

**Safeguarding children, young people
and adults at risk.**



House of Rainbow

Community Interest Company
April 2026

Foreword

The safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk is a fundamental obligation for everyone associated with House of Rainbow CIC and its partner agencies. Ensuring the safety and well-being of those vulnerable to abuse or neglect requires unwavering vigilance and continuous improvement. Recognizing this responsibility, House of Rainbow CIC regularly reviews and updates its safeguarding guidance to reflect the very best practices within and beyond our organization, and this policy embodies our steadfast commitment to promoting the safety, protection, and welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk.

In recent years, significant changes in societal well-being and pastoral care systems have reshaped how we approach safeguarding. The integration of partnerships, provider collaboratives, networks, and evolving legislation has introduced new dimensions to safeguarding practices, underscoring the importance of adapting to these changes

Section 1

Details of the organisation

Name: House of Rainbow

Registered Address: M35 0LW

Contact Tel No: 07521130179

Website: www.houseofrainbow.org

General Email address

Safeguarding Leads:

Jide Macaulay

Contact: jide@houseofrainbow.org

Tel: 07521130179

Catherine Bird

Contact: cathybird@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 07890 817628

Mission Statement and Activities

House of Rainbow (HoR) is a faith-based community that celebrates the diversity of all God's people. Founded on the vision of inclusion, it is a safe and affirming space for Black, African, Caribbean, and other ethnic minority LGBTIQ+ individuals, as well as their allies. The Mission of HoR is to create a home where faith, love, and justice meet. HoR works to break down the barriers of stigma, shame, and discrimination, while lifting up voices that have too often been silenced.

Rooted in Christian traditions and enriched by African culture, HoR affirms that every person is wonderfully made and deeply loved. Through worship, advocacy, support, and education, HoR nurtures spiritual growth, fosters community, and champions human rights for all. Activities include:

Faith & Inclusion Transformation - fostering belonging by expanding inclusive Christian fellowships, equipping faith leaders through training, and hosting annual conferences that celebrate diversity. It inspires dialogue, deepens understanding, and nurtures safe spaces where LGBTQ+ individuals and marginalised communities encounter God's love without fear, building bridges of reconciliation and hope.

Protection, Support & Empowerment - ensuring people seeking asylum and trafficking survivors receive safety, legal guidance, and pastoral care. It fosters emotional healing, community integration, and empowerment through advocacy, resources, and skills development—helping them rebuild their lives with dignity, resilience, and confidence while navigating complex legal and social systems.

Health, Wellbeing & Stigma Reduction - empowering Black gay, bisexual, and trans people living with HIV through peer-led support groups, education, and safe spaces. It challenges stigma with campaigns promoting acceptance, encourages regular healthcare engagement, and builds resilience by prioritising mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing for thriving, stigma-free communities.

Capacity Building & Leadership Development equipping activists, faith leaders, and community organisers with knowledge, skills, and confidence to create lasting change. Through training, mentorship,

and resources, they strengthen advocacy, inspire others, and mobilise communities, promoting justice, inclusion, and sustainable impact in addressing social, spiritual, and systemic challenges.

Global Mission & Advocacy Impact focussing on connecting local struggles to global platforms, ensuring marginalised voices are heard. It drives systemic change through international forums, partnerships, and campaigns, influencing policies, shaping narratives, and promoting justice, equality, and inclusion for vulnerable communities worldwide.

Regular Fellowships run by HoR are:

Group Name	Location	Leader Name/s
London Fellowship	Union Chapel	Jimmy Adekoya

Regular Other Specific Groups run by HoR:

Group Name	Location	Leader Name/s
PLHIV	Virtual	Fayosola Aina
PSA	Virtual	Praise T Edeh

All the above Groups must meet the standards set down in this Safeguarding policy. Leaders must sign a Code of Conduct agreement that they will follow safeguarding and other relevant processes. See Appendix 1.

Our Commitment

The Board of Directors of House of Rainbow recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for adults, young people, and where relevant, children. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. 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 Governing body 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 Board of Directors 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 its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that any premises used meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that they are welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

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 to vulnerable people but if you are aware or witness or fail to protect someone and do not report it then that will increase the chances of the abuse continuing too. 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.

In order to safeguard those with whom we are working 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:

1. States 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, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Definitions and further definitions and signs and symptoms of children:

- See Appendix 2 - Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children and Young People)
- See Appendix 3 - Signs of possible abuse (Children and Young People)
- See Appendix 4 - Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults) .
- See Appendix 5- Signs of possible abuse (Adults)

Safer Recruitment

The Board of Directors will ensure all workers and volunteers will be 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 each post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- Those short listed have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview and the panel was satisfied the principles were understood and any training needs were highlighted.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) for England and Wales or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for Scotland has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- If HoR is using workers from outside of the UK then necessary background checks will be undertaken on those applying to work with children/adults with care and support needs, including references and DBS checks where possible. Where it is not possible to gain an appropriate level of check then an appointment will not be made.

Safeguarding Training

The Board of Directors are 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 and regular volunteers will receive foundation induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training every 3 years.

The Board of Directors and Staff 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.

Supervision of Volunteers – Codes of Conduct

The Board of Directors are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers/volunteers will be issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

See Appendix 1.

Section 3

Practice Guidelines

As a CIC working with vulnerable adults and occasionally young people 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.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or in the appendices. The activities they cover include public worship, additional fellowship activities and work with refugees and asylum seekers. Consent forms where appropriate are always completed and attached as appendices.

- *See Appendix 6 - Guidance on touch*

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 and refer to flow charts for action if necessary:

See - Flowchart-for-action-children.pdf (Separate document to policy).

See - Flowchart-for-action-adults.pdf (Separate document to policy).

1. Document the concern

Using the example performer in Appendix 7 – Reporting a Concern Form

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

2. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to either of the Safeguarding leads:

Name: Jide Macaulay

Tel: 07521130179

Email: jide@houseofrainbow.org

Name: Catherine Bird

Tel: 07890817628

Email: cathy@blueyonder.co.uk

The above are nominated by the Board of Directors 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.

If the suspicions implicate both of the above listed, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Local Social Services relating to the area where the vulnerable adult or young person about whom the concern is being raised lives. The police Non-Emergency Number Tel: 101 can also be used

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

- The named safeguarding person may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern and whether there was any action to protect i.e., Suspension
 - I. Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - II. 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 a Safeguarding lead, the absence of a Safeguarding lead should not delay referral to Social Services or the Police.

- The Board of Directors will support the Safeguarding lead 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, although the Board of Directors hope that members and staff of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding lead as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Board of trustees demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding lead is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and 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 Safeguarding lead will:

- Contact Children's Social Services 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 significant 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.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspensions 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, Safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse.
- 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, Safeguarding lead will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e., counselling or other pastoral support

Allegations of abuse against a person who works or volunteers 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 Safeguarding lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and in Scotland Local Health and Social Care Partnership 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.
- For churches in Scotland make a referral to Disclosure Scotland for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. A referral must be made within 3 months of the organisations disciplinary actions or the organisation will find themselves criminally liable.
- 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/volunteers with adults with care and support needs.

The Safeguarding lead 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 Board of Directors are committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and to supporting all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with House of Rainbow.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending a House of Rainbow event or fellowship is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the Safeguarding lead will supervise (or arrange supervision for) 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. Refer to:

Appendix 8 - Sex Offenders and Church Attendance

Appendix 9 - Contracts and Agreements

Appendix 10 – Someone I care about may be a sex offender

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Board of Directors of House of Rainbow on xxxxx 2025 and will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

Signed by: Catherine Bird

Position: Director

Signed by: Jide Macaulay

Position: Director

Date: 17th April 2026

A copy of this policy is also lodged with Jide Macaulay and it is available on the HoR Website www.houseofrainbow.org/safeguarding

CODE OF CONDUCT

House of Rainbow behaviour code for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for House of Rainbow. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good Practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the safeguarding co-ordinator
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches House of Rainbow's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol whilst working/volunteering or taking illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave House of Rainbow, and if you are in receipt of services from, or a participant in HoR activities you may be asked to stay away from all HoR activities. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (CHILDREN)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

England

The four definitions (and a few additional categories) of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse : Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect : Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

Extremism

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

APPENDIX 3

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (ADULTS)

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14. Safeguarding, this replaces the previous guidelines produced in 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2000)

The legislation is relevant across England and Wales but on occasions applies only to local authorities in England.

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who.

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and.
- is experiencing, or 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 or neglect.

Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professional and other staff should not be advocating 'safety' measures that do not take account of individual well-being, as defined in Section 1 of the Care Act.

Link: [The Care Act 2014](#)

Link: [Care and Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014](#)

This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse,

cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE (ADULTS)

Physical Abuse

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or overuse of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite
- Person flinches at physical contact &/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather.
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people

Domestic Violence

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars
- Coercive, controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.
- Age range extended to 16 yrs.

Sexual Abuse

- Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming
- Emotional distress
- Mood changes
- Disturbed sleep patterns

Psychological Abuse

- Alteration in psychological state e.g., withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia
- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Helplessness or passivity
- Confusion or disorientation
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour
- Low self-esteem

Financial or Material Abuse

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money

- Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property
- Missing personal belongings
- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney

Modern Slavery

- Physical appearance: unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.
- Few personal possessions or ID documents.
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

Discriminatory Abuse

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance care
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves

Institutional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention

Self-neglect

- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment
- Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example not heating or lighting)
- Depression

GUIDANCE ON TOUCH

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child, young person or vulnerable adult's needs, not the workers.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that may be sexually stimulating.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc.), encourage the child, young person or vulnerable adult to do what they can themselves but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

REPORTING A CONCERN FORM

Part 1: Record of concern about a child/adult's safety and welfare

(for use by any staff/volunteers– This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)^{1, 2, 3}

All forms will be stored in a secure electronic file with restricted access.

Child/Adult's name (subject of concern):	Date of birth/age: Child/Adult:	Address:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Your Name (print): _____ Role/Job title: _____		
Signature: _____		
Other members of the household ⁴ :		
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g., disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)</i>		
How did the concern come to light?		
What is the child/adult saying about what has happened ⁴ ?		
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc.		

Date and time of discussion with Safeguarding Co-ordinator⁵: _____

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

Please pass this form to your Safeguarding Coordinator without delay.

Guidance notes for Form 1 (volunteers/staff only):

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form:

1. As a registered body the organisation is required to ensure that its duty of care towards its beneficiaries is carried out in line with the principles enshrined within the Working together to safeguard children and young people, 2018 and the Care Act, 2014. (Refer to your own church's/organisation's safeguarding policy at this point too).
2. Essential principles of recording the information received/disclosed/observed:
 - a. Remember: do not investigate or ask any leading questions
 - b. make notes within the first one hour of receiving the disclosure or observing the incident
 - c. be clear and factual in your recording of the incident or disclosure
 - d. avoid giving your opinion or feelings on the matter
 - e. aim to record using the 4 W's and 1 H: When, where, what, why and how
 - f. do not share this information with anyone else except your safeguarding co-ordinator in the first instance and they will advise on who else will need to be informed, how and when.
 - g. make use of the additional information section to add any other relevant information regarding the child/adult/ family that you may be aware of. This can include any historic concerns or observations.
3. ***What constitutes a safeguarding concern?*** – any incident that has caused or likely to cause significant harm to a child can be classed as a safeguarding concern. Abuse is classified under four different categories (with regards to children) as already stated within the safeguarding policy (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). With regards to adults there are 6 further categorisations. Whilst it may be helpful to record a specific category in the above form, if possible, this may not always be the case. Therefore, it is important to seek advice from your safeguarding Officer or Thirtyone:eight at this stage.
4. ***Why do you need information regarding 'other household members'?*** – It has been demonstrated as important to include information about significant adults in the household especially when concerns relate to children as this has been a recurrent risk factor in several serious case reviews.
5. ***Why is the view of the child/adult significant?*** It is important to give whatever detail is available of the child or adult's explanation (or verbatim) of the matter to help ascertain if it is plausible and to help offer a context to the concern identified.
6. ***Passing information to the Safeguarding co-ordinator*** – Your safeguarding co-ordinator holds ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within the church/organisation and therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions

being taken and make relevant and appropriate contact with statutory agencies if required. They will remain the most appropriate link between the organisation and external agencies.

Part 2: Record of concern about a child/adult's safety and welfare

(for use by Safeguarding Coordinator - This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)

Information received by SC:	Date:	Time completed:	From whom:		
Any advice sought, if applicable	Date:	Time completed:	Source of advice: name/organisation:		
	Advice received: Advice received about informing parents or in the case of adults, seeking consent/capacity ¹ :				
Initial Assessment of concern following advice ²					
Action taken with reasons recorded (e.g., <i>Referral completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff, CAF etc</i>)	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
	Referral		To whom		
	Signposting to other community resources				
	Pastoral Care and other support from church				
	Ongoing Monitoring				
Parent/carer informed?	Y	Who spoken to:	Date:	Time:	By whom:
	N	Detail reason:			

Any other relevant information			
Name of Safeguarding Coordinator:		Signature:	

OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS³:

S.No.	Date	Outcome (if known)	Service currently involved	Ongoing support offered by church (this can include monitoring)- include dates
1.				

Guidance notes for Form 2:

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form(s)

- 1. Importance of consent from parents/carer or adults (in the light of mental capacity)** – With regards to children, consent of the parents is considered important before a referral is made to external agencies, unless of course doing so will place the child(ren) at greater risk of harm. With regards to adults, it is important to be aware that their consent is crucial before reporting concerns onto statutory agencies. The individual's mental capacity will also be a significant factor to consider at this stage. You can always seek the advice of local authority social services.
- 2. Initial assessment-** Based on the advice you may have received from relevant individuals/agencies what are the concerns categorised as?
- 3. Overview of actions** - Includes a summary of the actions taken so far and who holds responsibility for it. You can use this section to add on information gathered when monitoring the situation or offering pastoral care over a defined period of time.

SEX OFFENDERS AND PARTICIPATION IN HOUSE OF RANIBOW FELLOWSHIP GROUPS OR SIMILAR ACTIVITIES

The Christian church is unique in that, based on the uncompromising message of the gospel, it opens its doors to all. It has also been known for some time that a significant number of sexual offenders living in the community also attend church. This may come as a surprise to some, a shock to others, and it is likely to stir up all sorts of feelings and strong opinions. On a personal level if you are told, or you find out, that a sexual offender has joined or plans to join your church, what is your reaction and what should you do to ensure others, (children and adults) who also attend your church are protected? This booklet attempts to answer some of these dilemmas and includes comments from a pastor and a sexual offender ('D') in this situation.

How do I feel?

It is perfectly understandable to be fearful, panicky or, at the very least, apprehensive. Perhaps you feel angry at the thought that someone who has abused children or adults should even be allowed back into the community. There are probably others in your church that, if they knew, would feel exactly the same. Whilst it is important to acknowledge your feelings, any information you have concerning an offender should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis with the leadership in the church who are responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place.

What do you mean by 'sexual offender'?

A sexual offender is someone who has committed sexual offences against either children or adults. In this guide we are primarily referring to people who have offended against children or vulnerable adults. Sexual offences include rape, indecent assault and indecent exposure, exposing children to pornography, and encouraging children to perform sexual acts on themselves, other children or the offender. They also include looking at images of children being abused or photographed in provocative poses. These are called indecent images of children (IIOC).

A number of sexual offenders will have downloaded child abuse images. Others will have made these images or distributed them to others as well as possessing them. Whilst some offenders will also have gone on to 'hands-on' offending, others may gather large collections of images on their computer. These offences are often described as 'child pornography' but this is inaccurate as every image captures an actual situation where a child has been abused, therefore a more appropriate term is indecent images of children (IIOC).

Some sexual offenders target children at a specific stage of sexual development. Others do not discriminate in this way and may also target adults who they see as vulnerable in some way. Most target children of a particular gender, but some target both.

Most offenders "groom" victims by forming a friendship with them, giving gifts, praise etc. so that the child or adult is comfortable in their presence and trusts them. They also groom parents, carers and others in the community to gain their confidence that it is alright for them to be around

their family. This grooming is very subtle and is usually more recognisable by outsiders than by those being groomed. Lone parent families, as well as children from low-income families, are often targeted. Most people think of a sexual offender as a lone adult male because this is the image frequently portrayed by the media. Such offenders actually represent between a third and a half of the total. A significant number of allegations of sexual crimes are against other children and young people (between a quarter and a third). Allegations against women account for up to a quarter and groups of offenders a similar amount also.

Whilst most abuse of children happens in families; it is important to realise that children of any age may be at risk of abuse by an offender who is part of your church. You should not therefore be complacent about the risks to a child whatever their age and never assume that because, as far as you know, the offender abused younger children they would be safe with an older age group. Any safeguards must be applied across the board! We also know that abuse of adults can be by family members, by carers within the home or within care homes or hospitals.

What are the on-going risks?

Sexual offenders often display addictive or repetitive behaviour towards their victims. For this reason, however repentant a sexual offender may appear to be, there are no cast-iron guarantees that they will not re-offend. Even if the offender has undergone treatment or received prayer ministry, they should not be assumed to be safe.

For some worshipping communities there is sometimes a denial that sexual offenders from within their own culture would frequent their place of worship. The fact that an individual demonstrates they are “Born Again” or is “Spirit-filled” is often the only requirement to place them within a position of trust within that community. Sexual offenders are present in all cultures, regardless of ethnicity and religious affiliation. Therefore, good sense safeguarding policies and procedures should not be disregarded purely because someone has had a spiritual renewal or experience.

True repentance is a change in thinking and behaviour, to “go and sin no more” so, apart from safeguarding considerations, in support of the repentant offender’s desire not to fall again we should not place them in a position of vulnerability where they could be tempted to re-offend. Sexual offenders need to be regarded in the same way as someone who has an addiction.

Whilst some offenders when arrested feel relief that their offending behaviour has been stopped, many initially refuse to admit that they have committed an offence and may continue to deny their guilt. This denial can be reinforced by family members who cannot accept the facts. (See Appendix 13 “Someone I care about may be a sex offender”).

Those offenders who represent a risk to children should be monitored closely and strict boundaries placed on their movements and behaviour within the church setting. A small group needs to be told of the situation; a contract written regarding the conditions necessary. There are three options.

- In some parts of church life, for example, morning worship, the offender must be monitored and discreetly supervised.
- Where provision cannot be made to monitor the individual at meetings involving children or adults who are vulnerable, it may be necessary to ensure that such offenders only attend meetings where those who are vulnerable are not present which may mean for the person

not to attend morning worship where large numbers of those who are vulnerable may be present.

- Some churches have created a home group with the person specifically in mind and where other members of the group know of the circumstances. It is important that such a group does not include families with children or is held in a house where children reside.

What can we do?

Having described the worst-case scenario, it is possible to help those who accept that what they have done is wrong and want to change. When they leave prison or the criminal court, they may feel:

- Worried about how people will react
- Frightened in case the temptation to re-offend overcomes them
- Guilty and ashamed
- Isolated and lonely.

'D': 'When leaving prison, society doesn't exactly welcome you with open arms. I did have support from friends and family but generally people don't trust ex-offenders. I felt like a second-class citizen'.

Like anyone, an offender wanting to change will need people around them who will love and accept them, offering care and protection with the assurance that God does not reject them. Alongside this, the people supporting the offender will need to:

1. Challenge risky or wrong thinking and behaviour.
2. Not allow themselves to be manipulated.
3. be relied upon to be supportive to help maintain self-control.

We encourage the setting up of Support and Accountability Groups, particularly for high-risk offenders, which can provide a group of people not only to share any necessary chaperoning and monitoring of the offender in church, but also provide a context in which they can address and be supported through the issues they face in life. They will be held to account for their thinking and behaviour, develop a range of close relationships with adults and be disciplined, all of which are key to maintaining an offence-free lifestyle and not giving into temptation.

On-going monitoring is essential, and it is important that, with changes of staff and leadership over time, knowledge of the offender is passed on to new leaders or staff. It is important that the offender is never placed in a position of trust including leadership, a door welcomer, a leader of worship, a reader or member of a worship band. All these roles suggest that the person is trustworthy and may lead others not to see the risk they may pose.

In every situation a careful assessment needs to be made as to whether the church can safely and adequately work with the person. Seek the help of police and probation in carrying out risk assessments which need to consider the details of offending and subsequent behaviour and attitudes. You will also need to take into account your own church circumstances, accepting the fact that some people will be just too risky and may need to be helped to find another fellowship where the risk to children can be more easily managed.

‘D’: ‘I know I can phone if I’m in trouble. I know they want to help me. These people give up their free time. It’s about feeling like a person again, not a number’.

What about boundaries?

Behavioural boundaries need to be put in place. These should help the offender feel secure and less at risk of false accusations. Most importantly, these boundaries will serve to protect children and young people who attend church activities.

- An offender should not be permitted to get close to children or adults who are vulnerable (either physically or emotionally)
- He or she should not sit in the vicinity of children or known vulnerable adults at church or attend house/cell group meetings where there are children in the home.
- An offender should never be allowed to work with children and young people or with adults who are known to be vulnerable
- They should not hold positions of leadership or responsibility where they are seen by others as someone who can be trusted.
- They should not undertake any activity where they might be seen as in a position of trust. e.g., giving books out at the door, greeting people, reading the lesson, leading prayers or a bible study, because those roles are regarded as suitable for those who are trustworthy.

‘D’: Working to a contract is a helpful and necessary procedure for ex-offenders in the church. It helped me know what I could and couldn’t do’.

Pastor: ‘In the beginning I found myself policing him, thinking and worrying whether it was going to work. Now, my pastoral team take care of this and I am more relaxed’.

Internet sexual offending includes not only indecent images of children but also online grooming, so helping an offender with online boundaries may also be needed.

See also; Thirtyone:eight Practice Guide – Contracts and Agreements.

What about forgiveness?

An offender needs pastoral care to help them deal with the spiritual and emotional aspects of their life. They may feel that their sins are too awful for God to forgive, that they can never change or be

healed of their own hurts. A pastor or carer needs to distinguish between forgiveness by God and forgiveness offered to the offender by those abused.

Offenders do not always appreciate that the consequences of their behaviour can be devastating for the person(s) involved and forgiveness by the victim may take a considerable time. Some may choose not to forgive. Offenders need to know that they have no inherent right to be forgiven by those they have harmed.

An offender may feel that they could never forgive themselves for their actions. In acknowledging they have done wrong they need to know that God forgives them and because of this they can forgive themselves. That is not to say they should forget what has happened and neither should the church. One offender commented that remembering his offence was a reminder to him to keep certain boundaries so that he would not be tempted to re-offend.

What about confidentiality?

Confidentiality is an important principle in any dealings with people in pastoral situations. However, where safety may be compromised, confidentiality has to take second place to the protection of others. Open communication with the person who has offended and sharing information with the police and probation service are vital for the protection of children and adults who are vulnerable. A church leader may be given confidential information by one of the statutory agencies that cannot be shared with the wider church. However, leaders responsible for children and vulnerable adults can be made aware of any boundaries that are in place without being given details of the offender's history. This is an important distinction; to know the boundaries without the reasons.

What about people who have never been convicted of an offence?

Most people who offend against children are not convicted. We know this by the number of adults admitting to unreported sexual offences against them as children and the number of cases reported to the police actually resulting in a conviction (about 5%). Even if an allegation is reported to the police, most are denied by the accused, and the case generally won't reach court if, for example, there is a lack of corroborative evidence or because it is not in the interests of the child or adult victim to take the matter further. For a case that reaches court, it is necessary for a jury to find someone guilty 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. Unless the jury agree on a verdict, the person will be found not guilty.

Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, churches will still need to respond even if the allegation is denied and in particular by applying appropriate boundaries. Failure to do so could place vulnerable adults and children at risk and it is also in the interests of someone who feels they have been falsely accused to work within given boundaries in order to minimise the possibility of further allegations.

Support for offenders - not an optional extra

Supporting offenders safely in the church is fundamental if others are to be protected from abuse. Safeguarding policies and good working practice are vital. If general procedures are in place and working, spelling out, for example, who has access to the crèche, then sudden changes do not have to be initiated immediately a person with a known problem comes to church. Having said this it is important, as a matter of course, to review policies and procedures on a regular basis, whether or not a known offender joins the church.

We cannot be all things to all people. For example, a church with one meeting room overflowing with children cannot provide appropriately for a high-risk offender. In this situation the church could seek the help of another local church who may be in a better position to provide a safer environment. Alternatively, the church may minister to an individual outside of public meetings. For example, in some situations offenders have been restricted to attendance at a particular cell group.

Part of a bigger package

The help and pastoral support available in the church needs to run alongside the monitoring of the individual by police and probation. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) exist in all areas. MAPPA places a duty on the police, the probation service and the prison authorities to assess and manage risks posed by offenders in every community in England and Wales. Similar arrangements apply elsewhere in the UK. They do this work in partnership with other agencies including health services, housing, social services etc. Where an offender is subject to a supervision plan it will be vital for churches to work closely with these agencies both in order to reduce risk and also to understand how the church can positively contribute to the supervision plan as well as the offender's relapse prevention or "better life" plan.

MAPPA guidance issued in 2009 by National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Public Protection Unit, Section 6.5, 'Offenders and Worship', stresses that MAPPA should work in partnership with places of worship and "that religious leaders should be provided with sufficient information to protect their congregation" Page 70. The guidance has been updated in 2012, 2014 and 2016. This guidance also says, 'Any breaches of the 'contract' with the offender must be reported to the offender/ case manager'. Therefore, it is important to contact the police/probation at an early stage and involve them in attending meetings and/or setting the contract where possible.

Further help and resources

The UK has led the world in sexual offending treatment programmes. There are accredited programmes in many prisons as well as community-based services. Research shows that those who complete treatment is less likely to fantasise about children or deny they harmed their victims and are therefore less likely to re-offend. It is vital that any help provided by the church is not seen as a substitute for working with the statutory agencies. It will also be important in any contract arrangement with an offender to emphasise keeping to agreed programmes and meeting the expectations of supervising agencies. If we are to gain full co-operation from an offender it is important that the Agreement, we put in place is discussed and agreed with them, possibly asking them what they think should be helpfully included, and is proportional to the risk they pose, reflects their pattern of offending and also their needs in terms of pastoral support.

Sexual offenders are not born as sexual offenders. Their sexual attraction to children developed mainly through their childhood experiences of abuse, be it emotional, physical, mental or sexual. They are typically people with low self-esteem, emotionally lonely and unable to relate deeply to adults, and who, to quote a probation officer, feel "powerless to change and hopeless". Many are full of shame for their activities, and that sense of shame may actually drive their sexual offending cycle. All of these characteristics, and more we have not mentioned, reflect what has come to be known in some Christian circles as an "orphan heart" and this gives us clues as to how we might fruitfully help them, for all of them are loved by God. The mandate for Christ's life, which we have inherited, was to heal the broken-hearted, set captives free, bring recovery of sight to the blind (self-deceived people?), to proclaim the Lord's favour etc. (Isaiah 61).

Key things to take away

A sexual offender is someone who has committed sexual offences against either children or adults.

Whilst most abuse of children happens in families; it is important to realise that children of any age may be at risk of abuse by an offender who is part of your church.

Those offenders who represent a risk to children should be monitored closely and strict boundaries placed on their movements and behaviour within the church setting.

Like anyone, an offender wanting to change will need people around them who will love and accept them, offering care and protection with the assurance that God does not reject them.

Supporting offenders safely in the church is fundamental if others are to be protected from abuse. Thirtyone:eight provides training and advice on all areas of child protection and good working practice to churches, organisations and individuals across the UK as well as a 24-hour helpline service.

The Lucy Faithful Foundation

A national safeguarding agency working with perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

Tel: 01527 591 922

Web: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Circles of Support and Accountability

A Community support system for sexual offenders

Tel: 0118 950 0068

Web: www.circles-uk.org.uk

Stop It Now!

A national campaign that aims to prevent child abuse by encouraging offenders to seek help.

Email: help@stopitnow.org.uk

Web: www.stopitnow.org.uk

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

Writing and managing a contract with;

- A person who has a conviction / convictions of violence or sexual harm to children or adults
- A person who has been accused of a violent or sexual offence
- A person whose behaviour is of concern and they have ignored advice

Stage 1 – calling a meeting

The person of concern needs to be invited to attend a meeting with a small group of people who may have professional expertise (police, social worker, prison officer, probation). If this is not possible, the attendees need to be people who are interested in supporting but also monitoring the person of concern. If the person is on the Sex Offenders or Violent and Sex Offenders Register, the police liaison officer can be invited to the meeting.

Stage 2 – church activities

A list needs to be made of all the activities which take place in the church building and are the responsibility of the church. This will be all the mid-week groups as well as the Sunday Services, but not the meetings which are leased by outside organisations or freely given to other organisations.

Stage 3 – risk assessment

Go through all the meetings and state which the person can attend (such as a concert), cannot attend at all (tea and toddlers or a social group for adults with disabilities), or can attend with supervision (worship).

Stage 4 – the contract

State which groups the person cannot attend and should not be in the building. State which groups the person can attend and what the supervision arrangements are. The contract must be signed by the person and all attendees.

Stage 5 – review meeting

The next meeting is arranged and there is discussion about how the terms of the contract have been adhered to, whether there have been any breaches (if so, any statutory authorities must be informed) and whether the terms of the contract need to be changed.

Some Examples:

Scenario A

Jack has been released from prison for a number of sexual offences against teenagers and young adults. He is on the sex offender's register. Whilst in prison he became friendly with the chaplain and now professes a faith. The church has one service on a Sunday morning with a large all age congregation. In the week, there is a youth club, a ladies bible group, a job club using computers for searching for jobs and a number of home groups. The contract stipulates that Jack must not be on the premises during the youth club night and the lady's bible group.

He is permitted to attend a specific home group where there are no under 18's or young adults in the group/household. He can attend morning worship as long as he sits in a particular place at the back of the church, and this will be within sight of one of the group members. He knows that if he leaves the service to use the toilets, he will be accompanied to the facilities. During coffee one of the groups will sit with him and ensure he does not initiate contact with any under 18's or young adults. The police are going to speak to the job club leader about the computers used for the job searches to ensure that unsuitable websites cannot be accessed.

At the review meeting, one member shared that Jack had formed a relationship with a 25-year-old young woman who is regarded as being vulnerable. The police are to be contacted to be informed of this information.

Scenario B

Joanna was a nursery worker. Four months into her contract she was dismissed from her post. A three-year-old had made an allegation about inappropriate touching but the matter did not proceed due to the age of the child and potential unreliability of the verbal evidence. However, the nursery found that she had breached their protocol about the toilet routines and had frequently been taking children into the toilets alone, even those who were capable of using the toilet independently. Joanna has asked to work in the crèche at church and gave this information on her self-declaration form.

She says she is passionate about working with children and wants a chance to prove her skills. A contract meeting was arranged and decided that she cannot work with any of the children's groups and cannot attend any home group where there are children in the household. She is also barred from agreeing to babysit if asked and from joining social media as a friend with any under 18's. Joanna feels aggrieved about these rules but was reminded that nobody has a right to be a children's worker and that appointments have to be made on the grounds of suitability.

As she was dismissed from the nursery, it is likely that this would be raised as a blemish on any DBS check. The contract group meet with Joanna every six months and are trying to support her in pursuing new areas of interest and employment.

Scenario C

Bill is an eighty-year-old widower. Complaints have been made at church from a number of older women about him hugging them enthusiastically without being asked and kissing them on their

mouths. This has caused a couple of the women great distress. Bill has been told about this on a number of occasions, but he has said that the women like it and 'it's all political correctness'.

A small group is formed, and Bill is advised that he will be accompanied as soon as he enters church, during the 'passing of the peace' and until he leaves the building. The person with him will ensure that he does not approach any women whilst in the building. The group decides that until he can prove he is acting appropriately, he is banned from attending the midweek lunch. After a three-month period, the review will look at the contract again. Bill refuses to sign the contract at the first meeting, so his refusal is recorded.

Scenario D

Carl/Carly is on probation for a violent offence when he/she was home carer. He/She was seen by the householder, stealing money from a wallet and when challenged, hit out at the resident and was dismissed from his/her post. At the contract meeting, it was decided to allow him/her to attend church services and a home group where the leader is one of the contract group. He/she was permitted to attend the luncheon club as a helper in the kitchen.

However, was told that he/she is not permitted to attend the group where young adults with learning disabilities meet to socialise and play games. Carl/Carly has no interest in attending the play group or children's groups and that is recorded in the group minutes. Carl/Carly was seen having coffee with a woman who is disabled. The pastoral worker said that Carl/Carly had offered to do some cleaning for her and that they had met in the supermarket, with Carl/Carly saying she recognised her from the church luncheon club. The police were informed about this and the liaison officer went to speak to him/her to give a warning. This made the group feel that Carl/Carly's cooperation with the terms of the contract was more superficial than first believed and so the contract was reviewed to prevent him/her being on church premises at any time other than for Sunday worship and would be accompanied throughout.

APPENDIX 10

SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT MAY BE A SEX OFFENDER

First Reactions

If you are in this situation and you sense there may be some truth behind the allegations, you are likely to experience a range of emotions. You may also need to make decisions that will have a significant impact not only on your own life but on the lives of other family members and those close to you.

Similarly, you may be shocked by the allegations and struggle to believe they are true. You may want to know what to do to in order to prove they are untrue. You are worried about people knowing, particularly if the situation is reported in the press.

Following the initial shock, there may be a sense of outrage, bewilderment and confusion. How could this happen? This person you thought you knew may have a dark side, a secret that you knew nothing about. How could you not have known? How could this secret have been kept hidden?

You may then feel disgusted, intense anger and betrayal. How could they let you down in such a way and expose you to public humiliation? If your own children have been affected this is perhaps the most difficult situation imaginable, to think that someone you loved and trusted could have harmed them without you knowing.

It is not unusual for partners, parents or friends to feel shame and a false sense of guilt. Sometimes they will question whether they are to blame for the abuse by not adequately meeting their partner's sexual needs, but this is never the cause of the sexual abuse of children. Feelings of shame are contagious; the closer you are the more you feel affected by it. It is also not uncommon for family and/or friends to be convinced of the alleged abuser's innocence or remain in denial due to a misguided sense of loyalty.

The situation can become even more complex if, for example, a wife or mother wants to stand by her partner despite the allegations against him. It is crucial all allegations are investigated, and the truth established for the sake of everyone involved. Each situation is individual and social services, police liaison officers and those close to you whom you trust will be able to help determine the levels of risk and how to respond.

The Investigation Process

The statutory agencies (i.e., Children's or Adult Social Services, police) have a duty to respond to an allegation of abuse. Depending on the ages of the alleged victims and the seriousness of the allegation, children and vulnerable adults, in particular, may be interviewed by a specially trained social worker and / or police officer. The person accused of the allegation may also be interviewed by the police. Following an arrest, the family may well be advised to discuss the situation on a 'need to know' basis only due to the obvious sensitivities and adverse reactions of others. This is a very difficult and stressful time because those involved have to live with some degree of uncertainty. Partners, in particular, may feel they are in an impossible situation especially if the allegation is denied.

A natural reaction to anything that contradicts what we think we know is to dismiss or deny it. Some thoughts are just too disturbing and unpleasant to entertain, and that's one of the reasons why there is so much denial surrounding sexual abuse. 'It couldn't happen!' is a common response. Most of us prefer to live in a world that conforms to our expectations. It needs to be

recognised that with regard to sexual abuse, it can and does happen – much more frequently than we would like to think. It happens in all sorts of situations; it happens to all sorts of children, and all sorts of people are perpetrators.

The caricature of the ‘evil paedophile’ portrayed in the media really doesn’t help. If you think about it, what child will trust such a frightening character or allow someone like that to get close to them? Sex offenders are, in other respects, ordinary people just like anyone else. To acknowledge the possibility of a child we know being abused by a person we know may require us to suspend disgust, disbelief and/or an instinct to defend them. Being open to the possibility that such a thing could have happened is very hard when we are close to the person involved. However, we owe it to the child or adult to take what they are saying seriously.

After the investigation

The aim of an investigation is to try to determine whether abuse has actually occurred. Unfortunately, this isn’t always possible. If a perpetrator admits the abuse, then this makes working with them and thereby reducing the risk of re-offending more likely to be successful. If they continue to deny the allegations, then some degree of uncertainty may remain even after the investigation has ended.

Quite often there is an absence of corroborative evidence; it is the word of the victim(s) against that of the alleged perpetrator. This is one of the main reasons many allegations of sexual abuse never reach the courts. In other situations, the matter does go to Court which can take a long time and there can be many hold-ups along the way. The whole situation can be frightening and confusing. Meanwhile, you might feel your life is on hold, waiting for the outcome.

However, even if there is insufficient evidence to proceed with a criminal prosecution, Children’s Services can still take action if they consider a child is at risk of significant harm. This can include a protection plan being prepared in respect of any children involved and in the most serious situations, an application can be made to the court for a child to be placed in care.

Don’t rush into making decisions

The impact of such an experience should never be underestimated. If a parent (usually a woman) discovers her partner may be guilty of abuse, she is likely to have to make some agonising decisions over what is best for the whole family. The children’s immediate safety and well-being is paramount, and this could mean a period of separation from her partner. It is important she doesn’t feel under pressure or rush into making decisions that are going to affect the long-term future or her family.

An inconclusive outcome

There are some cases where the outcome of an investigation is inconclusive and this presents challenges for everyone involved, the authorities, partners, parents, relatives, friends, and the church in some cases. We have said already, that those close to the alleged abuser can find it very difficult to accept the allegations of victims. This may be, in part, because they don’t have all the information surrounding the allegations. They may only hear the abuser’s denials and/or minimisations and the victim, whose confidentiality is protected, is not heard. When there is a court hearing then at least the evidence is out in the open. This can help challenge an abuser’s denials and help to bring some sort of closure for those affected.

A false allegation is a possibility but as allegations are generally denied anyway, proving guilt or innocence is often not possible. If doubts remain not only can this be difficult to live with but the potential risk to children or vulnerable adults remains.

Offering support

If you want to continue to offer support to someone suspected/convicted of abuse your acceptance of them, whatever the outcome of the investigation, can make a real difference. The fact that you don't reject them even though you find their alleged or actual behaviour abhorrent can provide hope for the future. The allegations and the investigation will undoubtedly have a life-long impact, even when unsubstantiated. Major readjustments may need to be made and things are unlikely ever to be the same again. It is possible to support the person even when what they have done or been accused of causes you great upset.

Facing the consequences – keeping in contact

The sexual abuse of children is a serious criminal offence and if convicted the person may serve a prison sentence. Sex offenders often feel lonely, isolated, and unforgivable, so contact made by, say, a pastoral carer can be a lifeline. Regular visits by family or friends can help keep valued relationships alive and make reintegration into society easier. However, pressure should not be exerted, and victims never coerced into visiting the offender. Children, in particular, are vulnerable to suggestion and might well feel that it's their fault the person is in prison.

Forgiveness and Restoration

Confession and forgiveness are central themes of the Christian faith. A sincere apology can make a real difference to all those affected, though this should never be allowed to become yet another way of the offender gaining control over the people involved.

Neither does this mean that the offender will not have to live with the consequences of their actions, carrying on with their lives as though nothing had happened? However repentant they may have been, and even though they may have sought forgiveness from God and their victim(s), it does not mean that they might not re-offend when faced with the same situation. Also, it is important to bear in mind that some victims will choose not to forgive. Others may struggle to reach a place where they can forgive an offender.

Due to the addictive nature of sex offending, a judge may decide it is not safe for the person to return home because they are considered too great a risk. Equally, family members may not want the person back even if there has been an admission of guilt, a desire to change and/or put things right. Family members and others may not want any contact with the person or only on a restricted or supervised basis.

An offender may attend a rehabilitation programme which also helps the probation service assess future risk. They can feel overwhelmed at the prospect of change, particularly to their lifestyle, as what was once considered ordinary activities, such as giving lifts to children, become out of bounds. One offender, realising the gravity of what they had done stated, 'I have learnt that I have to put boundaries around myself for the rest of my life'.

Reintegration – Is this possible?

It is important to recognise that churches cannot be all things to all people, but efforts can be made to ensure pastoral care is available without compromising the safety of children. On release

from prison or as part of on-going supervision, churches should make contact with and act on the advice of the probation service and/or MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements) and if the person's name is placed on the Sex Offenders Register, they will be required to give a known address and information about community groups they join (including churches). MAPPA assesses and manages the most serious sexual and violent offenders. With the aid of these statutory agencies, a risk assessment can be carried out. In some situations, the individual can be referred to another church where, for example, there are no children and/or they can be properly supervised.

Reintegration into the family home where an offender has abused their child(ren) is rare. It sometimes happens following much work with the offender and the partner agreeing to a monitoring role, much like a police/probation officer. In any event, you, as the partner, parent or friend of the person may be in a position to help them accept any statutory supervision and other requirements. This might include limitations placed upon them in relation to contact with children, particularly in a church situation where they may need to abide by a written contract. A contract does not mean an automatic ban from church life - rather a supervised arrangement where the offender can be valued and supported.

References and DBS Clearances

A DBS Clearances

House of Rainbow requires the following roles to undertake a DBS clearance. These are positions of trust, requiring one-to-one contact with potentially vulnerable individuals and holding access to personal information (including financial information) and keys.

Fellowship Leads

Safeguarding Leads

B Safer Recruitment

All new volunteers and employees will be expected to comply with a request for references and a self-declaration and will be given a Role Description. These forms will be held securely and electronically with restricted access.