concern relates lacks capacity and, in this situation, the Mental Capacity Act should be followed.
- If the adult is believed to be subject to undue influence such that they are unable to exercise free will, for example Modern Slavery, controlling and coercive behaviour or domestic violence and abuse.
- If an adult is disclosing potential criminal offences, any initial questioning should be intended only to elicit a brief account of what is alleged to have taken place. This brief account should include where and when the alleged incident took place and who was involved and should be recorded in writing at the time or as soon as possible afterwards. A more detailed account will be obtained by the police at a later stage.

5.5 Mental capacity

People must be assumed to have capacity to make their own decisions and be given all practicable help before they are considered not to be able to make their own decisions. Where an adult is found to lack capacity to make a decision then any action taken, or any decision made for, or on their behalf, must be made in their best interests. Professionals and other staff have a responsibility to ensure they understand and always work in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Even when a person is assessed as lacking capacity, they must still be encouraged to participate in the safeguarding process.

6. Responding to allegations/concerns against a member of staff or volunteer

Unfortunately, those who live with, care for, work alongside or serve those that are vulnerable can be individuals who go on to abuse them.

The Care Act 2014 requires the local authority, its relevant partners and those providing care and support services to have clear policies in place for dealing with allegations against anyone working in a position of trust. These policies should clearly distinguish between an allegation, a practice concern, a complaint and a care quality issue.

A position of trust is a paid or unpaid role when working with adults with care and support needs. If anyone becomes aware of allegations about the conduct or behaviour of an individual in a position of trust which might pose a risk to adults with care and support needs, they should raise a safeguarding concern with the local authority.

Should you ever have a concern about a person close to the adult who may be at risk, be that a relative or a member of your team for example you should:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously.

- Consider any allegation or concern to be potentially dangerous to the adult.
- Report to and inform (if appropriate) your Line Manager or DSL/SC.
- Record in writing on an **Adult Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form** all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible (see **Appendix 2**)
- Request your DSL informs relevant persons, ie. Adult Services, and/or the Police if appropriate.
- Also report any allegations involving a line manager/ senior team leader

6.1 Reporting abuse for investigation

Concerns of abuse towards an adult at risk should be referred/reported to the area Adult Service team, or the Emergency Social Services duty team if urgent and outside of normal office hours.

Where a crime may have been committed the Police must always be contacted, and if in any doubt, they should still be notified so that they can make that judgement.

6.2 Internal investigation for staff or volunteers

When a complaint or allegation has been made against a member of staff he/she must be made aware of their rights under employment legislation and internal disciplinary procedures. It is important that a thorough investigation be carried out in accordance with River Church's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure:

https://riverchurch2019.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/Trustees/EWqF32O092ZLpX8KCgs61ooBX3lbdC_UNB865JcLb8gHeQ?e=dFNQNC [River Disciplinary Policy and Procedure 2023.pdf](#)

With a complaint/allegation against a volunteer, they must be reported and investigated in a similar way, although they do not have the same rights as an employee.

A risk assessment must be undertaken immediately to assess the level of risk to all service users posed by the member of staff/volunteer. This must include whether it is safe for them to continue their role or any other role within the church and its projects whilst the investigation is being undertaken. The consideration of risk must be considered alongside the right of the employee. Decisions not to suspend an employee must be fully documented. Volunteers would be asked to step back from serving whilst the investigation is carried out.

Action to be considered will include the following:

- Is this a supervisory/training issue?
- Is it a matter for discipline/capability issue?
- Does discussion need to take place with other agencies, e.g. the Police and Adult Services?
- Is there a need to refer to Disclosure & Barring Service?

6.3 Disclosure & Barring Service – referrals

Employers and managers of volunteers working with people in regulated activity have a legal duty to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service in circumstances where they have permanently removed a person from the regulated activity through dismissal or permanent transfer (or would have if the person had not left, resigned, retired or been made redundant) because the person has:

- been cautioned, arrested or convicted for a relevant offence, or,
- engaged in misconduct in relation to children or adults at risk – i.e. that an action or inaction (neglect) has harmed a child or adult or put them at risk of harm, or,
- satisfied the ‘Harm Test’ in relation to children or adults at risk – i.e. that there has been no relevant misconduct but a risk of harm to a child or adult still exists.

Managers/Safeguarding Leads must keep all involved agencies informed of outcomes of any internal investigations and disciplinary proceedings being undertaken alongside any Adult Services own safeguarding investigation.

All agencies will work together and decide on the best possible course of action for both the perpetrator and the victim.

7. Recording Information

7.1 Using an incident reporting form

As soon after the disclosure/incident as possible, record in writing on a ‘Safeguarding Adult Incident Reporting Form’ all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the person’s own words. In order to record information as fully as possible you should include:

- The date and time.
- The person’s name and address and date of birth if known.
- The nature of the allegation.
- *A description of any visible injuries.*
- *Your observations – e.g. a description of the adult’s behaviour and physical and emotional state.*
- Exactly what the adult said and what you said. Record their account of what happened as closely as possible.
- Any action you took as a result of your concerns e.g. who you spoke to and resulting actions. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Sign and date what you have recorded.
- Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures, e.g. Data protection.

7.2 Preserving evidence

The first concern must be to ensure the safety and well-being of the adult you have concerns about. However, in situations where there has been or may have been a crime, and the Police have been called, it is important that forensic and other evidence is collected and preserved.

Try not to disturb the scene, clothing or victim if at all possible. Secure the scene, for example, lock the door, preserve all containers, documents, locations, etc. Evidence may be present even if it cannot actually be seen. If in doubt, contact the Police and ask for advice.

The Police will always be responsible for the gathering and preservation of evidence to pursue criminal allegations against people causing harm. However, other organisations and individuals can play a vital role in the preservation of evidence to ensure that vital information or forensics is not lost.

7.3 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only, i.e.: Safeguarding Lead, Trustees, Adult Services and the police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as a breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the adult, their family and any protection investigations that may follow. Informing the parent or carers of the adult 'at risk' you may have concerns about, needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way and should be done in consultation with Adult Services.

Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Adult Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. the information stored is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff and volunteers should be informed who the relevant designated spokesperson will be, and all enquiries directed through them. Staff and volunteers should reply 'no comment' to all questions/enquiries.



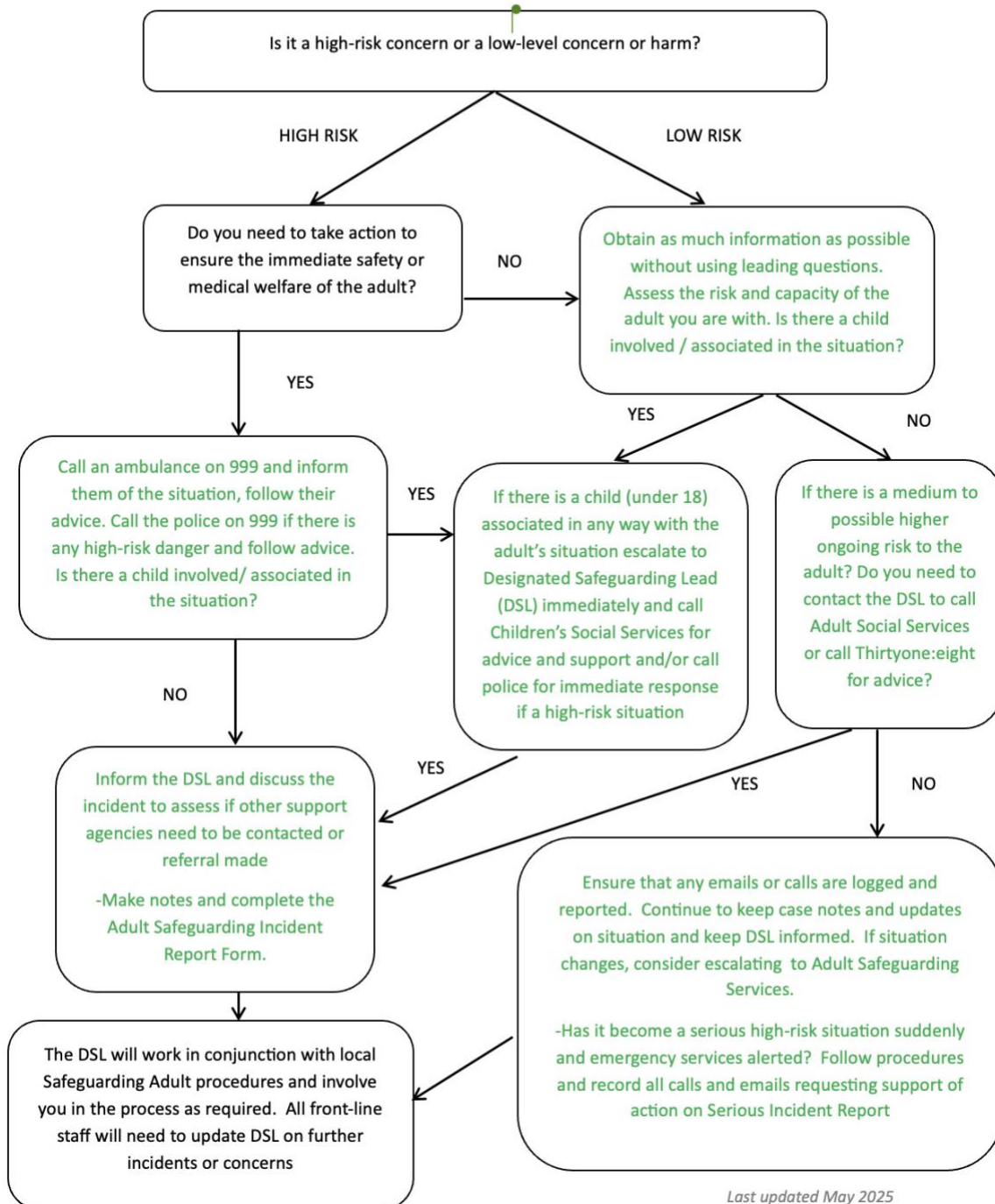
River Church Safeguarding Adults Policy

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: How to Report a Concern Flow Chart

Dealing with Concerns of an Adult at Risk of Harm

Remember to involve the adult at risk throughout the process wherever possible and gain consent for any referrals to Adult Social Services if the person has capacity. If an adult refuses consent but you believe they are in danger or at risk of serious harm, you may still report to adult services etc but log why.



Last updated May 2025

APPENDIX 2: SAFEGUARDING ADULT INCIDENT REPORTING FORM



Once completed and signed, please send to safeguarding@riverchurch.org

YOU MUST ALSO TELL A **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE IF YOU HAVE SENT A SAFEGUARDING FORM. PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY FOR THE DSL

Your information			
Name			
Role/Position			
Contact number		Email	
Details of adult at risk			
Name of adult		Contact number	
Address			
Date of Birth	Age (if date of birth not known)		
Details of any children at risk			
Are there children at risk in this situation: YES/NO	If yes, state briefly what actions have been taken and attach a child safeguarding incident report form.		
Name of agency, and contact numbers social worker dealing with case			
Incident details*			
Date and time of incident			
Please tick one:	<input type="checkbox"/> I am reporting my own concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am responding to concerns raised by someone else – please fill in their details:	
Name of person raising concern		Contact Number	
Email			
Record details of the incident or concerns (include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay) Detail what you have seen/been told/other that makes you believe the adult at risk is being abused or is at risk of abuse (include dates/times/evidence from records/photos etc.)			

Reasons for not discussing with the adult	
Adult lacks capacity Y/N Details	Adult unable to communicate their views Y/N Details
Discussion would increase the risk – provide details	

* Attach a separate sheet if more space is required (e.g. multiple witnesses)

Incident details (continued)			
Adult's account of the incident (in their own words where possible)			
Have you discussed your concerns with the adult? What are their views? What outcomes have they stated they want (if any)?			
Do you have permission to refer? Y/N		Are you referring without permission Y/N	
If you are not referring this incident please outline your reasons:			
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident			
Name of witness		Role within charity or relationship to the adult	
Address			
Email / Contact number(s)			
Details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury			
Name		Role within the charity or relationship to the adult	
Address			
Email/ Contact number(s)			
Please provide details of action taken to date			

Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – please provide further details:
Name of organisation / agency		
Contact person		
Email / Contact number(s)		
Agreed action or advice given:		

Declaration			
Your signature			
Print name		Today's date	

Reported to Designated Safeguarding Lead			
Designated Lead Name		Date reported	

DSL Records

Unit

<p><u>FOR DSL USE ONLY</u></p> <p>Are there identifying risks related to;</p> <p>CSE PREVENT FGM</p> <p>“honour” based violence</p> <p>(Please circle)</p> <p>Remember to consider specific recording procedures for these risks.</p>	<p>Is there a history of safeguarding concerns (NB: check electronic and hard copy files)</p> <p>YES NO</p>
--	--

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING RECORD OF ACTION / CONTACTS/CHRONOLOGY OF INCIDENT

NAME:		
DATE	DETAILS	SIGNATURE

APPENDIX 3: River Church Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct

River Church takes the safeguarding of children and adults who may be 'at risk' seriously. All staff and volunteers have a duty of care to adults they serve or work with who might be 'at risk' or vulnerable. This includes taking responsibility for your own behaviour and attitude at all times. Remember, as a leader, trustee, staff or volunteer this gives you a position of power and trust, so you need to be transparent and accountable in all that you do.

Alongside the practical issues of making sure the project you are serving in provides safe activities, you also need to ensure your behaviour and actions are reflecting safe practice too.

Our suggested code of conduct goes some way to outline practical examples of what we would expect to see in place as a minimum, and what to do if you have a concern about someone in your project who may be suffering from abuse, coercion or control.

Do:

- Treat all people with respect. Some adults 'at risk' may need different help at times, but all of it should be respectful, and value them as adults with choice and capability wherever possible.
- Be fair in all your dealings with everyone and do not show favouritism to any individual adult. If extra time or resources are needed for someone, talk to your Team Leader to keep it accountable.
- Take care to avoid your actions and words being misinterpreted. You may not know the background of all the people you are serving. For example, be conscious of the appropriateness of any physical contact and verbal comments you may make. Be age and gender appropriate and sensitive to ethnic/cultural boundaries.
- Remember, as a member of staff or volunteer you have a position of power and trust. Some charity workers have used their position to take advantage of others, so be transparent and accountable in all that you do.
- Ensure where possible there is more than one member of staff or volunteer present during activities, or that you are in the sight or hearing of other staff or volunteers. There is safety and accountability in numbers.
- Try to avoid lone working where possible. If this is unavoidable due to the nature of your role then follow the guidelines for lone working, such as only meeting in a public space where other people are around and follow the safety guidelines, we need you to observe.
- If you are in any doubt as to the appropriateness of your actions, then ask a colleague or the person responsible for your supervision.
- Report all concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Minister with appropriate physical contact and verbal comments, age and gender appropriate and sensitive to ethnic/cultural boundaries (See **Appendix 6**)

Don't:

- Offer your private contact details to individuals or arrange to meet up with them outside the project you are representing - unless meeting up is in a professional capacity and remains accountable with your Team Leader.
- Message individuals privately on social media or mobiles as a friend. Group messaging is more accountable or including your Team Leader in the message if it is an individual communication.
- Enter into any agreement to handle money on behalf of the service user or offer to help them financially. If there is a financial need or crisis report this to your Team Leader who may be able to help through the project or church.
- Enter into an intimate relationship with anyone you have a position of trust over. Intimacy can be emotional as well as physical.
- Allow boundaries to blur or be broken when serving adults who may be vulnerable.
- Let suspicions, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or reported.
- Carry out personal care such as toileting or dressing those you serve. If this type of help is needed someone else will be responsible for supporting them in this area, i.e. their parent/carer.
- Accept any type of financial reward or gift of any kind for any service or ministry provided or enter into any agreement to handle money on behalf of the service user.

Report or challenge the following:

- Abusive activities such as ridiculing or bullying. Educate where you can, report where you need to.
- Suggestive, aggressive or derogatory remarks or gestures. Model best practice of respect, choice and empowerment of individuals.
- A colleague's behaviour or boundaries that may have become a concern.
- Report all concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse. They must be recorded and passed on

Prayer Ministry in projects, visits etc

We want to be able to offer prayer in our projects when supporting adults who may be vulnerable and perhaps isolated at times. However, do ensure that you:

- Do not push prayer ministry onto a person who hasn't asked for it. Sensitive offering to pray is okay, but it should not be started without their permission.
- Generally, pray with another person present, or someone they are happy to have alongside them.
- Where possible pray with someone of the same sex or have someone alongside them of the same sex.
- Always ask permission before using physical touch during prayer. Usually this should be limited to a gentle hand on a shoulder for example.

Remember you have a position of power and trust serving as a member of a church or Christian project and must remain above reproach. Safeguarding does not stop appropriate care and support for the people you serve. It ensures they receive the best care and activities we can provide and protects your reputation and the projects you volunteer or work in.

River Church also has a more general Code of Conduct policy. Please refer to www.riverchurch.org.uk/policies

Statement:

I am signing this Code of Conduct to agree that I have read and understood what is expected of me.

Name:

Date:

Signature:



Registered Office: River Church, 1 Meadlake Place, Egham, Surrey TW20 8HE

Registered Charity: 1146525

APPENDIX 4: DECLARATION



Registered Office: River Church, 1 Meadlake Place, Egham, Surrey TW20 8HE
Registered Charity: 1146525

DECLARATION

River Church is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of adults by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Working as an employee or volunteer of River Church it is important that you have taken time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Adult Policy and procedures.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for adults and other people who use our service.

.....

Declaration:

I have read and understand the River Church Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and I accept the principles therein.

Signed: _____

Date: ___/___/20__

Name: _____

(Please print)

Position: _____

APPENDIX 5: Care Plan/ Risk Assessment Pro-forma

Appendix 4: Risk assessment pro-forma

Place of Worship / Organisation	New Generation Church	
Subject of Risk Assessment (if child, include age)		Location:
Date of Risk Assessment		Date for Review
Responsible Safeguarding Lead		Review Frequency:
Professionals/others involved (if applicable)		
Reason for risk assessment (including a view on the individual's awareness and acknowledgement of the concerns)		

What are the concerns?	Given this, what are the possible risks? Who is at risk?	Can the risk be managed? What measures can be adopted to safeguard in this situation?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Date Completed

APPENDIX 6. 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 congregational Safeguarding Coordinator (SC).
- 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 (SC) 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 (SC).

- If the above are not available, contact River Church's Designated Safeguarding Lead 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/River's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (SC/DSL/DDSL). If none are available, phone Thirtyone:Eight.