



Sanderstead United Reformed Church
Southern Synod

Promoting Safeguarding

Preventing Abuse

Protecting the Vulnerable

**Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
for Children & Vulnerable Adults**

2025

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Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is about creating churches that are a safe space for everyone; a space where children can flourish and adults can live up to their potential. Sanderstead United Reformed Church, (Sanderstead) agrees that in being a safe, supportive and caring community we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone and that children, young people and adults have a right to live in a way that does not cause them harm or impede their human rights.

We therefore acknowledge their right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice. We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.

We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, whilst recognising that safeguarding is a whole Church responsibility. The Safeguarding Coordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator should be contacted. Their contact details can be found in Section 4.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimize the risk of harm to children and adults.

We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources and training, to those who work with children and adults.

We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and recognize that it can affect both adults and children.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be responded to appropriately, including referring to the statutory authorities if necessary.

We will co-operate with the statutory authorities in any investigation, will follow multi-agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We will refer concerns about staff – volunteers and paid, lay and ordained – that meet the relevant criteria to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Sanderstead United Reformed Church follows Safeguarding Guidelines issued by the Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church and GOOD PRACTICE 6.

This document is for Sanderstead United Reformed Church and is intended to be read by individuals who work with children, young people and adults.

The document referred to as Part 2 refers to hirers of Church premises on a REGULAR or OCCASIONAL BASIS. Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with children or adults must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this safeguarding policy as a condition of the letting agreement. If they have their own safeguarding policy, they will be asked to provide a copy.

If they do not have their own safeguarding policy, the church will encourage them to adopt one before agreeing to the hire. In some cases, the church may agree to a small organisation following the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

2. Aim and purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting the vulnerable, both children and adults. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children and adults within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events. Therefore, creating Christian communities of love and care, where good practice in this area becomes a way of life.

3. Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders' Meeting as Trustees and applies:

- to those who attend our Church/place of worship;
- to our Trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- to organisations which hire our building with agreement to operate under the Church safeguarding policy, and their customers.

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent United Reformed Church good practice guidance.

Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy, and our procedures.

The existence of this policy and our related procedures will be displayed on the notice board in the Church Vestibule and Church Hall Main Entrance.

Children refers to those under the age of 18 years.

4. Duty of care and confidentiality

The Church has a duty of care to ensure that the children and adults who worship, assist, partake in group activities or volunteer at Sanderstead can do so in a safe environment. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

Sanderstead United Reformed Church have appointed two Safeguarding Coordinators.

Safeguarding Coordinator – Children and Vulnerable Adults

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Email: hgrainger.306@hotmail.co.uk

Assistant Safeguarding Coordinator – Children and Vulnerable Adults

Patricia Brady

Tel. (020) 8657 6816

Email: pahbrady@gmail.com

5. Objects of procedures

5.1 The main object is to put procedures in place:

- To protect children and to prevent any sort of child abuse.
- To protect adults who may be vulnerable.
- To protect leaders. While the main aim is to protect the vulnerable, both children and adults, the procedures do also, of course, serve to protect adults involved, as even false allegations are damaging.
- To protect the Church. Instances of abuse and allegations that Church members may be perpetrators adversely affect the Church's standing and its reputation in the community.

5.2 It is appreciated that these procedures will not always be practical to follow in every detail and to that extent must be regarded as best practice.

6. Preventing abuse

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessment will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with Children, appropriate records will be kept and adequate insurance will be in place.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

7. General guidelines for running groups

- 7.1 All groups should have two adults present who have been recruited following the safe recruitment process outlined in Section 8. When no adult from this list is available, the Minister or Safeguarding Coordinator will be notified of the adult before the group is run. No adult should be on his/her own with a child or a group of children. Small groups with single leaders may meet in a large room or in adjoining rooms with an open door between. If a child or young person is interviewed alone there should be another adult nearby. There should be at least one male leader if possible, when boys are present and always at least one female leader when girls are present.
- 7.2 No person under the age of 18 should be left in charge of children at any time. No children or young people should be left unattended at any time.
- 7.3 First aid boxes are located outside the kitchen and adjacent to that there is a mounted wooden box containing additional First Aid materials and Accident Book (This is GDPR Compliant). Any incident or accident must be brought to the attention of the Lettings Officer/Premises Committee and recorded in the Accident book. If there are issues regarding the condition of equipment or the premises, these should be drawn to the attention of the Lettings Officer or Premises Committee.
- 7.4 There is safety in numbers and therefore 1:1 situations should be avoided. Regular meetings on a 1:1 basis should not take place. If only one child or young person turns up, the meeting should be cancelled. Where 1:1 situations are necessary, they should be held at the child or young person's home, by arrangement with the parents, but not on church premises, or in the leader's home.

- 7.5 Leaders of all groups must be very careful to avoid all forms of abuse. It must be appreciated that, in the context of physical abuse, even if a leader or carer would smack his or her own children, any form of physical discipline/ punishment is unacceptable.
- 7.6 A register of children or young people attending the activity must be kept. This should include the child's name, address and the name and telephone number of the parent or guardian.

8. Recruitment of workers

Sanderstead is committed to safe recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include:

- Requiring applicants to complete an application form.
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications.
- Obtaining disclosure and barring checks where legally entitled to do so (see Appendix 8).
- Taking up two references (not family).
- Interviewing candidates.

Sanderstead is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and adults. Training in safeguarding will be provided by the Synod Children and Youth Development Officer and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role by either their line manager or Team Leader.

All Trustees, employed staff and volunteers work within a code of conduct and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.

8. What are we protecting from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults. A copy of the definitions relating to children is attached to this policy at Appendix 1. The definitions of abuse in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 2.

9. How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. A list of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to children is attached at Appendix 3 and in relation to Adults at Appendix 4. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories.

It is essential to note that these are only **indicators of possible** abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for any of these signs and/or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

10. What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child, young person or adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret.
- Inform your Safeguarding Coordinator (Children) or (Adults) as soon as possible. (If they are implicated in the allegation, refer them to Synod safeguarding personnel).
- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and will be shown to the Safeguarding Coordinator (Children) or (Adults).

11. Procedure in the event of concern

If there is an immediate threat of harm to the child the Safeguarding Coordinator (Children) will contact the Police. If there is concern that an adult is in immediate danger, or requires medical attention, the emergency services should be contacted immediately and without delay and the Safeguarding Coordinator (Adults) notified.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur: -

- The concern will be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator Children or Adults and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies. (The final decision remains the responsibility of the Safeguarding Coordinator)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it using the template at Appendix 5. This record will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.
- The person about whom the allegation is made may not be informed by anyone in the Church if it is judged that to do so would place a child or vulnerable adult at increased risk.
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns

If someone in the Church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults we will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support, and we will contact the relevant statutory authority.

12. Who to contact in the case of a Child

Croydon Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

4th Floor, Zone F
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon, CR0 1EA

Tel: (020) 8255 2889
Tel: (Out of hours) (020) 8726 6400
Email: LADO@croydon.gov.uk

Child protection

Tel: (020) 8255 2888

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon, CR0 1EA

Tel: (020) 8726 6400
Tel: (Out of hours) (020) 8726 6400 (ask for out of hours' team)
Email: childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk

13. Who to contact in the case of a Vulnerable Adult

The Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board Manager and Administrators - contact the CSAB in one of the following ways: -

Mail – Floor 2 (A)
Bernard Weatherill House
Mint Walk
Croydon, CRO 1EA

Tel: (020) 8726 6500
Email: csab@croydon.gov.uk

Metropolitan Police, Croydon

71 Park Lane,
Croydon, CR9 1BP

Tel: (020) 8667 1212 or 101
Web: <https://www.met.police.uk>

14. If the allegation is regarding a church staff member or church volunteer

For any concerns relating to children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the Church will follow this advice. For LADO contact details, see below.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. See section 14 for contact details.

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the DBS if the Church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children / adults at risk OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct, satisfied the harm test or committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

In such cases, a report will also be made to the Charity Commission, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and requires notification.

Croydon Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

4th Floor, Zone F
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon, CR0 1EA

Tel: (020) 8255 2889
Tel: (Out of hours) (020) 8726 6400
Email: LADO@croydon.gov.uk

15. If someone in the church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults

The Safeguarding Link Person (Children) or (Adults) will inform one of the Synod safeguarding personnel, so that they can offer advice and support.

<u>Synod Safeguarding Link Person - Children & Young People & Advisory for complex safeguarding issues:</u>
Email: southernsynodsafeguarding@urcsouthern.org.uk
<u>Synod Safeguarding link person(s) - Adults:</u>
Belinda Nielson/ Natalie Van Kamp Tel: 01843 448705 Email: safeguarding@urcsouthern.org.uk
<u>CCPAS – Churches Child Protection Advisory Service</u>
24 Hour Helpline Tel: 0845 120 4550

16. Guidelines for Elders/Trustees/Employed Staff/Volunteers

For advice on the implementation of the URC Good Practice Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Young People within Southern Synod, please contact the Synod Safeguarding Link Person for Children (see 16 above).

If you have routine questions of good practice in safeguarding adults, contact the Synod Safeguarding Link Persons for Adults (see 16 above)

If the Southern Synod safeguarding personnel are unavailable and you need advice urgently, can contact the URC safeguarding officer or the 24-hour helpline (see 16 above)

(Please note that CCPAS out of office hours this should only be used for urgent advice, i.e. when a decision needs to be made about a safeguarding case which cannot wait until the next day)

17. Whistleblowing

To fulfil its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The URC recognises the importance of creating a culture where there is a mechanism in place for workers to be able to raise legitimate concerns about other workers. This is commonly referred to as whistleblowing.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. While the Act does not provide the same protection for volunteers, churches should endeavour to adopt the same practice for all.

All staff, volunteers and members of a congregation should be encouraged to acknowledge and take individual responsibility by bringing matters of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour to the attention of any of the following:

- Church Safeguarding Coordinator or deputy
- Elders
- Minister or Interim Moderator
- Synod Moderator
- Synod Safeguarding Link Person

The URC promotes the need for a denominational whistleblowing policy based on the learning gained by the Past Case Review process.

Belinda Nielsen

Tel: Email: safeguarding@urcsouthern.org.uk I

If would be helpful to have complaints in writing as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing complaints will be acted upon. Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

18. Bullying and Harassment

The United Reformed Church acknowledges that bullying and harassment do occur within local churches and the wider councils. It is important that people should know where to find help if they believe themselves to have been bullied, and that those responsible for pastoral care should be vigilant for signs that bullying may be occurring. These guidelines are offered to enable the parties concerned to respond appropriately.

Conflict is a reality in every human organisation. It can be positive when it presses us to confront difficult issues and disagreements that we might prefer to avoid. It can be creative. However, abuse against individuals or groups within the church is unacceptable.

ACAS produces two booklets dealing with Bullying and Harassment and available to download from its website:

- Guide for employees – <http://bit.ly/38dIIGY>
- Guide for managers and employers – <http://bit.ly/2wf7JE2>

Whilst these guides are primarily intended for workplaces the advice and guidance apply equally well in other non-employment situations.

Harassment and discrimination are also addressed in United Reformed Church Policy documents held in the Church House public folders:

- Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure for Church House Staff

- Equalities Policy and Procedure for Church House Staff

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- 'Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that individual.'

Harassment of a sexual nature is one of the most common forms of harassment and, along with harassment related to any of the protected characteristics listed here, is outlawed by the Equality Act 2010.

- age
- sex
- disability
- gender identity
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation

There is no legal definition, in the same way, of Bullying. However, it is usually characterised as:

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient

Most people use the terms interchangeably and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.

Bullying is persistent. It exploits imbalances of power, as between stronger and weaker children on a playground or between a church treasurer and a minister claiming expenses.

It includes online and text/telephone bullying. Below is a list of behaviours which can legitimately be regarded as bullying, and these may be helpful to an individual seeking confirmation that the treatment s/he has been receiving does indeed constitute bullying.

Ministers are sometimes the targets of bullying. They can also be bullies themselves. Elders have a duty of care to both ministers and church members.

Churches may unwittingly bully a minister or member. There may be a situation where one person is singled out for public criticism, as in the case of a fabric committee convener, organist or youth leader being "reviewed" by an elders or church meeting. Individuals may find themselves isolated because they have expressed an unpopular opinion. Where a church is in pain it will sometimes look for a scapegoat and bullying becomes the oppressive tool.

Churches can also be the victims of a bully. It is not uncommon for someone with an aggressive personality to intimidate an entire congregation.

In the context of the United Reformed Church there is accountability and mutual responsibility for leadership especially in the Elders Meeting. This means that Ministers and Church officers should expect healthy debate and sometimes correction about the way they function. Bullying only starts when that proper discussion gets seriously out of hand.

Examples of bullying/harassing behavior:

This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment:

- a) removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice
- b) isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities
- c) consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing
- d) setting out to make someone appear incompetent
- e) persistently picking on someone in front of others
- f) deliberate sabotage of work or actions
- g) deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
- h) overloading with work/reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest
- i) displays of offensive material
- j) use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties
- k) cyber bullying including on social media such as Facebook
- l) repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private
- m) spreading malicious rumours to third parties
- n) public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and 'putting down'
- o) personal insults and name-calling
- p) aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation
- q) persistent threats about security
- r) making false accusations
- s) aggressive bodily posture or physical contact
- t) talking/shouting directly into someone's face
- u) direct physical intimidation, violence or assault

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur over the phone, in written communication including email and texts and through social media.

Someone who believes that s/he has been the target of harassment or bullying, or a third party witnessing such behaviour, should not hesitate to seek help. The sooner this is done the better, even if they are not certain that it is bullying, but they feel that someone's conduct displays unwanted behaviour. Such request for help should always be treated seriously. In a local church, the minister, church secretary or chair of the local CRCW committee, would normally be the first port of call. Where that is inappropriate, the synod moderator may be contacted. An allegation against a synod moderator should be directed to the General Secretary.

The following steps will assist others in addressing the problem, and support should always be provided so that an adequate disclosure can be made.

- Assemble the facts. Keep a log with the date of each incident and a description of what happened. Keep a record of emails and letters, as well as notes of conversations and telephone calls.
- Where possible, note the names of witnesses.
- Provide a copy of whatever role description may exist if the bullying or harassment has been about the performance of duties.
- Record consequences as well as actions, including any impact on health, emotional wellbeing, role performance and/or other relationships.
- If other people have been affected, note this too. Consult them as to whether they would be prepared to disclose their experiences as well.

Make sure that you have the personal support you need. Put this in place yourself if it is not adequately forthcoming from the church.

19. Annual Review

The Elders'/Trustees will review this policy annually with the Safeguarding Coordinator at the February Elders meeting.

20. Statement of Intent

Sanderstead United Reformed Church's Statement of Intent can be found in Appendix 9 and after signing by Safeguarding Coordinator on behalf of the Eldership and Church it will be displayed on the church noticeboard and Church Website.

WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT? - CHILDREN

(These definitions are taken from *Working Together 2013*)

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 a child 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 care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT? - ADULTS

It is unlikely that just one type of abuse will occur in isolation from another. For example, physical abuse, can give rise to emotional abuse, neglect can result in physical abuse, and self-harm.

Sexual abuse: This includes any form of sexual harassment, inappropriate touching or looking, indecent exposure, sexual teasing or innuendo, being subjected to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and any sexual act that the person did not agree to, or felt pressurised into consenting to, as well as rape.

Physical abuse: Physical abuse can include assault, being hit, slapped or restrained. Misuse of medication, to subdue or control a person, is physical abuse, as is denying someone food or water, or failing to help them to keep warm, use the toilet, or conduct their physical care.

Psychological Abuse: Sometimes called 'emotional abuse' and can involve threatening to hurt someone, to abandon them, preventing access to visitors, friends, and family. Being humiliated, insulted, blamed, controlled, intimidated, bullied, or harassed can constitute emotional abuse. Such abuse can take place face to face, online or in other communications.

Being denied access to aspects of life, which are important to a person's emotional wellbeing, is a form of emotional abuse. This may include being denied access to religious or spiritual materials that are important to the person, or in some circumstances, being prevented from attending church or other faith and worship settings.

The withdrawal of care services and support which cannot be justified and appear unreasonable may also constitute a form of psychological abuse.

Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse and/or intimate abuse is when a form of violence, or other type of abuse, is inflicted by a partner or family member. It can be a single incident or a recurring pattern which involves controlling, coercive or threatening actions. Forced Marriage and so called 'Honour Based' Violence are also forms of domestic abuse.

Discriminatory Abuse: This involves unfair treatment because of a person's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. It can include some forms of harassment, verbal abuse, and slurs upon the person's character. Physical abuse and other forms of abuse can arise because of discrimination.

Financial Abuse: This occurs when monies and valuables have been stolen, or where someone uses coercion or deception, to gain access to money and possessions, and uses them in ways that the person does not wish. It might involve theft of money or valuables, fraud, scams, gaining access to a bank account, or benefits, providing financial services in full knowledge that someone lacks capacity, or inappropriate use of money by someone appointed to look after financial assets on the person's behalf. Financial abuse is a common form of abuse against adults at risk.

Neglect: Neglect occurs when there is a deliberate withholding of help, care or other basic requirements, with the intention of causing harm or abuse. Failures to attend to someone's personal care or to provide the right sort of help, or medical care are all forms of neglect. Examples include not having access to enough food and drink, or the right type of food and drink, or not being provided with warmth or basic hygiene arrangements. Being denied access to medication or the inappropriate use of medication, is also a form of neglect. Although neglect is a form of abuse, it has close overlaps with other types of abuse such as psychological or physical abuse, because the action of omission leads to other harms as a direct consequence.

Institutional Abuse: Institutional abuse occurs when a place, company, organisation or charity undertakes practices which cause harm and abuse. Examples include: care homes where rotas are arranged for the benefit of staff, instead of the wellbeing of the people in the home, prisons which fail to address practices known to cause harm and when known abuse is ignored to protect adults and/ or limit reputational damage.

Forced Marriage: When an adult is coerced, pressurised or deceived into a marriage, to which they would/do not consent, this is a forced marriage. It differs from arranged marriages, which are agreed to by both parties.

Trafficking/Modern Slavery: This is an increasing form of abuse which is prevalent in all areas of the UK. It involves the purposeful movement of an adult for economic benefit to a third party, often involving forced labour, unpaid labour, sexual exploitation, rape or prostitution.

Online Abuse: Cyber bullying, internet fraud and stalking through social media, are all forms of abuse.

Self harm: Self harm is any form of self-inflicted injury or hurt. This can include self neglect and/or a failure to attend to basic needs. Adults, who harm themselves for whatever purpose, can be adults at risk.

Hoarding: Hoarding is a form of self-neglect, because it can arise from a neglect of home and surroundings and may be illustrative of mental health concerns. Hoarding increases the risk of fire and ill health, as well as financial and other types of abuse.

Spiritual abuse: You will not find references to spiritual abuse in The Care Act 2014. However, spiritual abuse is a recognised form of abuse which misuses power and is very relevant to church and faith settings. The term 'spiritual abuse' covers a wide variety of behaviours, and can be summarised as the use of spiritual authority or spiritual means in order to demean, manipulate, control or exploit someone. As with any category of abuse, spiritual abuse is most likely to arise when people, often in positions of authority, misuse power. (Comprehensive edition of Good Practice 4, page 92)

Adults are more at risk if;

- They are isolated and have little contact with their friends and family or people around them.
- They have difficulties with their memory.
- They have problems communicating.
- They are dependent on a carer (who may be a family member, friend or paid worker).
- If they don't like their carers.
- If the carer abuses alcohol or drugs.
- If the carer relies upon the adult at risk, for financial support, a home or emotional support

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE – CHILDREN

Emotional

The classic description of Emotional Abuse is “Low Warmth High Criticism” style of parenting.

- Physical, mental and emotional lags
- Acceptance of punishments, which appear excessive
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-depreciation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self-harm
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Bullying/Aggression
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Clingy
- Fearful/withdrawn
- Sleep disorders

Physical

- Unexplained injuries
- Injuries that are inconsistent with explanation
- Injuries that reflect an article used e.g. an iron
- Bruising, especially trunk, upper arm, shoulders, neck or finger tip bruising.
- Burns/scalds, especially cigarette
- Human bite marks
- Fractures, especially spiral
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs
- Serious injury with lack of / inconsistent explanation
- Untreated injuries

Psychological/emotional

- Unusually fearful with adults
- Unnaturally compliant to parents
- Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Aggression towards others
- Wears cover up clothing

Fictitious Illness by Proxy

- Psychiatric Illness, whereby a parent or carer deliberately inflicts harm onto a child
- Normally the child's mother
- The child has commonly had genuine serious illness in the first year of life (a dependency on medical attention has developed in the mother)
- Very difficult to diagnose/evidence
- Most common example – Beverley Allet – a nurse convicted of murder and actual bodily harm in the 1980's

Female Genital Mutilation

A cultural (not religious) procedure whereby parts of female genitalia are removed - also referred to as female circumcision.

- Illegal in UK
- Normally undertaken on pre-pubescent girls
- Girls either taken abroad for procedure or “practitioners” come to UK
- There can be no anaesthetic, no sterile equipment, barbaric practice
- Complications include – serious infection, septicaemia, death, numerous gynaecological problems.

Neglect

Physical signs include:

- Tired/listless
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation, potbelly, short stature
- Poor skin tone and hair tone
- Untreated medical problems
- Failure to thrive with no medical reason

Psychological/emotional signs include:

- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent lateness/nonattendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging
- Multiple accidents/accidental injuries

Sexual abuse

Physical signs include:

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Soreness to genitalia area, anus or mouth
- Repeated stomach aches
- Loss of weight
- Gaining weight
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections, discharges or abdominal pain
- Unexplained gifts/money

Psychological/emotional signs include:

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Sudden changes in personality
- Lack of concentration, restlessness
- Socially withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting – day or night
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Eating disorders

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE - ADULTS

Physical

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended.

Sexual

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse.
- Self-harming.

Psychological

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful.
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer.
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes.
- Unexplained paranoia.

Financial or Material

- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents.
- Sudden inability to pay bills.
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf.
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property.

Neglect or Omission

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger.
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores.
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition.
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care.
- No callers or visitors.

Discriminatory

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect.
- Poor quality or avoidance of care.

Institutional

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bedtimes, visitors, phone calls etc.
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication.
- Inappropriate use of restraint.
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids.
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans.
- Public discussion of private matter.
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity.

INCIDENT RECORDING FORM**Date and time of incident****Date on which this report is written***(N.B. This should preferably be immediately or no later than up to 48 hours of the incident taking place)***Your Name****Name of Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult****Date of Birth** _____**Address if known** _____**Recording:** _____

Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible – do not interpret what was said using your own words.

Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or Vulnerable Adult said. Include details such where the conversation took place and who else was present, if anyone.

If you have formed an opinion, please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion. It would assist, where possible, to also include descriptions of tone of voice, facial expression and body language.

Record

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name _____

Social Services Name _____

Police Name _____

NSPCC Name _____

Parent/Carer

Name _____

Child

Other Name.....

Follow up work:

Signed _____

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKERS

Be aware that behaviour in a worker's personal life (including online) may impact upon their work with children and young people. Therefore, all workers agree not to behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model within the United Reformed Church. More specifically, all workers agree to the following code of conduct:

Relating to young people

- Do treat all young people with dignity and respect.
- Don't belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting)
- Do act inclusively, seeking to make all young people feel welcome and valued.
- Don't exclude other young people or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason.
- Do treat young people with equal care and concern.
- Don't show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc) or encourage excessive attention from a particular young person. (e.g. giving gifts)
- Do encourage young people to follow the code of conduct agreed for the group / event / activity, and do refer to a more senior worker if a young person does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning of possible consequences.
- Don't threaten sanctions which have not been agreed by the team or which you cannot carry out.
- Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact.
- Don't use physical restraint (except as a last resort, by a competent person, in order to prevent injury).
- Do relate to young people in public. If a young person wants to talk one-to-one about a serious issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter but still in sight of other workers.
- Don't spend time alone with young people out of the sight of other workers.
- Do make sure that any electronic communication with young people is done with parental consent, and in a way which is transparent, accountable and noted / recorded.
- Don't swap phone numbers with young people or add them as 'friends' on social networking website unless this practice has been agreed as part of a church policy on electronic communication with young people.
- Do allow the designated photographer to take and share photos of event activities, in line with parental consent and URC good practice guidelines.
- Don't take photos and video of young people at the event if you are not the designated photographer.
- Do use physical contact wisely - it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the young person.
 - in response to the needs of the young person, not the adult.
 - respectful of the young person's privacy, feelings and dignity.
- Don't use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual.
- Do respect young people's privacy (especially when they are changing, washing or using the toilet).
- Don't walk in unannounced or use washing/changing facilities at times allocated to young people. Do listen well to young people and do tell the person responsible for safeguarding if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Don't promise to keep something secret if it is about a young person is at risk of harm but only tell those who need to know.

Working together as a team

- Do work as a team, respecting the different roles, fulfilling your general role and any specific responsibilities, including attending all team meetings.
- Don't undermine other workers in the team.
- Do tell the leader in charge or the person responsible for safeguarding if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.
- Don't ignore it or tell other workers in the team.
- Do make arrangements with the leader in charge to take time off if you need to.
- Don't ignore fatigue, but don't take time off without their knowledge and agreement.

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children and young people on behalf of Sanderstead United Reformed Church, Sanderstead CR2 0HB.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

THE ROLE OF A CHURCH SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR

Context

We believe that our children and vulnerable adults deserve the best possible care that the Church can provide. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

Purpose of the role:

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church.
- To provide a first point of contact regarding safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for safeguarding in the church.
- To ensure all investigations are taken seriously and impartially.

Responsibilities:

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church:

- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and fit for purpose.
- To make others in the church aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as URC guidelines.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in recruitment of all workers, both volunteers and paid, including, but not exclusively, ensuring that relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Checks.

To provide a first point of contact regarding safeguarding issues.

- To be a named person that children, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with child protection or safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate people within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Local Authority Designated Officer of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To report summary safeguarding information annually to the Synod Safeguarding Officer to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for safeguarding in the church

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impacts of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and congregation, including both paid staff and volunteers.
- To update their own safeguarding training every 2 years.
- To seek appropriate support, and advice, in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when they are on leave, and to publicise who this is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

ELIGIBILITY FOR DBS CHECKS

URC Good Practice guidance is that DBS checks should always be carried out for any role which is eligible, as part of a safer recruitment process. In order to identify which roles are eligible for a DBS check, it is important to firstly be clear about what each role entails. This is best achieved by producing a written role description which includes reference to:

- a) The type of work.
- b) The frequency and period of time over which the work will be done.
- c) If and how the work will be supervised.

Roles involving work with children (under 18 years of age):

Regulated Activity - For roles which fall within 'Regulated Activity' an Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check **must** be carried out, because it is a criminal offence to appoint somebody to such a role if they are on the Barred List. In local churches, such roles would typically include:

- Any role which is likely to involve teaching or supervising or providing advice and guidance to children frequently (weekly) *E.g. workers in weekly children's and youth groups who are on duty most weeks; people responsible for moderating an online chatroom / social networking group for children; leaders responsible for supervising children within groups which are open to both adults and children such (choirs, music groups, drama groups etc)*
- Any role which is likely to involve teaching or supervising or providing advice and guidance for 4+ days in a 30-day period. *E.g. leaders at a children's holiday club or similar event lasting 4 days or more.*
- Any role which is likely to involve supervision of children overnight, irrespective of how many nights or how often. *E.g. leaders staying overnight at a children's or youth group sleepover / camp / sleepover / camp / another residential event.*
- Any role which includes specific personal care of children because of illness, disability or age, irrespective of how frequently it takes place. *E.g. leaders of young children who help them with toileting, washing, bathing, or dressing, E.g. a leader who, because of a child's illness or disability, has to help them with eating, drinking, toileting, washing, bathing, or dressing.*
- Those who drive children as part of their church role weekly, 4+ days in a 30-day period, or overnight *e.g. someone who has been asked by the church to transport children to and from a church activity.*
- Moderators of internet chat rooms or social networking groups set up by the church for children *e.g. the worker who administers a church Facebook group for children*
- Any role which includes the management or supervision of the above regulated activity.

NB Please note that the above list is not exhaustive but covers the roles which will be relevant to most churches.

Supervised workers - In most church activities volunteers tend to work as co-workers rather than one supervising the other. Therefore, the above list assumes that the roles are not always supervised by a senior worker. The URC definition of supervision is where the person being supervised is always in sight of the supervisor. If one of the above roles is supervised in this way, it no longer falls within the current definition of regulated activity, but it is still eligible for an Enhanced DBS check only (i.e. without the barred list check) and this should be carried out as a matter of good practice.

Regular but less frequent work - those who work with children on a regular basis, but less often than every week, are now eligible for an Enhanced DBS check only (i.e. without barred list check) e.g. *workers on a rota for a weekly children's activity, e.g. workers for a monthly children's activity*. However, the church would be wise to think ahead about whether the person is likely to be involved in other regulated activity (see above) in the next year or two. If this is likely, it should be included in the role description and the Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check should be carried out.

Helpers who are under 18 - The lowest age at which someone can apply for a DBS check is 16 years old. URC Good Practice guidance states that under 18's should be supervised at all times by an adult and therefore should never be engaged in regulated activity and will not require an Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check. However, if 16- or 17-year-olds are doing one of the roles in the above list under supervision, then they are eligible for a DBS Enhanced check only.

Activities in which all children are supervised by a parent/carer:

a) Parent/Carer and Toddler groups -

Scenario 1 - Any roles which are solely about working with the parents, providing refreshments or providing administrative support in such a group are not eligible for any DBS check. If the role of the workers does not involve supervision or personal care of children they do not require a DBS check, but the leader in charge of the group and their deputy should have an Enhanced DBS check.

Scenario 2 - If the role of the workers includes supervision of children (e.g. to allow parents chat together) then Enhanced DBS checks only would be required for the workers and Enhanced DBS plus Barred List checks for the leader in charge of the group.

Scenario 3 - If the role of workers includes unsupervised personal care of the children e.g. help with toileting (see Regulated Activity section above) then they and the leader in charge will require an Enhanced DBS check plus Barred List check (see above).

All age activities e.g. Messy Church

Scenario 1 - Any roles which are solely about working with the parents, providing refreshments or providing administrative support in such a group are not eligible for any DBS check. If the role of the workers does not involve supervision, teaching or specific personal care of children (see Regulated Activity section above) they do not require a DBS check, but the leader in charge of the group and their deputy should have an Enhanced DBS check only.

Scenario 2 - If the role of any workers includes supervision of children (e.g. because some children attend without a parent/carer) they and the leader in charge (and their deputy) should have an Enhanced DBS check.

Scenario 3 - If the role of any workers includes unsupervised personal care of the children (e.g. see Regulated Activity section above) then they and the leader in charge will require an Enhanced DBS check plus Barred List check (see Regulated Activity section above).

Roles involving work with adults (18+ years of age):

The definition of Regulated Activity is simpler for work with adults as it does not depend on frequency, period, or whether the worker is supervised. However, within a church setting, Regulated Activity with adults will be limited to a small number of church roles where the person is involved in any of the following activities as part of that church role.

- Help with washing/dressing; eating/drinking; toileting; or teaching someone to do one of these tasks.
- Help with a person's cash, bills or shopping because of their age, illness or disability. (A good example is helping someone pay a household bill. Posting the letter for the housebound person is not Regulated Activity but taking the money from them to take and pay at the PO counter is Regulated Activity. This would not usually be part of any church role but is included here for the small minority of exceptional occasions.)

- Helping someone in the conduct of their affairs (for example, a Power of Attorney for someone who is not a relative or friend). This would be very unlikely in a church context).
- Driving someone (because of their age, illness or disability) to/from places in order to receive health, personal or social care. (Note: not as family or friend but as part of a church role.)

For roles involving the above activities an Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check **must** be carried out, because it is a criminal offence to appoint somebody to such a role if they are on the Barred List.

For other church roles in which a worker has a significant level of involvement with adults who are in need or at risk because of age, illness, disability or factors arising from social exclusion (whether temporary or permanent), then an Enhanced DBS check only (without Barred List check) should be carried out as a matter of good practice.

Safeguarding roles:

The names person(s) responsible for safeguarding children and/or adults in the local church are not doing regulated activity but should have an Enhanced DBS check as a matter of good practice.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The following statement has been agreed by the leadership of Sanderstead United Reformed Church.

This church is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and to ensuring their well-being.

- We believe that all children and vulnerable adults should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our church.
- We respect the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults (for example, as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and will ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.
- We recognise that domestic abuse affects both adults and children and believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.
- We will report any abuse of children or vulnerable adults that we discover or suspect.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Adult Services does so for vulnerable adults
- We acknowledge that Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) have responsibility for dealing with all allegations and concerns about people working with children, whether paid or voluntary workers, lay or ordained.
- We recognise that safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.

We are committed to:

- The establishment of a loving environment, which is safe and caring and where there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- Following the relevant legislation, statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that we keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with the relevant Voluntary and Statutory Authorities.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a church, everyone works within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Following safer recruitment principles in the appointment and selection of all those who work with children and vulnerable adults, be they volunteer or paid staff, lay or ordained.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with children and vulnerable adults. Training is mandatory.
- Ensuring that the children and adults we have contact with know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- At all times maintaining confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm.
- Fully investigating allegations made by children and vulnerable adults and taking appropriate action, where necessary.
- Ensuring any outcomes made will be done so impartially and under the guidance of the Safeguarding Coordinator or deputy or if necessary, the Synod Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensuring that all parties concerned, during an allegation investigation, receive the necessary pastoral support, while at the same time respecting all parties right to confidentiality.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, and where appropriate implement contracts of behavior, whilst bearing in mind the overarching principle that the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- If an assessment is made that someone poses an unmanageable risk to those in need of protection and could not safely attend our Church, we will ensure that they continue to be offered pastoral care and will signpost them to appropriate agencies for support.

Name: Malcolm Dalton
(on behalf of the church leadership)

Signed:

Date: 10 September 2025