



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

NOV 2025

THIS POLICY IS SUBJECT TO CONTINUOUS REVISION AND UPDATING.
WHEN WE UPDATE IT, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MAKE THE LATEST
VERSION AVAILABLE TO ALL.

POLICY STATEMENT.

Bridge Chapel, as a Church community, is committed to supporting and encouraging children, parents, adults and families in the growth of their Christian faith. Bridge Chapel is also committed to the provision of a safe environment within its accommodation and ministry provision.

We believe that every child, young person and adult has the right to feel safe and secure, and has the right to be listened to. We fully accept, endorse and will implement:

- a) the principle within the Children Act (1989) that ‘the welfare of the child is paramount’ and
- b) the principle within the Care Act (2014) that adults with the greatest needs should be supported and protected.

Therefore:

- As Pastors, elders, trustees, staff and volunteer workers of Bridge Chapel we are committed to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of children, young people and adults who we come into contact with.
- We recognise that safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility and that it is the responsibility of each of us to provide an environment in which any potential abuse to children or adults can be minimised or prevented. We also undertake to appropriately report any actual or suspected abuse or neglect of children, young people or adults, while continuing to support anyone affected by abuse.
- We are committed to following the agreed safeguarding procedures in line with statutory and City of Liverpool safeguarding children and adults procedures.
- We will aim through our recruitment, training and code of conduct to create a safe and secure environment for any child or adults with support needs, when they are in our care.
- We will have clearly identified church safeguarding designated people to lead and support others in this important area.
- We will maintain up to date information about national and local policy changes and review this policy annually. Next review – October 2025

Signed:

.....Pastor

.....Elder /Trustee

.....Elder/Trustee

**If you have any concerns relating to safeguarding children or adults, please speak to one of the church designated people for safeguarding:
Ian MacMichael: 07812 422 349
Lynn McNaught: 07914 823 064**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURE.

PURPOSE OF THESE PROCEDURES.

These procedures aim to give guidance and support to pastors, elders, trustees, staff, volunteers and the wider church congregation in dealing with issues relating to safeguarding children, young people, and adults. They should be read and understood by anyone in the church with responsibility for working with children, young people and, adults

SECTION 1.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18.

Child abuse can be divided into four main categories of harm, all of which can cause long term damage to a child. A child may be experiencing more than one form of abuse. These categories are:

1. **Physical abuse** — which can involve any form of physical harm, including fabricating or inducing illness.
2. **Emotional abuse** — which is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, and includes spiritual abuse, the key aspect of which is the religious context in which the abuse occurs and the ways in which people are controlled through the misuse and abuse of religious scripture, divine position, spiritual threats and fear of spiritual consequences and the suggestion of God as complicit. All or some of these features can be used to control or coerce.
3. **Neglect** – which is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychological needs.
4. **Sexual abuse** — which involves forcing or enticing a child to participate or witness sexual activity.

HOW DO WE RECOGNISE THAT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

Sometimes a child, young person or another person will directly allege that they are being abused or neglected.

Often, however, we do not have an allegation, but we must be alert to the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and respond when we have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

There are many different signs or symptoms of abuse, some of which are ambiguous. Signs and symptoms will be different for different aged children. Some indicators of potential abuse include:

1. Physical Abuse

- Unexplained or unsatisfactorily explained injury
- Hidden or concealed injuries
- Lack of appropriate and timely medical attention
- Changes in behaviour of child

2. Neglect

- Child looking ill-cared for and unhappy
- Lingering injuries or health problems
- Always hungry, even at unexpected times
- Unusual weight loss
- Unresponsive

3. Emotional Abuse

- Reverting to non age appropriate behaviour
- Nervousness
- Jumpy or twitchy
- Sudden underachievement
- Attention seeking
- Behavioural problems such as lying, stealing

4. Sexual Abuse

- Preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawing
- Sexually provocative with adults
- Secretive or furtive relationships with adults
- Tummy pains with no apparent cause
- Disturbed sleep or nightmares

For more in-depth information refer to <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>



SECTION 2

WHAT TO DO IF YOU NOTICE ANY SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

None of the signs or symptoms of abuse and neglect are conclusive — however we have a responsibility to share any concerns we have in order to protect children. This guidance is to assist you in the event that you have concerns about a child or suspect that they might be being abused or neglected.

DO:

- ✓ Note your concerns, as factually and clearly as possible
- ✓ Keep an open mind — noting a concern does not mean that you are accusing someone of abusing a child but equally you must not minimise your concerns
- ✓ Speak to the leader of the activity.
- ✓ Pass on your concerns to one of the church designated people for safeguarding as soon as possible.
- ✓ If a child is in immediate danger of significant harm, agree immediate actions to protect the child.

DON'T:

- ✗ Investigate the matter
- ✗ Interrogate the child
- ✗ Share the information with others outside of the activity/church designated people for safeguarding

The church designated people for safeguarding will discuss with you the next steps. A decision will be taken as to whether your concerns are such that a referral should be made to Liverpool Children's Services, to another agency or other action to be taken.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE.

This guidance is to aid you in the event of a child disclosing abuse to you.

DO

- ✓ Make it clear that you cannot be asked to keep a secret
- ✓ Listen to the child or young person, let them express their views and feelings without interruption, accept what they are saying
- ✓ Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- ✓ Do not press for information
- ✓ Explain that you must pass this information on
- ✓ Make notes of what was said using the child or young person's words whenever possible
- ✓ Let the child know what you are doing next, who you are going to tell and why
- ✓ Speak to the leader of the activity (unless the subject of an allegation)
- ✓ Refer immediately to one of the Church designated people for safeguarding children. A decision will be taken about the next steps, including referral to Liverpool Children's Services.



DO NOT

- ☒ Show shock or disbelief
- ☒ Agree to keep the disclosure a secret
- ☒ Make a promise or suggestion that you can stop the abuse
- ☒ Ask questions seeking further detail if you risk contaminating evidence
- ☒ Investigate any allegation — specially trained professionals undertake this role
- ☒ Contact the alleged perpetrator

Remember, you do not investigate, and do not delay in passing on the information. If the child is in immediate danger, you should contact the police immediately. Ensure you contact one of the Church designated people for safeguarding children.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS THAT A CHURCH WORKER OR VOLUNTEER IS ABUSING A CHILD?

This guidance is to assist you in the event that you have concerns that a church worker or volunteer is abusing a child, either from an allegation from a child or another adult or from what you have seen or heard.

DO

- ☒ Note your concerns, as clearly and factually as possible
- ☒ Keep an open mind
- ☒ Speak to one of the church designated people for safeguarding children (if one of them is the subject of your concerns or allegations then ensure you speak to another designated person)

DO NOT

- ☒ Investigate the matter
- ☒ Speak to the person the concerns are about
- ☒ Share the information with others other than the church designated people for safeguarding children

The church designated people for safeguarding will discuss with you the next steps. A decision will be taken as to whether your concerns are such that a referral should be made to Liverpool Children's Services or the police.

RECORDING OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS OR INCIDENTS.

You will be asked to record in writing your concerns. This may need to be given to other agencies investigating an allegation of abuse. Any such material must be given to the designated church safeguarding lead that you have discussed the matter with, and they will ensure it is kept locked in a secure cabinet in the church office.

[You can raise a concern using this form.](#)



SECTION 3

WORKING SAFELY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

The CIO aims to ensure that children and young people are safe whilst in the care of the CIO. The following guidance aims to support the church in ensuring this.

Recruitment of staff and volunteers working directly with children and young people and adults in Bridge Chapel's activities.

Selection Process.

Summary.

1. Volunteer expresses interest in joining team.
2. Where possible, volunteer joins a team on trial basis
3. Volunteer completes Volunteer Application Form. See Appendix 1.
4. A trial period is arranged and mentor named.
5. During this time, volunteer completes E-learning modules in safeguarding
6. References taken up and DBS application started.
7. Subsequent to satisfactory completion of trial period, references, DBS check and decision of Team leader, volunteer joins team.

As Christians, we trust one another and it makes us uneasy if we suggest that we don't. Many church leaders feel they know their people so well that it is quite unnecessary to put them through these procedures. Others may be so short of adult help in children's work that they gratefully accept any offers that are made and to 'screen' volunteers places an extra burden on an over-stretched leadership. We have to weigh all this against our solemn duty to prevent unsuitable people working with children, which sadly can and does happen in churches even with people we have trusted. A rigorous selection system may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. Even when everyone is "checked out" though, we must never become complacent.

Volunteering

To be considered as volunteer in any role with children/ adults, at Bridge Chapel, the first step would be for the person to complete the Volunteer Registration Form.

Where possible, it is appropriate for a person wishing to volunteer, or being asked to volunteer, to join a team on trial basis. In this circumstance, the person may come along to the event for a prescribed period of time, not longer than a half term. This should be done with input from the church leadership and notice given to the safeguarding team. We would not require a DBS for this trial period, however, the application should be started during the trial period. In this situation, the volunteer should be allocated a named member of the team to shadow and to act as a mentor for the trial period. The named person should ensure that the trial volunteer is appropriately supervised and not left unsupervised with children. At the end of the trial, the team leader will meet with the volunteer and a decision will be made about either leaving or joining the team. If they are to join the team, it will be subject to satisfactory references and DBS check being in place.

In all cases, a trial period is required as an appropriate start to exploring the possibility of being part of a team.

DETAIL.

STAGE 1

A meeting with an appropriate person should be arranged and the role and expectations discussed as well as the suitability and experience of the person for the role. In the first instance, this will usually be done by the team leader. After this conversation, the team leader should discuss the volunteer with an elder before inviting them to a trial period. A member of the safeguarding team should also be informed at this stage.

STAGE 2

As part of the recruitment process, we will ask for written support of suitability from people who have first-hand knowledge of the volunteer. One could be from a previous church if this is relevant. One should be someone who is not a relative. If any concerns are raised, these must be discussed with one of the church designated people for safeguarding. During this time, the volunteer should complete the appropriate e-learning modules on safeguarding.

STAGE 3

Volunteer to complete DBS Disclosure Application Form. Information disclosed must be dealt with confidentially. If a DBS check discloses an offence, this must be discussed with one of the church designated people for safeguarding and a decision will be made as to whether this is a matter of concern in working with children and young people or not.

STAGE 4

If DBS and references are satisfactory, a volunteer can join the team. They should be given the safeguarding policy and procedures as part of their induction and attend safeguarding training as soon as possible. Team leaders should ensure that new workers are supported and observed in their role. A review with them to see how they are getting on should be arranged by the team leader at an appropriate time.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

It maybe that a volunteer holds a valid and in date DBS check from either their professional context or from another church or volunteer setting. If this DBS check is registered via the update service, and is at the appropriate level, we will accept this after seeing the appropriate details so we can perform our own verification. If all the other criteria are met, the volunteer may join the team on this basis.

If the DBS check is not registered with the Update Service, Bridge Chapel will require a new DBS check is processed. In this situation, the volunteer should be allocated a named member of the team to shadow and to act as a mentor. The named person should ensure that the volunteer is appropriately supervised and not left unsupervised with children. We would encourage all volunteers who get their DBS check done via Bridge Chapel to register it via The Update Service. This makes managing the check much easier for us and for the volunteer.



Younger Volunteers.

Depending on the ministry team, volunteers must be at least 18 years old. For joining a team at one off type events (eg Holiday Bible Club), volunteers under 18 may be part of the team. However, they should not be left in sole care of children at any time. The leader must also remember that these junior helpers count as children when thinking about adult/ child ratios. In this situation, the volunteer should be allocated a named member of the team to shadow and to act as a mentor for the event. The named person should ensure that the junior volunteer is appropriately supervised and not left unsupervised with children

It is advisable that the age of a volunteer in relation to the age group of the young people in the activity is considered carefully. Young volunteers should be allocated a mentor who would also be present at all times. We recommend that volunteers wishing to join the Youth Team are at least 4 years older than the oldest attendee at the Youth Ministry.

Support and training of staff and volunteers working directly with children and young people in church activities.

The church will provide annual training sessions on safeguarding children and young people. Additional training should be provided as appropriate to the role.

Leaders of activities and elder/s trustees should:

- Meet with workers regularly to review and plan the work and provide support to the worker, recognising that working with children can be challenging
- Ask about working and personal relationships with the children
- Take or create opportunities for observing the worker with the children
- If the leader has any doubts about the worker's relationships or conduct he or she should explore further, taking advice from the designated church people for safeguarding.
- Watch for any child receiving exceptional treatment, being highly favoured or treated unduly harshly.

Adult:child ratios in church activities.

Please note that this is guidance and not legislation.

Guidance recommends the following ratio of leaders to children according to their age:

For 0 to 2 years - 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years - 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years - 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8s - 1 leader for the first 8 children followed by 1:12

(i.e. 32 children would require 3 leaders)

These ratios may need to increase depending on the activity being undertaken.

Registration procedures for children in church activities

An up-to-date register and record of children, their parents and contact numbers, addresses and medical consent form, attendance and other specific information (such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, allergies, medication, etc.) must be kept for all activities when a child is left in the care of church workers without a parent present.



It is the responsibility of the team leader to ensure that “ongoing consent” is in place for each child attending a ministry. Team leaders should regularly check their records to make sure this is as up to date as is reasonable practicable.

SECTION 4

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working directly with children and young people in church activities. It is important that teams support each other to ensure they comply with the code of conduct

- As far as possible, a worker should not be alone with a child or young person where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- In counselling situations with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. Another adult should be in the building, and the young person should know they are there.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body.
- Not engage in any of the following:
 - *Invading their privacy when they are showering or toileting*
 - *Rough, physical or sexually provocative game*
 - *Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in “fun”*
 - *Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form*
 - *Any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person*
- Learn to control and discipline without using physical punishment. If finding it difficult to manage a child or group of children, ensure you seek advice and support from the leader of the group or other staff and volunteers
- Make sure another worker knows the support you are giving if a child needs help with personal care, toileting , etc.
- Not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking which are overly sexual or physical in nature.
- Generally, do not give lifts to children or young people on their own. If there is no alternative, travel with the child in the rear seat, make others aware of the exact timing of your journey e.g. when you leave, when you drop and when you return.
- Maintain a register for every child, young person and worker attending meeting and keep records of attendance. This is especially important when dealing with allegations of abuse against workers.



- Do not share sleeping accommodation with children and young people. If this is required for a disabled child, then there must be explicit written consent by parents regarding these arrangements.
- Be cautious about the use of social media. Do not post images of children you work with on any social media. Do not become 'friends' with children or young people you work with on social media sites. If social media is being used as a group, ensure more than one adult has access to the group, so your interaction online with young people is transparent.
- Exercise great caution when producing materials or displays featuring images of children. Paedophiles go to great lengths to collect images of children from a variety of sources including the internet, magazines, leaflets, newsletters and wall displays. Images which are sought after include:
 - *any state of undress*
 - *nightwear*
 - *swimsuits.*

Do not underestimate the potential danger of using these types of images or pictures, which we might consider to be "fun" or "cheeky" but may sexually stimulate a paedophile. Always seek permission from the parents of the child before displaying any images.

SECTION 5 –additional issues

Other adults or parents at activities.

Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the church as a leader or helper, should not have access to children without an adult who is responsible for the group being present. A parent can be left to care for their own children, and can be part of the group, but again should not be left to care for others without a church volunteer being present.

A parent on rota should avoid bringing their other children into a session. Children should not be allowed to care for or hold other children while in Bridge Chapel ministries. Secondary school children should be encouraged to attend their own classes or remain in the church service.



If you see another worker acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your leader about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. These measures will also protect workers from false accusations.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS USING BRIDGE CHAPEL CENTRE.

Any organisation renting the use of Bridge chapel centre to work with children and young people will be asked to confirm in writing that they have an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedure in place and be willing to share that with centre Trustees if required.

Managing risks relating to people attending church services or activities with an offence history or subject of police investigations

If it becomes known that an individual with an offence history or is subject to a police investigation that presents a potential safeguarding risk (eg sexual offences or violent offences) is attending church services or activities (even if not in a volunteer role), then the safeguarding leads should be informed. They will undertake a risk assessment, taking into account the nature of the offences, when the offences took place, any legal orders in place and then put in place with the person, and with other appropriate/necessary leaders/individuals safety measures to mitigate risks. This may include for example supervision of the individual, specific activities or services that are suitable to attend/not attend and pastoral support arrangements. Information will be dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner, but will be shared in the event there is an immediate risk of harm.



SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PROCEDURES

PURPOSE OF THESE PROCEDURES

These procedures aim to give guidance and support to pastors, elders, staff, volunteers and church members in dealing with issues relating to safeguarding adults. They should be read and understood by anyone in the church with responsibility for working with adults who have support needs (aged 18 years and above).

What is 'safeguarding adults'?

Adult safeguarding is working with adults (aged 18 and above) with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect. In these cases, local services, including churches, must work together to spot those at risk and take steps to protect them.

SECTION 1

What is abuse?

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes him or her harm, endangers their life or violates their human and civil rights. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be planned or unplanned. It may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. It may happen when an adult, who has care and support needs, is persuaded to enter into a transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent.

Abuse can take many forms:

- **Physical Abuse** – for example, hitting, pushing, shaking, misuse of medication or inappropriate moving and handling or use of restraint techniques or otherwise causing physical harm.
- **Domestic violence** — including all forms of domestic harm, including so-called, 'honour' based violence and, abuse via coercive control
- **Sexual Abuse** – for example, unwanted touching, kissing or sexual activity, indecent exposure, inflicting pornography. Acts to which the vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent.
- **Psychological Abuse** - including verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying or the use of threats, over control and humiliation, Lack of privacy , denial of choice, threats of harm
- **Financial or Material Abuse** – the illegal or improper use of a person's money, property, pension book, bank account or other belongings. Pressure in connection with wills or financial transactions
- **Modern slavery** — including trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude



- **Neglect and acts of omission-the** repeated deprivation of help or care that an adult needs which, if withdrawn, will cause him or her to suffer, including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs.
- **Organisational Abuse** - abuse, neglect, withdrawal of rights or continually poor care in a care home, hospital or other setting or care provided in the adult's home.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** - Including racist or sexist abuse, and abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Self neglect** – This covers a wide range of behaviours relating to the neglect of one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Abuse can take place in any setting and the person responsible may be a relative, friend or neighbour, a paid or volunteer carer, a professional worker, another service user or an occasional visitor.

SECTION 2

HOW DO WE RECOGNISE THAT AN ADULT IS BEING ABUSED?

- Sometimes an adult or another person who knows them, will directly disclose/allege to us that they are being abused or neglected.
- Sometimes an incident is witnessed by us
- Most often, we see behaviours, physical signs or indirect comments that give us cause to suspect or be concerned that an adult may be being abused, or neglected.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU NOTICE ANY SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

Liverpool City Council Safeguarding Adults policy is available on the Liverpool City Council website with full explanation of their legal duties in this area

It is not the responsibility of Bridge chapel staff or volunteers to make enquiries about an incident or disclosure. It must be reported to Liverpool City Council.

Signs or symptoms of abuse and neglect are often not conclusive — however we have a responsibility to share any concerns we have in order to protect adults.

DO:

- ✓ Note your concerns, as factually and clearly as possible
- ✓ Keep an open mind — noting a concern does not mean that you are accusing someone of abusing an adult but equally you must not minimise your concerns
- ✓ Inform the activity leader of your concerns.
- ✓ Pass on your concerns to one of the church designated people for safeguarding as soon as possible.
- ✓ If an adult is in immediate danger, agree immediate actions to protect the adult.



DO NOT:

- ✗ Investigate the matter
- ✗ Interrogate the adult
- ✗ Share the information with others outside of the activity/church designated people for safeguarding
- ✗ Inform the parents or other carers yourself.

The church designated people for safeguarding will discuss with you the next steps. A decision will be taken as to whether your concerns are such that a referral should be made to Liverpool Adults Social Care Services, or other action that should be taken.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE?**DO**

- ✓ Inform the activity leader and Premises manager immediately.
- ✓ Call for emergency services, if there is already harm done or risk of immediate harm. You do not need to wait for permission to do this.
- ✓ Provide basic care to the person
- ✓ Record any concerns and observations as clearly as possible and as soon as possible.
- ✓ Contact one of the church designated leads for safeguarding.
- ✓ They will make an adult safeguarding referral within 24 hours to Liverpool City Council Care-line. 0151 233 3800.

DO NOT

- ✗ Try and ask questions of the person about what happened
- ✗ Remove anything that might later be considered evidence.
- ✗ Talk about the incident with others outside of the activity/church designated safe-guarding leads.

WHAT TO DO IF AN ADULT TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE.

This guidance is to aid you in the event of an adult, with care and support needs, disclosing abuse to you.

DO

- ✓ Listen to the person, let them express their views and feelings without interruption, accept what they are saying
- ✓ Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- ✓ Note that a disclosure may occur sometime after the event but should still be taken seriously
- ✓ Do not press for information
- ✓ Affirm them and tell them they have done the right thing by bringing it out into the open. Discuss with them what they would like to happen next
- ✓ Depending on the capacity of the person making the disclosure and the seriousness of the incident it may not be possible to promise that it will go no further. Worker should seek advice.



- ✓ Make notes of what was said using the person's words whenever possible
- ✓ Let the person know what you are doing next, who you are going to tell and why
- ✓ Speak to the leader of the activity (unless the subject of an allegation)
- ✓ Refer immediately to one of the Church designated people for safeguarding. A decision will be taken about the next steps, including referral to Liverpool Adult's Services.

DO NOT

- ✗ Show shock or disbelief
- ✗ Agree to keep the disclosure a secret
- ✗ Make a promise or suggestion that you can stop the abuse
- ✗ Ask questions seeking further detail if you risk contaminating evidence
- ✗ Investigate any allegation — specially trained professionals undertake this role
- ✗ Contact the alleged perpetrator

Remember, you do not investigate, and do not delay in passing on the information. If the person is in immediate danger, you should contact the police immediately. Ensure you contact one of the Church designated people for safeguarding.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS THAT A CHURCH WORKER OR VOLUNTEER IS ABUSING AN ADULT WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS?

This guidance is to assist you in the event that you have concerns that a church worker or volunteer is abusing an adult, either from an allegation from a person or from what you have seen or heard.

DO

- ✓ Note your concerns, as clearly and factually as possible
- ✓ Keep an open mind
- ✓ Speak to one of the church designated people for safeguarding (if one of them is the subject of your concerns or allegations then ensure you speak to another designated person)

DO NOT

- ✗ Investigate the matter
- ✗ Speak to the person the concerns are about
- ✗ Share the information with others other than the church designated people for safeguarding

The church designated people for safeguarding will discuss with you the next steps. A decision will be taken as to whether your concerns are such that a referral should be made to Liverpool City Council Adult Services or the police.

RECORDING OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS OR INCIDENTS.

As acknowledged in these procedures, it is often necessary to record what has happened or what has been said regarding a safeguarding concern. This may need to be given to other agencies investigating an allegation of abuse. Any such material must be given to the designated church safeguarding lead that you have discussed the matter with, and they will ensure it is kept locked in a secure cabinet in the church office.



SECTION 3

WORKING SAFELY WITH ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS.

The church aims to ensure that adults with care and support needs are safe whilst in the care of the church. The following guidance aims to support the church in ensuring this.

Dignity and respect.

Foster a culture of respect at all times for those referred to as adults with care and support needs. This means promoting a culture of recognition and celebration of difference, rather than patronising or discriminating remarks and ensuring that choices and independence are respected. This should apply in congregational worship and all Bridge activities.

Recruitment of staff and volunteers working directly with adults with care and support needs in church activities.

See section above on page 7-8.

Support and training of staff and volunteers working directly with adults with care and support needs in church activities

The church will provide annual training sessions on safeguarding. Additional training should be provided as appropriate to the role.

Leaders of activities and elder should:

- Meet with workers regularly to review and plan the work and provide support to the worker, recognising that working with adults with care and support needs can be challenging
- Ask about working and personal relationships with the adults
- Take or create opportunities for observing the worker with the adults
- If the leader has any doubts about the worker's relationships or conduct he or she should explore further, taking advice from the designated church people for safeguarding.
- Watch for any adult receiving exceptional treatment, being highly favoured or treated unduly harshly.

Young People as Volunteers

Children who are under 16 cannot be volunteers. Between 16-18 they should have a mentor allocated to them who should be present while the young volunteer is present.



SECTION 4

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working directly with adults with care and support needs in church activities. It is important that teams support each other to ensure they comply with the code of conduct.

Guidance for Ministry leaders

The guidance below will apply in most situations However if there is an aspect of your work that is not covered then please meet with the designated safeguarding team who will assist in drawing up additional procedures

- Bridge chapel centre will ensure appropriate rooms are allocated for activities and that access to the building is safe and well lit.
- Ministry leaders should arrange activities so that there are groups in the same room or where doors are left open so that a worker is not alone with a vulnerable adult where their activity cannot be seen
- In counselling/listening situations with an adult with care and support needs, where privacy and confidentiality are important, make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. Another adult should be in the building, this may be the premises manager or evening caretaker and those in the interview room should know they are there. A panic button is installed in the counselling interview room
- A register or record of attendance should be kept including workers on duty and people seen. This could be of help to any enquiries if concerns are raised about the person. These should be kept in a confidential manner for at least 12 months
- On the occasion of any planned weekend away special procedures should be drawn up particularly around sleeping arrangements and personal care. Depending on the mental capacity of the adult permission may be required if Power of attorney exists.
- Photographs of people in activities should only be taken with their permission and where it is made clear how and when they will be used. Photographic displays can be useful to encourage others but always be careful of where they are displayed
- Sexual contact between adults—physical, emotional or via social media

This is a complex area depending on a persons' capacity and understanding. It is an area where workers should be alert and report anything they become aware of to the activity leader and the safeguarding team



Financial transactions.

- Workers should avoid becoming involved in financial transactions that include using a person's debit or credit card without a member of the safeguarding group being informed of the arrangements.
- If a worker does handle money on someone behalf they should obtain receipts of what they have done.
- Borrowing money from a vulnerable adult is not appropriate nor expecting payment for help given. Small gifts are acceptable but if a vulnerable adult either offers a large gift or suggests money will be left the worker in a will advice should be sought.

All staff and volunteers should:

- Treat people with respect and dignity befitting their age; be careful of language, tone of voice, and where you put your body.
- As far as possible, do not be alone with a vulnerable adult. If they require one to one attention and privacy this should be done out of earshot but within sight of other adult workers.
- Not engage in any of the following:
 - Invading their privacy when they are showering or toileting
 - Rough, physical or sexually provocative game
 - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to an adult with care and support needs even in fun
 - Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
 - Any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting the person
- Make sure another worker knows the support you are giving if the person needs help. Personal care, toileting should only be performed by people who are an agreed family carer or paid staff from a service
- Try not to let adults with care and support needs involve you in excessive attention seeking which are overly sexual or physical in nature. An arm around the shoulder is more appropriate than a bear hug. Report any concerns about sexual behaviour to the activity leader
- In a situation where someone's behaviour is difficult and potentially upsetting others discuss with the activity leader so that a management plan can be developed. Do not use any form of physical restraint except in extreme cases eg if someone is about to cross a busy road without looking
- Generally, do not give lifts to an adult with care needs on your own. If there is no alternative, travel with the person in the rear seat, make others aware of the exact timing of your journey e.g. when you leave, when you drop and when you return.



- Be cautious about the use of social media. Do not post images of the adults you work with on any social media. It may be supportive to some people to be friends with them on a social media website but advice should be taken
- If asked to buy items for a person with support needs ensure you give receipts and change. If the person gives you their pin number for a card please let someone know you have that. Do not borrow money from any person who you are there to support. Do not expect payment

SECTION 5 HOME VISITING

During a visit to someone's home the worker must remain in the position of an invited guest.

However they may also be aware of situations that may not be obvious from knowing the person outside the home.

In situations where the person may be particularly vulnerable it maybe better for a visitor to go in pairs or where there is someone of the same gender.

They should record when they have visited and any actions undertaken for the person.

If they witness or receive a disclosure of any kind that refers to a child at risk of harm or an adult without the capacity to keep themselves safe they must follow the above procedures.

In the case of an adult with capacity they should aim to ensure the person's trust so that they will agree a way forward that will minimise future risk.

In any complex situation please seek advice from the safeguarding team

SECTION 6 Other issues

How to deal with a vulnerable adult who is also a volunteer.

If circumstances arise where a volunteer is thought to be causing harm to any other visitor to Bridge chapel or Bridge chapel centre then the above procedures should be used. If the situation is one of concern rather than harm the activity leader or relevant elder should request a meeting with the Safeguarding adults group where a risk assessment and management plan can be agreed.

Other adults or parents or carers at activities.

There is no reason why other adults parents or other carers cannot be present for group activities if all the above procedures are taken into account. However other adults should not offer personal /intimate care to adults with support needs while at a Bridge activity. On any trip involving staying away extra volunteers would need to be properly recruited and trained.



If you see another worker acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your leader about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. These measures will also protect workers from false accusations.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS USING BRIDGE CHAPEL CENTRE.

Any organisation renting the use of Bridge chapel centre to work with adults with care and support needs will be asked to confirm in writing that they have an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedure in place and be able to produce it if required by Bridge Chapel Centre Trustees.

Managing risks relating to people attending church services or activities with an offence history or subject of police investigations

If it becomes known that an individual with an offence history or is subject to a police investigation that presents a potential safeguarding risk (eg sexual offences or violent offences) is attending church services or activities (even if not in a volunteer role), then the safeguarding leads should be informed. They will undertake a risk assessment, taking into account the nature of the offences, when the offences took place, any legal orders in place and then put in place with the person, and with other appropriate/necessary leaders/individuals safety measures to mitigate risks. This may include for example supervision of the individual, specific activities or services that are suitable to attend/not attend and pastoral support arrangements. Information will be dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner, but will be shared in the event there is an immediate risk of harm.



KEY CONTACTS FOR SAFEGUARDING

In the case of an emergency

If you have immediate concerns about the safety of someone, please contact the police on 999 and/or Liverpool Children's Services on 0151 459 2606 or Liverpool Adults Service on 01514592609 or NHS on 999 or 111 for mental health emergencies.

Helplines

- Child-line: 0800 1111 (lines free and open 24 hours).
- Parent Line: 0808 800 2222
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (lines free and open 24 hours).
- Samaritans Helpline: 116 123 (open 24 hours).
- Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: 080 8808 8141 (freephone Monday to Friday 9-5pm)
-
- MIND: Infoline on **0300 123 3393** or email: info@mind.org.uk
-
- **Shout** 85258 is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope and requires mental health support. Text **SHOUT to 85258** or email: info@giveusashout.org



A P P E N D I X

Thank you for your interest in volunteering on a team at Bridge Chapel. **Please complete this form in full.**

This form, along, a satisfactory DBS check, agreement with Bridge Chapel's Statement of Faith/Team's Code of Conduct document, form part of our requirements to serve on a team. The Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct document will be provided by the team leader.

Supporting statements/ References.

As part of your application, we will usually seek 2 supporting statements (references) from other people regarding your experience. One should be from a previous church (if applicable). Please provide information for these referees in the appropriate section below. Those supplying these statements must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives.

Please note that 'Self-supplied', 'to whom it may concern' and verbal references will not be accepted.



BRIDGE CHAPEL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM		
1. Personal Information		
Title:	Forename(s):	Surname:
Any previous names by which you have been known:		
Date of Birth:		
Home Address:		
Postcode:		
Daytime Tel No:	Mobile Tel No:	Email Address:
2. Education, Training & Qualifications Information Please give details of any relevant training and qualifications which you feel equip you to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.		
3. Employment & Voluntary Work Experience Please provide some details of any previous experience you may have of looking after and/or working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary.		
4. Church Involvement Please provide details (with dates wherever possible) of your church involvement (current and previous).		
5. Why do you want to volunteer? Please tell us why you wish to volunteer to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and the skills & qualities you think you would bring to the role.		



6. Health Information

Please provide information about any disability or health issue that we should be aware of in order that we can identify what support or reasonable adjustments we can provide for you to undertake volunteering duties safely.

7. Supporting statements/ Referees

As part of your application, we will usually seek 2 supporting statements (references) from other people regarding your experience. One should be from a previous church (if applicable).. Those supplying these statements must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives. Please note that 'Self-supplied', 'to whom it may concern' and verbal references will not be accepted.

Supporting statement/Referee 1

Name:

Telephone No:

Address (including postcode):

Email Address:

In what capacity do you know this person?

Supporting statement/Referee 2

Name:

Telephone No:

Address (including postcode):

Email Address:

In what capacity do you know this person?

8. Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided on this form is correct and I accept that providing deliberately false information could result in my termination of my role as a volunteer.

I understand that any offer of appointment to a volunteering role is subject to satisfactory pre-appointment checks as well as completion of a Confidential Declaration Form and satisfactory disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service at the appropriate level, where this is a requirement of the role as stated on the volunteer role description.

I understand that if I am appointed to a volunteering role there will be a settling in period and that I will be expected to complete a volunteer induction programme and undertake relevant safeguarding training.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:



SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM

For reporting concerns to Bridge Chapel Safeguarding Team.

YOUR INFORMATION (PERSON REPORTING)

Your Name: * _____

Your Role: _____

Contact Details: * _____ Email/phone

Date of Report: * _____

DETAILS OF PERSON(S) AT RISK

Name of Person at Risk: _____ (If you don't know or prefer not to say, please indicate so)

Age or Age Group:

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-64
- 65+
- Unknown

Vulnerability Factors (select all that apply):

- Child (under 18)
- Disability
- Mental Health Issues
- Elderly/Frail
- Other: _____

Your Relationship to the Person: _____

DETAILS OF THE CONCERN/INCIDENT

Date of Incident/Concern: * _____ (If ongoing or multiple incidents, please note this in the description below)



Location: _____ (Where did this occur?)

Type of Concern:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional/Psychological Abuse
- Sexual Abuse/Harassment
- Neglect
- Financial Abuse
- Discrimination
- Institutional Abuse
- Radicalisation
- Other: _____

Details of the Concern/Incident: * (Please be as specific as possible. Include what was said, by whom, and any visible signs or behaviours you observed)

Are there witnesses to the incident?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Witness Details (if known and appropriate to share):



ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN

Has this concern been reported elsewhere?

- Police
- Social Services
- Bridge Chapel Staff
- Bridge Chapel Elder/ Trustee
- Ministry Team Leader
- Other: _____

Any immediate actions already taken:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any other relevant information:

DECLARATION

- I confirm that the information I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge *
- I understand that this information will be shared with the trustees and may be shared with appropriate authorities if there is a legal obligation to do so *

Signature (Type or sign your name): * _____

Fields marked with an asterisk are required*



CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This form contains sensitive personal information. It should be treated as confidential and shared only with those who need to know for the purposes of safeguarding. All information will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

For Safeguarding Team Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____

Action Taken: _____

Date Closed: _____



Appendix: Responding to a Safeguarding Referral

(To be read in conjunction with the Church Safeguarding Policy)

Purpose

This section sets out the clear process to be followed when a safeguarding referral is made. It ensures all concerns are handled promptly, consistently, and in accordance with statutory guidance and denominational expectations.

1. Receiving a Referral

A safeguarding referral may come from:

- A member of the congregation, volunteer, or staff member
- A child, young person, or adult at risk
- A parent, carer, or member of the public
- An external agency (e.g. police, social services, school, or charity)

All referrals or concerns **must be taken seriously** and treated as confidential within safeguarding boundaries.

2. Immediate Response

If someone is in **immediate danger**, call **999**.

If urgent but not an emergency, contact **[Local Authority Emergency Duty Team / Police non-emergency line]**.

Do **not** promise confidentiality. Explain that you may need to share information with those who can help keep them safe.

Make a **factual, dated record** of what was said or seen — using the church's safeguarding concern form if possible.

3. Reporting Internally

All safeguarding concerns and referrals should be passed to:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Name: Lynn McNaught: 07914 823 064

Ian MacMichael: 07812 422 349

Email: safeguarding@bridgechapel.co.uk



If the DSL is unavailable, contact:

Deputy DSL: Daniel Curry: 07507 773 339

If neither is available, contact **Pastor / Elder**

4. Deciding What Action We Will Take

The DSL (or Deputy) will:

1. Review the information and assess the level of concern.
2. Consult with each other as needed.
3. Decide whether to:
 - Monitor the situation within church;
 - Seek advice from the Local Authority; or
 - Make a formal **referral to Children's or Adult Social Care**.

All decisions and the reasons for them must be **recorded and dated**.

5. Making a Referral to Statutory Authorities

If a formal referral is required, the DSL (or Deputy) will contact:

- **Children's Social Care:**
- **Adult Social Care:**
- **Police:**

Information should be shared using the **'need to know' principle**, in line with GDPR and safeguarding confidentiality.

6. Informing Others

The DSL will determine, in consultation with statutory services, who else needs to be informed, e.g.:

- Parents or carers (unless this would place the child or adult at greater risk)
- The Senior Pastor / Elders
- The Safeguarding Trustee/s



7. Recording and Storing Information

All records must:

- Be factual, signed, and dated
- Use the church safeguarding concern form or equivalent
- Be stored securely and confidentially by the DSL
- Be retained in accordance with the church's data retention policy

8. Ongoing Support and Review

After a referral:

- The DSL will ensure pastoral support is offered appropriately to those affected.
- The safeguarding team will review the incident to identify any learning or improvements to policy or practice.
- Where required, a written report may be presented to the Trustees / Elders.

9. Summary Flowchart

Concern → Record → Report to DSL → DSL decides next step → Refer (if needed) → Record and Review

