



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Plume Avenue United Reformed Church

We acknowledge children's and adults right to protection from abuse, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice in order to protect vulnerable people in our church.

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

We will implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, who will have specific responsibilities for safeguarding, although we recognise 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 Key Contacts.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise 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 at risk, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support, 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 recognise 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

A full copy of our Safeguarding Policy is available from the Church.

Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

This policy is based on the Policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk – Good Practice 5

<https://urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/SafeguardingDocuments/GP5-Safeguarding-Pack-2020-web.pdf>

Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies to:

- all members of our church
- all those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- our trustees and elders
- paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- volunteers
- organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

The values and safeguarding principles within the United Reformed Church are described in **Appendix A1**. The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with these principles and the most recent URC good practice guidance. Children, parents/carers, adults at risk and those responsible for safeguarding them will be informed of this policy and our procedures.

Definitions

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether adults, children or young people. We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Preventing abuse

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults. A job/role description is attached as **Appendix A2**.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for

harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate and accessible consent forms will be used (for children's activities or activities for people with special needs), appropriate records will be kept, and adequate insurance will be in place.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers with emphasis on those in regulated activities. We will treat applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed and ensure that all safer recruitment-related procedures are followed, which include:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- providing workers with job or role descriptions and person specifications
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks for eligible roles and positions
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/agreements.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as **Appendix A3**) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or the termination of people's service.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed or harm children or adults, we will inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or Synod Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and adults.

When any church premises are let to an external, informal group or individual, those hiring the premises should hold and abide by their own safeguarding policy. If a hirer does not have a policy, they must abide by the church's own safeguarding policy, a copy of which should be made available. Each hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults at risk are always protected by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. **Appendix A4: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse** provides definitions of different forms of abuse and further help and guidance. Some signs could be indicators of several different categories of abuse.

It is essential to note that these are only indicators of possible abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for these signs and/or behaviour. There might be domestic abuse that requires a different approach (please see **Appendix R: A Guide to domestic abuse**). The indicators 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.

Church workers and members will also pay attention to online safety and their electronic communications with children and adults. Grooming and abuse of any form can occur offline

(both physically and verbally) and online. **The church online safety policy** includes an acceptable use policy in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children and provides sample forms which children and workers could be asked to sign.

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

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and have been abused, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listen carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- informs the church Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (using the template in **Appendix A6**). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.

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

- The concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer **within 24 hours** and a decision needs to be made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory authorities (**NOTE:** Key Contacts of relevant statutory contacts in your local authority should be added in this policy)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at **Appendix A6**. This record will be kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory authorities if a referral is made
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at further risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted beforehand
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns and referrals to police and statutory authorities.

Prior to any referral to children's services, the child's wishes and rights should be considered when determining what action to take. There should also be a verbal consultation with local authority's children's services to ensure that making a referral is an appropriate action. The parent/carer will normally be contacted to obtain their consent before a referral is made. However, if the concern involves, for example alleged or suspected child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Honour Based Violence, fabricated or induced illness, or the Synod Safeguarding Officer has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing should be said to the

parent/carer ahead of the referral, but a rationale for the decision to progress without consent should be provided with the referral.

In the case of referrals to adult social care or other services for adults at risk, information should be shared with consent if the adult has capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act and if this does not place the referrer, them or others at an increased risk. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others. See section 14 of Good Practice 5 for further advice and guidance.

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

If someone in the church is alleged or known to harm/have harmed children or adults, it is essential to inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support.

For any concerns relating to children, the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales 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 DO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this advice. As noted, DO contact details, should be included in the Key Contacts section of this model policy.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. Likewise, their contacts details should be included in the Key Contacts section of this model policy.

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS / PVG for consideration of barring to share information about any individual in regulated activity where for safeguarding reasons the organisation has either terminated the employment, failed to appoint, or would have terminated the employment had the individual not moved on through resignation, retirement or re-deployment. In such cases, the synod safeguarding officer needs to be advised/informed.

Depending on the seriousness of incidents or allegations, a report to the Charity Commission will also need to be considered at the elders/trustees' meeting, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and require notification.

Managing those who may pose a risk to the welfare of people

The use of rigorous and careful supervision is paramount to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing safeguarding contracts with known or alleged offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk. Where it is known that someone has a caution or conviction for committing a sexual offence,

the church can play an important role in the prevention of further abuse by helping the offender to live an offence-free life.

If anyone is made aware that a person attending their church has been convicted of an offence against a child or has had an allegation of this nature made against them at any time, we immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim moderator.

It is important to provide known or alleged offenders with a group of people who will offer support, friendship and supervision. Following advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer, when appropriate, a formal safeguarding contract will be drawn up between the church, the person who is considered to pose a risk to the welfare of people in the church, and any statutory agencies when involved.

Training

Safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role. All relevant staff members and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training delivered by the synod. The Safeguarding Coordinator(s) should ensure that trustees/elders and people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers) have undergone safeguarding training, as recommended by the URC.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact:

Name: Liz Bird

Telephone No: 07771 646562

Email admin@plumeavenuechurch.org.uk

It 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.

Key Contacts: Sources of advice and support

- The church **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations relating to children, young people or adults should be addressed:

Name Dave Anderson

Telephone No 01206 572290 07775 820651

Email andersonco3@ntlworld.com

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators** can be contacted:

Name Marianne Rattray

Telephone No 07971 070440

Email marianne@plumeavenuechurch.org.uk

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name Candice Hart

Telephone 01223 609846

Email safeguarding@urceastern.org.uk

- **URC Safeguarding Office** (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone No 020 7520 2729

Email safeguarding@urc.org.uk

- **ThirtyOne: Eight** (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact URC)

24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550

- **Designated Officer (DO)** or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales

Name Essex Social Care

Telephone No 0845 603 7364 Out of hours Telephone: 0845 606 1212

Email initialresponseteam@essex.gcsx.gov.uk

- Statutory contact in the case of a child
As above
- Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk
As above

NOTE: A list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults can be found on **Appendix 7** and be used in this section of the local policy.

Review

The Elders will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required, and informing Church Meeting that this has been done.

Date of the most recent review: February 2025

Date of the next review: [January 2026](#)

Signed: E R Bird

(on behalf of the church Elders)



Appendix A1



Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the leadership of Plume Avenue URC

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Plume Avenue United Reformed Church. We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults, and ensure the well-being and pastoral care of those who are or may be at risk.

We will prevent abuse for extremist or other purposes and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

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

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a place of worship all will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when available) are the persons to whom all concerns or



allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available in our posters, websites, or other communications with the public.

We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of trustees and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the Church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained. We will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. We will use DBS/PVG checks as part of a wide range of checks on trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, DO (the Designated Officer, formerly known as LADO), Local Safeguarding Boards (in Wales), Children's Partnership Boards (formally Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to working with those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, offering appropriate pastoral support where possible as well as to challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the Church and offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervision, referral to the appropriate agencies, and implementation of safeguarding contracts, when appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside the denomination.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment in alignment with Good Practice 5 – United Reformed Church's Policy and Guidance in Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the local church trustees.



Appendix A2



The role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC)

Context

We believe that children and adults at risk deserve the best possible care that the church can provide and that the church should be a safe place for everyone involved. 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 procedures in the church.
- To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church.

Responsibilities

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures 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 are fit for purpose.
- To make sure that elders and others in the church are aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, including URC guidelines and Charity Commission responsibilities.
- To collaborate with the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when there is one), the minister, the DBS/PVG signatory people and the Synod Safeguarding Officer on all matters around safeguarding.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in the recruitment of all workers (both volunteers and paid) including, but not exclusively, ensuring that the relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks.
- To review and ensure others' safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place when any church premises are let to an external organisation, informal group or individual.

To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues

- To be a named person that children / adults at risk, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate departments and teams 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 Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To ensure safe practice is in place for supporting people who pose a risk to children and adults at risk at 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 inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer about any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory authorities.
- To report safeguarding information annually to the Eldership/Church Meeting and the Synod Safeguarding Officer, using the Appendix H1 as part of the annual returns process, to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impact 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 all people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers), as recommended by the synod, and ensure that their training is renewed every three years.
- To attend appropriate training for the role, including refresher training every three years, and keep updated on matters related to safeguarding.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when on leave, and to publicise who the substitute is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

Requirements for the role

- To have knowledge of policy and practice for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk.
- Good communication (written and oral) skills
- Be willing to attend appropriate safeguarding training/refresher training organised by the synod.
- Be willing to be easily contactable – and prepared to make contact details public to enable direct contact when needed.



Appendix A3



All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children and young people. The word 'child' refers to all those under the age of 18 throughout this document

DO

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect
- Respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture
- Act inclusively, seeking to make everyone feel welcome and valued
- Use appropriate language
- Be a good role model
- Treat people with equal care and concern
- Take all reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities and special education needs
- Listen to children and tell the Church Safeguarding Coordinator if you have any concerns about a child's welfare
- Refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning
- Encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact
- Interact with children in a public place. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk
- Make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies. Using church platforms and not private accounts
- Have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with URC good practice guidelines
- Use physical contact wisely; it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child
 - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult
 - respectful of the child's wishes, feelings and dignity
- Respect children's and young people's privacy
- Ensure that any communication online is done through a work or church account – this may require setting up an account specific for that purpose
- Ensure, where possible, parents or guardians are present in the building or other workers are aware when young people are communicating with you via social media. Communication with a child via social media should only ever take place when their parent or guardian and other adult workers are aware of these online interactions.
- Inform your line manager or point of contact of your intention to communicate online with families or young people and keep a record of times and dates when you do this.



- Keep up to date on policies, procedures and training, including safeguarding and health and safety
- Understand that your conduct outside of work including on line can impact on your work with children and young people

DO NOT

- Do not abuse the power and responsibility of your role for example do not belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo)
- Exclude children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason
- Overshare about your own situations
- Show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts)
- Threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed
- Feel you have to deal with every problem on your own
- Use physical restraint unless they are causing harm to themselves or others
- Spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Contact them through private messaging
- Keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences
- Use child/young person's personal data for other purposes than activities consented
- Take photos or videos without consent
- Engage with children or young people through your personal social media or mobile account
- Assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker
- Promise to keep anything a secret, it may be that if a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of harm, that you will need to share that information but only on a need to know basis
- Work in ways that puts your needs and interests before those of the children you work with
- Discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged
- Interact with children you are working with from personal social media accounts

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children and young people

on behalf of Plume Avenue United Reformed Church

Name of worker:

Signed:

Date:



Appendix 4

Appendix A4

Signs and symptoms of abuse

It is important to be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse. Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be a perfectly ordinary explanation. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not 'ring true', should give more cause for concern.

Below is a comprehensive table of definitions, signs and symptoms of some of the types of abuse. The table has been compiled from a number of different sources, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. **Please note:** it is not an exhaustive list, and relates to the abuse of both children and adults.

Physical Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
To inflict pain, physical injury, impairment or suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping and beating. • Shaking, pinching, throwing and pushing. • Kicking, biting, burning, drowning and hair pulling. • Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint. • Parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. • Inappropriate use of restraint techniques or other physical sanctions. • Isolation or confinement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. • Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, welts. • Bruising and discolouration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc. ○ in unusual places (e.g. around the mouth), in unusual patterns (e.g. symmetrical) or in particular shapes (e.g. fingertip bruising or belt marks). • Black eyes, burns, broken bones and skull fractures. • If the person is seen to have injuries that recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without plausible explanation. • Any injury that has not received medical attention or been properly cared for. • Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene. • Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite. • Repeated or unexplained tummy pains.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person flinches at physical contact and/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather. • Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.
Emotional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of threats, fear or power gained by another's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes.</p> <p>Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological stress. In children it can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour. • Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation. • The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation. • Making someone feel worthless, a lack of love or affection or ignoring the person. • Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. <p>Emotional abuse may well be indicative of other forms of abuse.</p> <p>All forms of abuse have an emotional component.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour. • Becoming quiet, clingy or withdrawn or conversely becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. • Denial and hesitation to talk openly. • Excessive fear or anxiety • Behaviour such as rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking. • Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness. • Loss of appetite. • Low self-esteem, helplessness or passivity. • Confusion or disorientation. • Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour. • Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults. • Running away, school non-attendance, stealing or lying.
Sexual Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>For a child – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.</p> <p>For an adult - Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not consent or was pressurised into consenting. • Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional distress. • Preoccupation with anything sexual and age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour. • Mood, attitude or behaviour changes. • Expressions of feelings of guilt or shame. • Itching, soreness, bruises or lacerations, particularly around the genital areas.

<p>No one should enter a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.</p>	<p>another person in a sexual manner without consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing. • Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts. • Filming or photographing a child in sexual poses or acts. • Enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways. • Being spied on while a person is undertaking or receiving personal care activities. • ‘Sexting’, grooming and using social media to share inappropriate content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in walking or sitting, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding. • Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections. • A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults. • Disturbed sleep patterns. • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. • Significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook. • A very young girl or a woman who lacks mental capacity to consent to intercourse becomes pregnant. • Underage Pregnancy/Termination.
Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>A person’s wellbeing is impaired and their care needs (physical and/or psychological) are not met.</p> <p>In a child, neglect is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.</p> <p>Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services. • Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment. • Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not providing adequate food or assistance with eating/drinking, or not providing sufficient or appropriate clothing. • Leaving alone or unsupervised. • Failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous (particularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene. • Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food. • Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions. • Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person’s environment. • Developmental delay in children. • Low self-esteem, socially isolated and poor concentration. • Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example no heating or lighting). • Health and safety hazards in the living environment.

<p>what someone's needs are.</p>	<p>when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess the risks to themselves or to others).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately withholding medication or aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids. • Denying social, religious or cultural contacts, or denying contact with the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untreated medical conditions, pressure sores, rashes, lice on the person. • Depression or low mood. • Person and/or carer have inconsistent or reluctant contact with Health and Social Services. • Callers/visitors are refused access to the person. • Prolonged isolation or lack of stimulation. • Person who is not able to look after themselves is left unattended and so put at risk. • Not being helped to the toilet when assistance is requested. • Change leaving alone to 'child/vulnerable person being left alone or unsupervised'.
Self-Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>An unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding or having no possessions at all. • Living in squalor and neglecting self-care and hygiene. • Failure to provide oneself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, healthcare and safety precautions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration, malnutrition or obesity. • Untreated medical conditions and poor personal hygiene. • Unsanitary living conditions. • Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing and lack of necessary medical aids. • Homelessness. • Not adhering to medical advice. • Not taking medication as advised/prescribed.
Financial Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods. • Exploitation or profiteering. • Applying pressure in connection with Wills, property or inheritance, or financial transactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained loss of money. • Missing personal belongings such as art, jewellery and silverware. • Deterioration in standard of living, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings. • Unexplained lack of money, inability to pay bills or getting into debt.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will. • Being charged excessive amounts for services such as minor building works on a property. • Loans made under duress, threat or dishonestly extracted. • Mate-crime – where vulnerable people are befriended by those who go on to exploit them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden changes in a person’s finances or a disparity in assets and living conditions. • Person unable to access their own money or check their own accounts. • Cheques being signed or cashed by other people without someone’s consent. • Recent acquaintances expressing sudden or disproportionate interest in the person and their money. • Reluctance on the part of the family, friends or the person controlling the person’s funds to pay for necessary food, clothes or other items. • Recent changes of deeds/title of home. • Inappropriate granting and/or use of Power of Attorney. • Sudden change or creation of a will to benefit an individual significantly. • Someone else having possession of money/ bank cards. • Someone else reported making financial decisions. • Fraud.
Discriminatory Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageist, racist, sexist, or abuse based on a person’s disability. • Abuse linked to a person’s sexuality. • Harassment, slurs or similar inappropriate use of language and treatment. • Withholding services without proper justification, or lack of disabled access to services and activities. • Lack of respect towards a person’s culture, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem. • Withdrawal and social isolation. • Anger. • Person puts themselves down in terms of their age, race, gender identity or sexuality. • Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. • Preference not to receive care from particular individuals. • Feeling as though there is a lack of control based on age, gender, religion. • Signs of substandard service offered (health/education).

	deliberate exclusion.	
Institutional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The mistreatment of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability of an institution to safeguard people from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. • Having fixed rules and routines by which people are controlled. • People prevented from acting within their rights. • No access to personal possessions or personal allowance. • Inadequate staffing, poorly trained staff and a lack of leadership and/or supervision of staff or volunteers. • Inappropriate use of physical interventions and poor practice in the provision of intimate care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or poor care. • Being routinely referred to in a condescending fashion. • Disrespectful language and attitudes. • Adult being spoken to or treated like a child. • A person's privacy and dignity being routinely compromised. • Failure to recognise the individuality of each person and applying a 'one size fits all' approach to support. • No evidence of support services care plans that focus on the individual's needs. • Inadequate staffing levels and the absence of individual care. • Lack of adequate procedures. • Poor record keeping/missing documents.
Domestic Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>Any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of age, gender or sexuality or social status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse. • Patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour. • Child to parent/carer abuse. • Abuse towards elderly family members. • Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). • Honour based violence, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and community. • Forced marriage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises or injuries. • Unusually quiet or withdrawn. • Fear, anxiety or panic attacks. • Frequent absences from work or other commitments. • Stops talking about their partner/family member. • Is always accompanied by their partner/family member. • Becomes isolated and withdrawn from friends and other family. • Doesn't have control over possessions or money. • Anxious about being away from home and rushes to get back.

<p>Rarely is domestic abuse a one-off incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can experience it by seeing and/or hearing the abuse, or seeing the injuries or distress afterwards, as well as being directly targeted. 	
<p>Spiritual Abuse</p>	<p>Includes....</p>	<p>Some of the key indicators</p>
<p>The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The abuse of trust or misuse of power by someone in a position of spiritual authority (such as a minister).</p> <p>The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcing religious ideas or practices on to people, particular those who may be vulnerable to such practices. • Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters – reducing individual choice and responsibility. • The misuse of scripture or power to control behaviour and pressure to conform. • Oppressive teaching and isolation from others. • The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a “divine” position. • Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in people experiencing emotional, physical or sexual harm. • The denial of the right to have a faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. • Exclusion of people from the full range of church life (no arrangements for gluten-free wafers or non-alcoholic wine at Communion, or promoting 	<p>It is often difficult for churches to identify spiritual abuse because its definition may be more an issue of personal interpretation of common practices in the church or denomination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral practices that ‘force’ people into accepting religious values or ideas. • A Feeling of confusion and uncertainty as to who, what or why they believe any more. • Deeply scarred – emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. • Feelings of betrayal leading to deep distrust, self-isolation and powerlessness. • A changed and damaged view of church – loss of church as a safe space.

	<p>fear of involving those who are HIV positive).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversimplification of forgiveness and healing without regard to pain or suffering. 	
Online Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of the internet (via email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, online games, live-streaming etc) to harm or harass in a deliberate manner.</p> <p>It can happen at any time and is not limited to a specific location – can be experienced even when alone.</p> <p>It can affect anyone at any age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications seeking to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, humiliate. • Threatening earnings, reputation, employment, safety. • Cyberbullying/Harassment – repeated offensive, rude, insulting messages. • Denigration – derogatory information and/or digitally altered photos. • Flaming – posting insults using vulgar/profane language. • Impersonation – hacking accounts and taking on someone else’s identity. • Outing/Trickery – sharing someone’s secrets or tricking them into revealing embarrassing information. • Cyber stalking – repeated online threats/activity making someone afraid for their safety. • Trolling – online provocations, starting arguments, threats and insults. • Grooming – building emotional connection to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn, time spent alone, exclusion from social events. • Spend a lot more/less time than usual online, texting, gaming, on social media. • Reluctance to let anyone near their phone/ tablet/laptop etc. • Change in personality – anger, depression, anxiety etc • Changing appearance, trying to ‘fit in’ • Staying away from school/work • Nervous behaviour. • Losing self-confidence. • Distressed/withdrawn.

	<p>gain trust for exploitation/abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexting – sharing or coercion into sharing sexual, naked or semi-naked images/videos/messages. 	
Modern Slavery	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Includes human trafficking, where people are moved from one place to another into a situation of exploitation, using deception, coercion and violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic servitude – forced to work in private houses with restricted freedoms, long hours, no pay. • Criminal exploitation – pick pocketing, shoplifting, drug trafficking. • Forced labour – long hours, no pay, poor conditions, verbal and physical threats. • Sexual exploitation – prostitution and child abuse. • Organ removal, forced begging, forced marriage and illegal adoption. • Travel and identity documents removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a dependency situation, under the control and influence of others. • Malnourished or unkempt, wearing the same clothes all the time. • Travel, identity and financial documents held by someone else, or use of false/forged documents. • Living in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation, living and working at same address, few personal possessions. • In debt to others, low or no pay, excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport. • Unfamiliar with the neighbourhood, unsure of home/work address. • Scared, untrusting, withdrawn, anxious, avoiding eye contact. • Showing signs of abuse, having old/untreated injuries and healthcare issues. • In fear of the authorities and in fear of removal or consequences for family.
Radicalisation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The process that moves a person to legitimise their support for or use of violence. The promise of an ideology which gives purpose and belonging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violent and inappropriate material. • Being recruited in person – online or face-to-face. • Joining extremist organisations. • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expression of extremist views • Accessing extremist websites/social networks or possessing extremist, violent literature. • Behavioural changes, anger and use of inappropriate language. • Becoming disrespectful and intolerant of others. • Using words and phrases that sound scripted, talking about ‘us’ and ‘them’.

<p>Can take place over a long time period or happen quickly.</p> <p>The person may not understand that they have been radicalised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. <p>Extremist recruiters speak directly to the vulnerabilities people experience at times in their lives, e.g. sense of not belonging, low self-esteem, issues at home, involvement with gangs/criminal groups or identity crisis with their cultural heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sympathies, admiration or associations with known extremists. • Advocating violent actions or means. • Changing name or friends.
Child Sexual Exploitation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>A type of sexual abuse.</p> <p>The child is given gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities.</p> <p>The tricking or grooming of children to believe they are in a loving and consensual relationship.</p> <p>Can be both in person or online.</p> <p>The child may not understand that they have been abused. They may seem to be condoning or even encouraging the abusive behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of violence, coercion and intimidation to force the child into sexual activity. • Invitations to parties where drugs and alcohol are freely given in exchange for sex. • Deceiving children into producing online indecent images/films of themselves. • Children being used to recruit other children into sexual exploitation. • Children being trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. • Sexual exploitation as part of gang initiation, status, protection or punishment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. they can't or won't explain. • Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour. • Swings and changes in mood or character, being secretive. • Gang-association and/or isolation from friends and social networks. • Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups. • Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area. • Alcohol or drug misuse. • Going missing for periods of time. • Skipping school.

Self-Harm	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is often used as a way of coping with, expressing or releasing overwhelming emotions and distress.</p> <p>It may also be about converting emotional pain into physical pain, expressing something that is hard to put into words or feeling that they are in control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting • Burning • Bruising • Scratching • Hair pulling • Poisoning • Overdosing • Intentionally putting themselves in risky situations • Overeating or undereating • Inserting objects into their own body • Hitting themselves or walls • Exercising excessively • Self-neglect (adults) <p>Some may self-harm to create a reason to physically care for themselves, or to feel something instead of numbness or disconnection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained cuts, bruises and burns, which are likely to be on wrists, arms, thighs and chest. • Keeping themselves fully covered, even in hot weather. • Signs of depression, including low mood, tearfulness and a lack of motivation or interest. • Becoming withdrawn and a reluctance to speak to others. • Weight loss or weight gain due to changes in eating habits, including being secretive about eating. • Low self-esteem, such as an inclination to blame themselves for external problems and expressing that they are not good enough. • Alcohol or drugs misuse. • Bald patches from pulling out hair.

Things to note about abuse:

- It is unlikely that just one type of abuse will occur in isolation from another
- There can be an overlap of the signs and symptoms with different types of abuse
- All abuse involves the misuse of power
- There is an emotional abuse aspect to all types of abuse, including the witnessing of abuse
- If a child witnesses (including hearing) domestic abuse, this is considered to be child abuse
- Any type of abuse committed within the church can also have a negative impact on someone's faith and relationship with God
- It is not our role to determine which type of abuse it may be or to investigate.

For more information about specific forms of abuse, useful contacts of relevant organisations and details about those who are vulnerable to abuse, see:

- ***Appendix 5: A Guide to Domestic Abuse***
- ***Appendix 7: Useful Contacts—For All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults***

Available via this link <https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>

- ***Appendix V: Safeguarding and Digital Communications***
- ***Appendix X: Responding to Allegations of Bullying and Harassment***
- ***Appendix E: A Guide to Working with People with Disabilities***



Appendix 5

A guide to supporting those affected by domestic

1. Introduction

This guide has been produced to develop your understanding of what domestic abuse is, the difficulties and dangers faced by those dealing with abuse, and what steps you can take to offer support in a safer way.

Domestic abuse is alarmingly common. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2018 an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

People who perpetrate domestic abuse do not discriminate. It can happen to people who are married; not married; heterosexual; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender; living together, separated or dating. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.

Whether or not you are aware of it, it is likely that you know someone who has been affected by domestic abuse. The Methodist Church in the UK conducted a survey in 2002 and found that:

- 17% of respondents had experienced domestic abuse.
- The main perpetrators of the violence were husbands and partners.

Christianity Magazine, in conjunction with Restored (An International Christian Alliance whose aim is to transform relationships and end violence against women by working with churches and Christians worldwide) conducted a survey in September 2013 and discovered that:

- 40% had suffered some form of intimidation in their relationship.
- 16% had suffered some form of physical violence.

The Evangelical Alliance UK in its 'How is the Family Report' 2010 found that:

- 10% of women answering the survey had experienced physical abuse in their relationship.
- 7% of men admitted perpetrating physical abuse.

Christian homes are not immune to domestic abuse. The responsibility to offer help and be a voice for the prevention of domestic violence is fundamental to core Christian values – those of love, justice, equality, respect and care for one another.



2. Defining Domestic Abuse

In 2013 The UK Government defined domestic abuse as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Controlling behaviour is defined as:

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

Coercive behaviour is defined as:

An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

It has been widely understood that coercive control is a core part of domestic abuse and the inclusion of this in the definition highlights the importance of recognising coercive control as a pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), so called Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage are classified as Domestic Abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM), sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting', is recognised internationally as a gross violation of the human rights of girls and women, often taking place whilst girls are still in their childhood or early teenage years. It is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to take abroad a British national or permanent resident for FGM, or to help someone trying to do this.

Performing FGM or helping it to take place, which would include taking girls/women to countries where FGM is still legal, carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison.

Honour Based Violence

There is no specific offence of "honour based crime". It is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation. Honour based violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such



violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not).

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Scotland

In Scotland there is no criminal offence of 'domestic abuse' or statutory definition of what constitutes domestic abuse. However, Police Scotland define domestic abuse as:

Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere, including online.

3. Understanding domestic abuse

How does domestic abuse happen?

It is of course difficult to understand what motivates one human being to abuse another and why someone stays in a relationship that causes them, and those around them, particularly children, so much suffering. Many ask why the victim stays. Nikki Dhillon Keane in her book *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*¹, highlights that this is the wrong question, and a form of victim blaming. Instead we should be asking why the perpetrator abuses.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse, like their victims, come from all walks of life. It is not always easy to recognise perpetrators of domestic abuse, as they can be charming and friendly in public, yet abusive and violent behind closed doors.

¹ Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*



Domestic abuse is about one person in a relationship using a pattern of behaviours to intimidate and control the other person. Perpetrators of domestic abuse frequently avoid taking responsibility for their behaviour, by blaming their violence on someone or something else, denying it took place at all or minimising their behaviour. It is therefore important to remember that responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator of that abuse.

Many people experience abuse within the so-called cycle of abuse in which periods of comparative calm or peace (known as the 'honeymoon stage') will be followed by a build-up toward an abusive episode. Although it may appear as though these periods of apparent calm are non-abusive, they represent part of a manipulative cycle, in which the abuser feels in control of their partner and situation. They may show repentance for pain caused, or even promise to change. Often it is these periods of apparent calm, which give the victim of abuse the hope that change can be achieved, and that the abuse will stop, which keeps them locked in the abusive relationship.

Not all relationships follow the same cycle, and individual experiences vary, some stages – especially the honeymoon or calm periods, may shorten or be left out completely, especially as the abuse intensifies over a period. Each stage of the cycle can last from a few minutes, to a number of months

There are many myths surrounding domestic abuse. For instance it has been said that domestic abuse can be attributed to a lack of control. However, perpetrators of abuse are often careful about when, where and to whom they are abusive. They can use violence and tactics of coercion as a way of exercising control and getting what they want. So, rather than being out of control, it can be a method to gain control.

The use (or misuse) of substances such as alcohol or drugs has been suggested to be a contributing factor. However, many people who drink too much or take drugs do not abuse their partners or family members. Likewise, perpetrators of abuse may be violent without the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Some suggest that domestic abuse is perpetrated by people who have mental health issues. However, most people with mental health problems do not abuse other people. Mental health issues are more likely to be the result of experiencing domestic violence than the cause of it. For instance, women who have experienced domestic violence have higher rates of mental illness: 64% experience post-traumatic stress disorder, 48% have depression, and 18% attempt or commit suicide².

A particularly damaging myth is that perpetrators do it because they were a victim of abuse in the past. Some perpetrators of abuse have witnessed or experienced abuse in the past and have normalised that behaviour. However, most victims and survivors of abuse do not

² From a Department of Health meta-analysis emerging from the VVAPP programme: Itzin, C. (2006).



go on to abuse anyone. Survivors of childhood abuse are more likely to become victims than perpetrators of abuse in adulthood.³

It can be extremely difficult to leave an abusive partner or family member, and some victims will never leave. There are many practical and psychological barriers to ending a relationship with an abusive partner or family member. The risk of death is also at its highest at the point of separation or just after leaving an abusive partner.

Barriers to leaving an abusive relationship

The reasons why someone experiencing abuse may believe that it is not possible for them to move away from the situation in which they are being abused are complex. Some of these are shown below:

- Fear of death, theirs or their children's.
- Lack of financial resources – no access to money; not able to support themselves and their children independently.
- Safety – the victim may be fearful of what the abuser will do to them and the children if they left or attempted to leave.
- Remembering good times – particularly those at the start of the relationship. There could for instance be long periods between incidents of abuse when the abuser is charming and caring.
- Hope or belief that the abuser will change or that things will get better.
- A belief that staying is better for the children.
- Shame – the embarrassment of people finding out.
- Having nowhere to go.
- Isolation – if emotionally and financially dependent on their partner, they may be very isolated.
- Religious or cultural beliefs – admitting that there is a problem may bring shame on their family or pressure not to leave the marriage.
- Leaving everything behind – having to leave friends, family, neighbours, job, school, clothes, possessions, pets etc.
- Lack of self-confidence / self-esteem – the victim's self-esteem has been steadily worn down and they no longer believe that they can manage on their own, or that they have any options.
- Self-reliance. A belief that they can cope and don't need or want help.
- Pressure – from family and friends to stay and 'make it work'.
- Denial – convincing themselves that "it's not that bad".
- Expectation – having grown up in an abusive household, the belief that this is what relationships look like.
- Guilt – the belief that they deserve the abuse and it is their fault
- A sense of duty.
- Loyalty – devotion to the abuser regardless of their actions.

³ Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*



- Fear of being alone – being with someone, despite their faults, is better than the fear of being lonely.
- Attachment issues/Co dependency.
- Lack of support – doesn't know who to turn to or where to go, particularly if English is not their first language.
- Rescuing – the belief that they can change the abuser.
- Intimidation – the abuser threatens to take the children or pets away.
- Immigration – the fear of being deported.
- Love – despite the abuse, they still feel that they love the abuser.
- The victim does not realise its abuse.
- Exhaustion. It is easy to underestimate the amount of energy needed for a victim to keep themselves, and possibly their children, alive and relatively safe.

4. The different kinds of domestic abuse

Below is a list of the main kinds of domestic abuse. However, in most cases more than one form exists.

Psychological abuse

This can include threats, gas lighting (making someone doubt their own reality) and mental torture. It can be used to groom victims for other types of abuse, although by itself it can cause devastating and lasting damage to a victim. It is a way of wearing down the victim to make them easier to control and therefore have power over them.

Isolation

This is a very powerful form of psychological abuse as it is of course much harder to exert power and control over someone that is surrounded by a support network of family and/or friends. Perpetrators might insist on moving to an area far away from their family and friends, sow seeds of doubt about close supportive relationships in a way that damages those relationships or become so aggressive when the victim tries to see family or friends that it is simply easier to stop seeing them. A perpetrator can also prevent someone from working and can monitor and/or block telephone calls.

Physical

This can include any of the following:

- Hitting, biting, slapping and beating.
- Shaking, pinching and pushing.
- Kicking, burning and hair pulling.
- Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint.
- Imprisoning, assault with implements and destroying possessions.



Perpetrators of physical abuse often carefully cause injuries only where they will not be visible to others. They do not abuse because of losing control of their temper but use physical abuse to gain and then maintain control over their victim.

Sexual

There are a range of abusive acts that are included within this definition

- Any behavior which uses sex or sexual activity in order to gain power and control over another person.
- Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts that the person has not consented to, could not consent to or was presurised into consenting to.
- punishment for not having sex.
- Forcing the victim/survivor to agree to have sex in order to avoid other abusive behaviour.
- sexual name calling or shaming.
- Being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts.
- Imposition of dress codes upon a partner, enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate photography of a person in sexually explicit ways.
- Involvement in the sex trade or pornography.
- Knowingly passing on sexually transmitted infections.

Emotional abuse

- Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behavior.
- Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation.
- Shouting, swearing, frightening or blaming behavior.
- Ridiculing, being obsessively and irrationally jealous.
- The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation.
- A lack of love or affection, or ignoring the person leading to feelings of worthlessness.
- Constantly checking where someone is.
- Telling them they are too fat/thin, stupid/useless.
- Telling them they are a bad mother/father, wife/husband/partner.

Economic/Financial abuse

- Prevent or discourage the victim from working.
- Force the victim to earn money so that they do not have to work.
- Keeping the victim in poverty, controlling all of the money, refusing to allow the victim access to their own money.
- Expect the victim to account for every penny they spend.
- Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods.
- Applying pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- Force the victim to take out a loan or withhold money so that they cannot buy essentials like food for the children.

Economic abuse disproportionately affects women.⁴

Threats

- Making angry gestures.
- Using physical size to intimidate.
- Shouting you down.
- Destroying your possessions.
- Breaking things.
- Punching walls.
- Wielding a knife or a gun.
- Threatening to kill or harm you, the children and/or pets.

Neglect

Adults can be the victim of neglect as one adult might rely on another individual for example if they are elderly or frail, have a learning disability, a physical disability or an illness. They might also have a mental health issue or English might not be their first language.

Neglect is when a person's wellbeing is impaired, and their care needs are not met. It might include:

- Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services.
- Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not giving someone proper food, or assistance with eating or drinking.
- Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment.
- Deliberately withholding aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids.
- Denying social, religious or cultural contacts.
- Leaving someone alone or unsupervised.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices, or the coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. In a domestic abuse context, it might include:

- Forcing religious ideas or practices onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices.
- The misuse of scripture to control behaviour and pressure to conform.
- The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position.
- The denial of the right to practice their faith.
- Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in emotional, physical or sexual harm.

⁴ Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, 'Money matters: research into the extent and nature of financial abuse within intimate relationships in the UK' <https://www.refuge.org.uk/files/Money-Matters.pdf> cited in Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

Stalking, harassment and digital abuse

This is a more common type of abuse once a relationship has ended. With the availability of social media abuse by digital means has become an increasing problem. Stalking and harassment can be a sign that a perpetrator could be extremely dangerous, even if they have not so far been physically violent.

5. Domestic abuse in different groups

Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. For any victim of domestic abuse, whatever their age, gender, sexuality or culture, the effects of the abuse are likely to be deeply significant. It will also impact friends, family, colleagues and neighbours – in fact whole communities can be affected by abuse that takes place behind closed doors. Below, in alphabetical order, are some groups that are affected. It is not an exhaustive list.

Children

Statistics from the NSPCC show that 1 in 5 children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse. Children are often called the ‘hidden victims’ of domestic abuse – their voices are not heard, and they have no choice whether or not to stay in the abusive environment. Living in a home where domestic abuse is taking place can be hugely distressing and confusing for children.

It can have a serious effect on their behaviour and overall wellbeing, both in the short and long term and they are likely to experience a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse⁵

Children may witness domestic abuse directly, but they can also witness it indirectly by hearing the abuse from another room, seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards, finding disarray like broken furniture or being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

Witnessing parental conflict may increase the likelihood of a child developing risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, alcohol and drug use and early sexual activity⁶. Domestic abuse can cause confusing relationships with parents. Children may:

- Not be able to develop a strong bond with their parents/carers (poor attachment).
- Worry their parents will divorce.
- Hope an abused parent will leave for safety reasons.
- Be afraid of their parents.

The Psychological effects of witnessing domestic abuse include:

- Aggression and challenging behavior.
- Depression.

⁵ Royal College of General Practitioners and NSPCC, 2014; Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008.

⁶ Early Intervention Foundation, 2018.

- Anxiety – including worrying about a parent’s safety.
- Changes in mood.
- Difficulty interacting with others.
- Withdrawal.
- Fearfulness, including fear of conflict.
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings.⁷
- Low self-esteem.
- Nightmares and flashbacks.

Physical effects can include:

- A risk of injury when they try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Self-harming.
- Higher rates of illness and fatigue.
- Reduced physical growth.
- Impact on nervous and hormonal systems (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018).
- Bedwetting.
- Eating disorders.

Emotional effects can include:

- Guilt that they didn’t try to intervene or stop the abuse.
- Feeling responsible for everything happening in the family.
- Attempts to be perfect and anxious to please.
- Fear of the abuser and other people who are similar to the abuser.
- Distressed and/or frightened by seeing arguments or violence.
- Afraid of their own emotions, such as anger.
- Difficulty in creating positive relationships.
- Feelings of powerlessness, insecurities, guilt, fear and loneliness.

Exposure to domestic abuse in childhood undermines a child’s basic need for safety and security and can have a negative impact on their development, educational outcomes and mental health. It is contained within the definition of emotional abuse (Working Together 2018).

Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a child is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, safeguarding procedures must be followed by referring to Children’s Services/Social Work Scotland. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on children, and the increased risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

⁷ Diez, et al 2018; *Early Intervention Foundation*, 2018.



Child to parent/carer

Child to parent/carer abuse is an aspect of domestic abuse where the child in the relationship seeks to control and coerce the parent, grandparent, foster parent or carer. There can be a number of reasons why a child is violent and/or abusive towards their parent or carer. It can include if they have seen a parent/carer be on the receiving end of abuse and they may believe it is normal behaviour to treat them in that manner.

Child to parent/carer abuse is largely under-reported and parents are often unable to identify or define what they are experiencing as abuse. Instead, they may talk about 'struggling with their child', 'having relationship difficulties with their child' or 'living in fear of their child'. They may not realise that there is specific help available for them, or they may feel ashamed and embarrassed that they cannot control their child, and that they are afraid of them. Additional barriers in seeking help may arise if the parents or carers responsible for the child cannot reach a consensus on the best course of action.

LGBTQ+

Domestic abuse can happen in lesbian and gay relationships, and between people who are transgender or have non-binary gender identities. Stonewall's research shows that 1 in 4 lesbian and bi women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. Two thirds of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a third a man. Almost half (49%) of all gay and bi men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

There is limited research on how many trans people experience domestic abuse in the UK, and the best studies have small group samples. However, these figures suggest it is a significant issue. A report by the Scottish Transgender Alliance indicates that 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner⁸

LGBTQ+ people may experience unique forms of coercive control targeted at their sexual orientation or gender identity. For victims who are not 'out' the perpetrator may threaten to expose the victims sexual or gender identity to friends, family, the police, church or employer. Research by Stonewall found that more than one in ten LGBTQ+ people (13%) who had experienced domestic abuse in the past year reported that their partner had threatened to 'out' them. The concept of 'outing' can also apply to HIV status.

Other forms of abuse that are unique to transgender people are their partner deliberately using the wrong pronoun, forcing someone to perform a gender that they do not want to present as, or preventing them from medically transitioning, for instance by hiding hormones or creating barriers such as controlling finances to accessing surgery⁹

The discrimination often faced by LGBTQ+ people in their everyday lives can create huge barriers to accessing domestic abuse support¹⁰ The Government's national survey of LGBTQ+ people found that 40% of respondents had experienced a homophobic, bi phobic or

⁸ [Stonewall.org.uk](https://www.stonewall.org.uk)

⁹ *Free to be Safe LGBTQ+ people experiencing domestic abuse 2018*

¹⁰ *Free to Be Safe: LGBTQ+ people experiencing domestic abuse 2018*



transphobic incident in the previous 12 months, committed by someone they did not live with¹¹.

Someone experiencing domestic abuse in a LGBT relationship may struggle to find the necessary support (Broken Rainbow, the UK organisation that offered support for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse closed in 2106) and they may have to 'out' themselves in order to report the abuse. A perpetrator of domestic abuse may attempt to increase isolation by saying that no-one would believe or help them because the police and support services are all homophobic.

People may feel unable to turn to their church community for support because they don't know what sort of response they will get. Some victims seeking support find rejection and condemnation because of their sexual or gender identity.

Misconceptions, homophobia, and simply the lack of suitable and relevant services, can cause LGBT victims of domestic abuse to feel isolated and unable to do anything but suffer in silence

Men

On average one in six men experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. However, male victims of domestic abuse are only half as likely to report their abuse as female victims¹². Shame and embarrassment are common feelings amongst male victims, and unfortunately, there are far fewer support services for them, particularly regarding emergency accommodation like refuges and shelters.

Men can be abused by women or men. It can become complicated when the man tries to ward off or defend himself against an attack by a female perpetrator and some male victims report facing arrest when the police assumed that the female was the victim.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales records (March 2018) that an estimated 4.2% (695,000) men experienced domestic abuse in the previous year. Each year, an average of 30 men are murdered by their partner or ex-partner¹³.

Older people

Elder abuse can happen in any family, or in institutions. In domestic situations the perpetrator can be the person's main carer, such as a spouse or daughter/son or other relative.

For some the abuse may have started earlier in life and persisted into old age. For others they may have entered into a new relationship later in life, only to find that their new spouse is abusive.

11 Government Equalities Committee (2018) *National LGBT Survey: Research Report*

12 Office for National Statistics

13 Office for National Statistics



There may be a late onset of domestic abuse that begins or is exacerbated at a significant point in life, such as retirement, ill health and frailty, disability or changes in family roles. For people who are limited to their own homes owing to frailty or disability, the abuse may go on for many years without anyone to see what is happening, particularly if the abuser is the victim's key carer.

It may be more difficult for older victims of domestic abuse to seek help, and when they do, the services available are not always suited to their needs. Dementia can cause the victim extreme difficulties in understanding and reporting the abuse, and in being believed if they do report it.



People living with a chronic illness or disability

People who have a disability are twice as likely to be a victim of domestic abuse¹⁴, for instance research suggests that one in two deaf women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives¹⁵.

People with either disabilities or suffering with chronic illnesses are likely to have higher dependency upon family/carers meaning that if they are being abused, they could be less able to report it. This is compounded if the person has difficulty communicating owing to a speech impairment or hearing difficulties.

The perpetrator could be the persons main carer and withhold or threaten to withhold medication as a form of coercion and control. They may also withhold aids such as wheelchair or refuse to assist with essential tasks such as washing or eating. They may also always accompany the victim to medical appointments which would severely limit their opportunity to report abuse.

People who have a learning disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse, are less likely to report it and even when they do are less likely to be believed¹⁶.

Women

Statistics show that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. The Office for National Statistics 2018 record that women are four times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault by a partner (including attempts) in the previous year. The Crime Survey for England and Wales records¹⁷ that an estimated 7.9% (1.3 million) women experienced domestic abuse in the previous year.

Pregnancy is a particularly vulnerable time for women. Department of Health statistics show that 40%-60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused while pregnant¹⁸

Increasingly perpetrators of domestic abuse use technology and social media to control and instil fear in those they victimise. In a Women's Aid survey¹⁹ 85% of respondents reported online abuse perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner as part of a pattern also experience offline.

Domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and leads to, on average, 2 women being murdered each week²⁰

In findings by Women's Aid 46.2% of women in refuges had spent between 2 and 10 years in the abusive relationship, with 17% of women enduring a violent relationship for more than 10 years. Research by the NSPCC suggests that BME communities continue to live in abusive

14 Women's Aid (www.womensaid.org.uk)

15 Dhillon-Keane N 2018

16 Dhillon Keane, N (2018) *Domestic Abuse in Church Communities*

17 March 2018

18 DoH 2005

19 The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The economics of abuse

20 Living without abuse



situations for longer. Women from BME communities potentially face additional barriers to reporting owing to

a fear of discrimination by statutory services or a fear about their children's (mainly daughters) ability or prospect to marry²¹

Young people (aged 16 – 18)

When the government updated their definition of domestic abuse in 2013, they widened it to include young people who are aged 16 and 17 years old. This definition recognises that those in this age group can experience abuse within their relationships.

Teenagers experience high levels of abuse within a relationship, with a 2011/12 government survey finding that the 16-19 age group were more likely to suffer partner abuse than any other age group.

There is often stigma surrounding domestic abuse in teenage relationships, and young people can feel that adults trivialise the abuse experienced. In addition, many domestic abuse support services are not open to young people until they reach 18 years old.

All young people under 18 are children and the definition of emotional abuse in respect of children includes them witnessing Domestic abuse. Therefore, if anyone becomes aware that a young person is living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place, Children's Services/Social Work Scotland should always be notified. This is because of the emotional impact that witnessing domestic abuse has on young people, and the increased risk and impact of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

6. Responding to someone who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse

It takes tremendous courage for someone who is being abused to come forward and disclose

that this is happening. They are most likely to tell someone they trust. Pastoral support can make a huge difference to those who are victims of domestic abuse. It is important, however,

to highlight that it is crucial for victims of domestic abuse to be signposted to relevant agencies

so that they can receive appropriate specialist support from the various organisations who are trained and experienced in these matters.

Below are guidelines for talking to someone who is a victim or survivor of domestic abuse:

²¹ Women's Aid



Listen and believe what they say. Take time to listen and ensure that you talk in a safe place.

It is worth remembering that it is much more likely that a victim will minimise what they are experiencing rather than dramatising it. What they tell you might therefore be the tip of the iceberg. Give them time to talk, but don't push them to talk if they don't want to. Take care not

to trivialise, judge, criticise or dismiss what they tell you. Acknowledge that they're in a difficult and frightening situation.

Take care of your reactions. It can be difficult to hear a victim's account of domestic abuse. Think constantly of what a victim might need and be mindful of your body language as well as what you say.

Reassure and support them. It is important that you tell them that it is not their fault and that nothing justifies the abuse that they have suffered. If they have suffered physical injury offer to go with them to a Hospital or GP. You can also offer to support them in reporting to the Police.

Make sure they are safe. If possible, have a prepared plan of action in place within the church, to protect anyone disclosing abuse and to prevent church workers or yourself being put at risk. If you are concerned about someone's immediate safety, contact the police.

Do not investigate. It is not your job to go and speak to the perpetrator about the abuse, even if you know them. By doing so you place the victim, any children involved, and possibly yourself, in danger.

Gently question/Explore. Do not ask direct questions such as "Does your partner beat you?" or "Are you a victim of domestic abuse?" Instead, ask gentle questions such as "How are things at home?" or "What's troubling you?"

Keeping confidentiality. What has been disclosed to you should not become common knowledge within the church community, not even for prayer purposes, unless the victim chooses to share that information themselves. Any records or notes of what has been said should also be kept confidential. However, complete confidentiality cannot be promised, as it may be necessary to contact the safeguarding designated persons of the Church, the police or other statutory authorities, especially if there are children involved.

Record and report appropriately.

Fill in the incident report (*Appendix A5*) and pass it to relevant people with victim's consent. A record can be the first step to enable people affected by domestic abuse to seek appropriate support and access other services.

Talk to an expert. The church can, and should, work in partnership with other agencies and professionals as appropriate, to provide the best possible support for the individual or family. External support should always be sought in situations beyond your experience and expertise.

Empower them to make their own decisions. As far as possible it is vitally important to ensure that a victim/survivor makes the decisions and that you support and respect their choices. In situations where the victim decides to return to the perpetrator and children could be placed at risk it will be necessary to involve Children's Services. If this is necessary you should explain your intention to contact the statutory services and make every attempt to involve the victim in the decision-making process, unless that would mean placing the children at increased risk.

Do not:

- Suggest or offer couples counselling to those where their partner is the alleged abuser. This is not a helpful or appropriate response to domestic abuse and creates more fear and strain for the person being abused, whilst offering the abuser another opportunity to exercise control.

Church response to the perpetrator

Perpetrators of abuse need support and pastoral care. However, caution should be exercised as many perpetrators are highly skilled at manipulating people into colluding with abuse. If a perpetrator asks for help to change their abusive behaviour the most appropriate course of

action is to recommend a perpetrator programme. As detailed above it would be completely inappropriate for anyone from the church to engage in couples counselling or reconciliation/ mediation. The first priority must be for the perpetrator to address their violent behaviour and the church can help find an appropriate treatment program. Do not agree to advocate for the perpetrator or to provide a character witness for them as this could be misinterpreted as the Church condoning domestic abuse.

Sometimes a perpetrator may claim a conversion experience and use this as justification as to why they do not need treatment. It would be dangerous to accept this, on its own, even if the person appears repentant. A person who is genuinely repentant will understand and accept that they need help to address their problems. Anyone who has been supporting a victim should never meet a perpetrator on their own or confront them with anything the victim has told them. Not only is this a breach of confidentiality but it may also place the victim, and yourselves, at risk.

It is important to liaise with the statutory authorities where an individual is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) involvement.

It may be necessary to discuss boundaries or restrictions you would need to place on their attendance at Church, such as safeguarding contracts. If an individual is convicted of committing crimes associated with domestic abuse, a contract is required with the support of the synod safeguarding officer. A safeguarding contract is advised to protect the alleged perpetrator, victims and the local congregation. The process of writing a contract is the same as described in Good Practice 5's *Section 13 – Managing and supporting those who pose a risk of harm to children*.

See also **Appendix Z: Guide to managing risk and offenders** for further details.



What should churches do?

There are a number of ways in which your church can act as a place of compassion and caring for those who have experienced ,or are currently experiencing, domestic abuse:

Believe it. For many people in church domestic abuse is a taboo subject, with many believing that it does not happen.

Preaching/teaching. Speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching, study groups and prayers within the context of regular worship. Make it clear that domestic abuse is wrong and against Christian teaching. Pray for victims and perpetrators of abuse and for the work of specialised agencies that can help both victims and perpetrators. It is common for the Christian faith to put emphasis on the family structure and a positive family image, which may not be helpful for those from an abusive family setting.

Have information available in your church building. Have brochures and posters in places where a victim can take the information without fear of discovery. Telephone numbers of local and national domestic abuse helplines should also be included. Some of this information could be placed in a private location such as the toilets (male and female) to avoid scrutiny by others. Churches can develop good relationships with other statutory and voluntary agencies working in this area to draw on their expertise and refer victims to them.

Have a safe space to talk if possible. Ensure that there is space within the church building for people to talk in confidence and that conversations that warrant privacy are not held over coffee where sensitive information may be overheard.

Youth groups. By allowing young people to discuss and work through how they think and feel about their relationships, you are demonstrating that your church is a place of safety and somewhere where it is possible to be honest about abuse. If you can tackle these important issues within the safety of a youth group, youth fellowship or similar, you are creating a space for young people to talk about what might be happening in their families. It will be useful to be mindful of the fact that the definition of domestic abuse was widened to include the age range 16 to 18. Being mindful will ensure that you do not miss possible signs of domestic abuse between this age range.

Training. It is recommended that particularly relevant people in the church, e.g. ministers, elders, pastoral leaders, church safeguarding coordinators and synod safeguarding officers receive training about domestic abuse, either as part of their ongoing safeguarding training or as a stand-alone session. This training will help individuals within the church to reflect on the damage caused by domestic abuse, and how best to support victims and perpetrators. It is also important to make such training available to anyone who wishes to attend, confirming that it is everyone's responsibility to respond well to domestic abuse. Your Safeguarding Officer can either provide training or arrange suitable training.

Educate the church using local expertise. You may want to invite someone from the local police or a local support agency to talk about their work and to find out more about domestic abuse. Holding a well-publicised event and opening it up to other local churches



and the local community, highlights your desire to stop domestic abuse being a taboo subject. Refuges and domestic abuse charities are always in need of extra resources. You could hold a fundraising event for them or agree to regularly offer financial support.

Marriage Preparation. It is a sad fact that getting married is known to be one of the triggers that can lead to the start or escalation of domestic abuse. Marriage preparation is therefore an ideal time to talk with couples about to be married about issues surrounding domestic abuse, such as equality, conflict, communication, control and violence. It will be very important to explain a biblical view of marriage, and to be clear that violence and abuse play no part in the marriage relationship. Those who lead marriage preparation should have received training on the issues of domestic abuse beforehand.

Personal Reflection. It is important for all to reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes as these can impact how we respond to a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Consider whether your views need challenging and find either books or someone you trust, such as a Spiritual Director, to explore your views. There are many helpful resources online also.

The Domestic Violence disclosure scheme

This is sometimes known as Clare's Law. Under this scheme you can ask the police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. This is called 'right to ask'. If records show that you may be at risk of domestic abuse from a partner, the police will consider disclosing the information. A disclosure can be made if it is legal, proportionate and necessary to do so.

The 'right to ask' also enables a third party, such as a friend or family member, to apply for a disclosure on behalf of someone they know. Again, the police can release information if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

In order to make an application under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme you can contact the police by either visiting a police station, phoning 101 or speaking to a member of the police on the street.

Domestic abuse and The Bible

The Bible has often been misused in domestic abuse situations by the very people whose role

and duty it is to help. Victims have been told when disclosing, for instance, to:

- pray harder
- submit to your husband (this is used in the context of heterosexual relationships)
- try to get your partner to church
- lift up the abuse to the Lord

These responses could be unsafe and unhelpful and, in the case of submitting to your husband, can be seen as encouragement to stay in an abusive relationship. It is very clear within the Christian tradition that God does not expect anyone to submit to abuse at the



hands of
another person.

The church often has much to say about violent crimes in society, but some have regarded abuse in the home as a 'private matter'. We need to acknowledge that biblically this is not acceptable and take an active role in challenging domestic abuse as not being consistent with a Christian life.



Contacts for help with domestic abuse

Below there is a list of services and organisations that can support people who are victims of domestic abuse. It is not exhaustive.

Action on Elder Abuse

A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support

Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)

A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.

Website: www.avaproject.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse

A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.

Website: www.caada.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 317 8750

ChildLine

for children wanting to talk to someone.

Telephone: 0800 1111

Forced Marriage Unit

The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage.

Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Telephone: 020 7008 0151



Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.

Website: www.ikwro.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Website: www.lawrs.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

ManKind

Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).

Website: <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line

Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.

Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone: 0808 2000 247

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC

The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child / children)

Police

Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.

Telephone: 999 – in an emergency

Telephone: 101 – in a non-emergency

Refuge

Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7395 7700

24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247



Respect

Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Website: www.respect.uk.net

They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.

Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored

Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

Website: www.restoredrelationships.org

Helpline: 020 8943 7706

Southall Black Sisters

For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women

Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Help Line: 0208 571 0800 (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)

Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

Website: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

The Hideout

Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.

Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Telephone: 116 123

Women's Aid

A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk



Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Singhealth

A charity that supports deaf people's wellbeing with services focused on domestic abuse

Crisis Text Service: Text DEAF to 85258

Website: <https://signhealth.org.uk/>



Appendix 6



Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form

Where a person is in imminent danger of harm or a criminal act may have been committed, the police must be notified immediately on 999. Otherwise, call 101 to report a crime or any other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

- Please fill in this form with the information available within 24 hours after becoming aware of a safeguarding incident or concern. You do not have to fill in all sections.
- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible, and do not interpret what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.
- The completed form must be passed on or sent by secure email to the designated safeguarding person, and immediately followed up after sending.

Date on which this form is completed				
Full name of the person reporting the concern/incident				
Relationship to child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk				
Church details, if known	Synod	Church	Number	
Contact details of church or organization, if known	Address	Phone numbers	Email	
Full name of child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk				
Date of Birth, if known				
Contact details, if known	Address	Phone numbers	Email	
Has the individual given consent to report? (or report as appropriate)	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:
If under 18, have the parents/carers /guardians of the child been informed?	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:

<p>Please give a summary of the safeguarding incident/concern</p>	
<p>Date/time of incident</p>	
<p>What happened? Please provide detailed information about the circumstances and the person experiencing or being at risk of harm, abuse or neglect (preferably as a timeline)</p>	
<p>When did it happen? (date, time)</p>	
<p>Where did it happen? (specific location)</p>	
<p>What action/s were taken, and by whom?</p>	
<p>Name of anyone involved and in what way, including witnesses</p>	
<p>Other services or agencies involved <u>Note:</u> If referred to statutory authorities, or other services, please include name and contact details</p>	
<p>Next steps or recommendations</p>	
<p>INTERNAL USE</p>	
<p>Date received</p>	
<p>Full name of Designated Person</p>	
<p>Progress</p>	
<p>Conclusion</p>	



Appendix 7



Useful Contacts for All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults

Some suggested organisations and services who can provide information, advice and support:

Police

www.police.uk

Tel: 999 in an emergency

Tel: 101 – provides a service for non-emergency issues and will connect you to your local Police service, wherever you call from in the UK.

Local Authority

Every Local Authority provides services to the community, including statutory services such as Children's Services, Adult Care Services, housing and environment. Your local council will have a website with contact details for your local services.

www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

NHS

The National Health Service can provide advice, guidance, support and signposting to local services for all health issues.

www.nhs.uk/service-search

Citizens Advice

Providing free general advice and guidance around a range of concerns such as benefits, debt, relationships, housing, law, discrimination, tax, money, healthcare and education.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

DBS/PVG checking

DDC (Due Diligence Checking Ltd)

DDC is the registered body that will be processing all DBS/PVG applications for the URC.

<https://www.ddc.uk.net/urc>

Tel: 0845 644 3298 or 0116 260 3055

Samaritans

A crisis helpline, providing a listening service for any worries or concerns.

www.samaritans.org

Tel: 116 123



Thirtyone:eight

An independent Christian charity providing help to individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Previously known as CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service).

www.thirtyoneeight.org

Tel: 0303 003 1111

Victim Support

Independent charity supporting victims of crime.

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Tel: 0808 168 9111

Children

Action for Children

Action for Children (formerly NCH – National Children’s Homes) is a leading children’s charity running over 500 projects and working with children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse.

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

AFRUCA: Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Afruca is an organisation that seeks to address through prevention and early intervention the welfare of African children in the UK. Areas it gives information on include female genital mutilation, witchcraft and trafficking.

www.afruca.org

Barnardo’s

Protecting, supporting and nurturing the UK's most vulnerable children, including campaigning to end child sexual exploitation. Provides leaflets in both English and Welsh for parents, children, young people and professionals, showing how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to keep safe. www.barnardos.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)



CEOP is a command of the National Crime Agency, which helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It offers guidance, advice and accepts direct reporting.

www.ceop.police.uk

Childline

A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to 19 years of age.

www.childline.org.uk

Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

Educate Against Hate

A website giving practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

www.educateagainsthate.com

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)

Resourcing parents, volunteers and workers providing a range of services including 'Positive Boundaries' which focusses on sexual bullying, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and developing positive gender relationships.

www.familylives.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 2222

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. Working with families that have been affected by sexual abuse and includes adult male and female sexual abusers, young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours, victims of abuse and other family members.

www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

NSPCC

Providing support and advice for keeping children safe from harm and abuse. The website has many useful resources, including research studies and fact sheets.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Parents Protect

Helping parents and carers to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.



www.parentsprotect.co.uk

Tel: 0808 1000 900

Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! is the Lucy Faithfull child sexual abuse prevention campaign and confidential helpline for any adult concerned about sexual abuse. Providing help, advice and support for people who are displaying or considering sexually harmful behaviour or for those concerned about another's behaviour, either a child or adult.

www.stopitnow.org.uk

Tel: 0808 1000 900

Young Minds

A UK charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Tel: 0808 802 5544

Adults

Action on Elder Abuse

A charity which campaigns against the abuse of older people. Their website includes information and research.

www.elderabuse.org.uk

Tel: 0808 8088 141

Age UK

Support and advice services for the elderly. The website has many useful resources including research studies and fact sheets as well as information on protecting yourself or others from abuse.

www.ageuk.org.uk

Tel: 0800169 6565

Mencap

Supporting and resourcing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The website has specific advice on safeguarding.



www.mencap.org.uk

MOSAC

Supporting non-abusing parents of sexually abused children.

Website: www.mosac.org.uk

Tel: 0800 980 1958

Domestic Abuse

Action on Elder Abuse

A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Asian Women's support

Website: www.kiranproject.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8558 1986

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse)

A national organisation for professionals – frontline workers, policy officers, those with strategic responsibilities providing training and consultancy on teenage relationship abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women and girls.

Website: www.avaproject.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 5490 280

Bullying UK

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

Website: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

CAADA – Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse

A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims.

Website: www.caada.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 317 8750



ChildLine

for children wanting to talk to someone.
Telephone: 0800 1111

Forced Marriage Unit

The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage.

Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Telephone: 020 7008 0151

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

IKWRO's mission is to protect Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and domestic violence and to promote their rights.

Website: www.ikwro.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 920 6460

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Website: www.lawrs.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7336 0888 (closed Wed)

ManKind

Support for men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).

Website: <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01823 334244

Men's Advice Line

Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.

Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 801 0327

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone: 0808 2000 247



National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

NSPCC

The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (for adults with a concern about a child / children)

Police

Most local neighbourhood policing teams have a specialist domestic violence unit or coordinators.

Telephone: 999 – in an emergency

Telephone: 101 – in a non-emergency

Refuge

Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.

Website: www.refuge.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7395 7700

24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

Respect

Respect is a UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Website: www.respect.uk.net

They also offer a helpline phone and website service for domestic violence perpetrators.

Website: www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Restored

Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

Website: www.restoredrelationships.org

Helpline: 020 8943 7706



Southall Black Sisters

For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women

Website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Help Line: 0208 571 0800 (Mon, Wed, Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm)

Advice line: 0208 571 9595 (Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm)

Stonewall

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

Website: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

The Hideout

Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to

find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.

Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

The Mix

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

The Samaritans (24/7 service)

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Telephone: 116 123

This Is Abuse

A Home Office teen relationship abuse website, which educates, resources and supports young

people, and those working with them, who are in abusive relationships.

Website: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Women's Aid

A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

Address: PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk



Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Survivors

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

Support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

www.napac.org.uk

Tel: 0808 801 0331

MACSAS (Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)

Supporting women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

www.macsas.org.uk

Tel: 08088 01 03 40

One in Four

Specialises in supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse, particularly survivors of child sexual abuse and trauma.

www.oneinfour.org.uk

Rape Crisis England & Wales

An organisation supporting the work of Rape Crisis Centres across England and Wales, and raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse in all its forms.

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

The Survivors Trust

A national umbrella organisation for specialist rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse support organisations throughout the UK and Ireland.

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Tel: 0808 801 0818

SurvivorsUK



Helping men who have been sexually abused and raises awareness of their needs.

NOTE: Sexual violation includes both childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault/rape.

www.survivorsuk.org

Tel: 0203 598 3898

Survivors Scotland

Scottish government website providing a directory of support for survivors of childhood abuse

in Scotland.

www.survivorscotland.org.uk