



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Contents

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Plume Avenue United Reformed Church	1
1. Aim and purpose of this policy.....	2
2. Creating a safer culture.....	2
3. Ensuring safer activities.....	3
4. Recognising and responding to concerns.....	3
5. Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others.....	3
6. Supporting victims and survivors.....	4
7. Key contacts.....	4
8. Review.....	5
9. Details of other organisations and support services.....	5
Appendix 1	11
Safeguarding Policy Statement.....	11
Appendix 2	14
The role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC).....	14
Appendix 3	17
Code of Conduct for working with children or young people.....	17
Appendix 4.....	20
Code of conduct for working with adults	20
Appendix 5.....	23
Signs and symptoms of abuse	23
Other types and examples of abuse	24
Appendix 6	25
Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders	25
Appendix 7	28
Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form.....	28



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.



1. 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.

This policy is based on the Policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk – Good Practice 6

<https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>

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, e.g. consultants or contractors)
- volunteers

Principles underpinning the policy

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put the welfare of children and adults at risk first
- A willingness to be open and listen
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

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 children or adults. 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.

Sections 2-6 below follow the structure of Good Practice 6 and each section lists the 'key responsibilities' for local churches outlined in the corresponding chapter of GP6.

2. Creating a safer culture

We are committed to creating a safer culture in our church which will help us to prevent harm



from occurring and provide an environment in which all can flourish.

In line with Chapter two of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles
- Ensure all those working with children and/or adults at risk are given copies of relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in respect of data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings.

3. Ensuring safer activities

Whilst it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, we are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible for activities both on and off church premises.

In line with Chapter three of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for buildings and activities
- Consider the implications of data protection and health and safety requirements for specific activities
- Carry out risk assessments for relevant activities or events
- Ensure adequate staffing for activities and that leaders have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and agree to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- Ensure the hirer's agreement is in place for other organisations using church premises
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer for complex or sensitive risks.

4. Recognising and responding to concerns

We acknowledge that, although promoting Safer Culture and Safer Activities will help to protect all those in contact with the church, some concerns will inevitably arise and we are committed to responding well in such circumstances.

In line with Chapter four of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Promote awareness of different kinds of abuse, other vulnerabilities and types of safeguarding concern
- Seek to create a 'listening culture' and help people develop listening skills to respond appropriately in situations where sensitive information is disclosed
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer as a minimum of any situations where involvement from statutory services is/may be required
- Share information with statutory services as appropriate and co-operate with them during any investigations
- Report any serious safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission and notify the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

5. Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others

Where allegations are made against individuals within the Church, we are committed to following all required investigative and regulatory procedures. We will work in collaboration with the Synod, wider Church staff, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations.



In line with Chapter five of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Co-operate fully with any investigative or disciplinary procedures
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer immediately on becoming aware of anyone in the church who may present a risk to others
- Work with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and contribute relevant information for risk assessments
- Alert the Synod Safeguarding Officer or statutory agencies to known breaches of a safeguarding agreement.

6. Supporting victims and survivors

The key principle underpinning our policy and practice in this area is that all those who have experienced abuse, whether recently or in the past 'will be listened to and offered the pastoral care and support they deem appropriate and relevant, irrespective of type of abuse, context, or when this occurred' (General Assembly policy statement 2021).

In line with Chapter six of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Recognise that the Elders' meeting has responsibility for provision of pastoral care
- Be aware of local support services that people can be referred or directed to
- Ensure those in relevant roles attend appropriate training
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer about provision of appropriate support when necessary.

7. Key contacts

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name and contact details:

Dave Anderson

Telephone No: **01206 572290; 07775 820651**

Email: **andersonco3@ntlworld.com**

Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name and contact details:

Marianne Rattray

Telephone No: **07971 070440**

Email: **marianne@plumeavenuechurch.org.uk**

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Name and contact details:

Candice Hart

Telephone: **07849 276750**

Email: **safeguarding@urceastern.org.uk**

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

Telephone No: **020 7520 2729**

Email: **safeguarding@urc.org.uk**

Local Authority Designated Officer/Designated Officer/Designated Officer for safeguarding



Contact details:

Essex Social Care

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

Email: **initialresponseteam@essex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Local statutory services: Children

Contact details, including an out of hours number:

As above.

Local statutory services: Adults

Contact details, including an out of hours number:

As above.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, updated as required and adopted by the church meeting.

Date of most recent review: September 2025

Date of next review: no later than September 2026

Signed by: Elizabeth Bird

(On behalf of the church Elders)

9. Details of other organisations and support services

Public sector services

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

Police

www.police.uk

Telephone: 999 in an emergency. Telephone: 101 – provides a service for non-emergency issues and will connect you to your local Police service, wherever you call from in the UK. **General support, advice and helplines**

Association of Christians in Counselling

Provides a facility to search for Christian counsellors: www.acc-uk.org

**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

Premier Lifeline

A confidential telephone helpline offering a listening ear, emotional and spiritual support from a Christian perspective, prayer and signposting: www.premierlifeline.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 0101 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday

Samaritans

A crisis helpline, providing a listening service for any worries or concerns: www.samaritans.org
Telephone: 116 123

Victim Support

Independent charity supporting victims of crime: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Children**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 law enforcement agency which helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. They provide advice and accept direct reporting from young people, parents/carers or other concerned adults about online abuse: www.ceop.police.uk

Childline

A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to age 19: www.childline.org.uk
Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse including: young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours, adult male and female sexual abusers, and other family members: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

NSPCC

Providing support and advice for keeping children safe from harm and abuse: www.nspcc.org.uk
Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Parents Protect

Helping parents and carers to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
Telephone: 0808 1000 900

UK Safer Internet Centre Helping children and young people stay safe online:
www.saferinternet.org.uk

**We Stand**

Provides a range of support services and information for families affected by child sexual abuse: www.westand.org.uk

Helpline: 0800 980 1958

Older people**Age UK**

Support and advice services for older people: www.ageuk.org.uk

Advice Line: 0800 678 1602

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk Telephone: 0333 150 3456

Anna's Chaplaincy

Offering spiritual care in later life: www.annachaplaincy.org.uk

Telephone: 01865 319 700

Faith in Later Life

Providing resources to help churches support older people, including guidance on developing a dementia friendly church: www.faithinlaterlife.org/fill-resource/developing-dementia-friendly-churches-livability/

Hourglass (previously Action on Elder Abuse)

Provides information and support to an older person or anyone concerned about an older person who is at risk of, experiencing or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect:

www.wearehourglass.org

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Linking Lives

Helping churches run befriending schemes and reduce loneliness amongst older people:

www.linkinglives.uk

People with additional needs**Additional Needs Alliance**

Help churches support and spiritually grow children, young people and young adults with additional needs or disabilities: www.additionalneedsalliance.org.uk

Mencap

Supporting and resourcing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The website has specific advice on safeguarding: www.mencap.org.uk

Respond

A national charity providing therapy and specialist support services to people with learning disabilities, autism or both who have experienced abuse, violence or trauma:

www.respond.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7383 0700

Mental health**Hub of hope**

UK-wide mental health service database which lets you search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support: www.hubofhope.co.uk

**Kintsugi Hope**

Working in communities through the local church to provide safe and supportive spaces for people who feel or have felt overwhelmed: www.kintsugihope.com

Mind

Providing a range of advice and services on mental health: www.mind.org.uk

Renew Wellbeing

Helps churches open spaces of welcome and inclusion in partnership with mental health teams to improve mental and emotional wellbeing: www.renewwellbeing.org.uk

Rethink

Providing services and advice to those severely affected by mental illness: www.rethink.org

Shout

A free, confidential, anonymous text support service: www.giveusashout.org
Text: 85258

Domestic abuse**Forced Marriage Unit**

The unit works both inside and outside the UK. It provides help and support to victims of forced marriage/those at risk of a forced marriage: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage
Telephone: 020 7008 0151

ManKind

Helping men escape domestic abuse: www.mankind.org.uk
Telephone: 01823 334 244

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (for women)

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 2000 247 (lines free and open 24 hours).

Also options for live chat and British Sign Language interpreter service.

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

Refuge

Provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.
www.refuge.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7395 7700

Respect: Men's Advice Line

A helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse:
www.mensadviceline.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 801 0327

Restored

A Christian charity working to raise awareness of domestic abuse, support survivors, and equip the church to do the same. They also provide a Survivor's Handbook: www.restored-uk.org
Helpline: 020 8943 7706



Safe in Faith

Providing survivors of domestic abuse, who are part of a faith community, with safe, faith-based support and counselling that is tailored to their needs as believers:
www.safeinfaith.org.uk/about

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:
www.womensaid.org.uk

Survivors

Galop

Provides support for LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence:
www.galop.org.uk

MACSAS (Ministry and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)

A support group for women and men from Christian backgrounds who have been sexually abused by Ministers or Clergy, as children or as adults. They support both survivors who have remained within their Christian communities and those who have left: www.macsas.org.uk

NAPAC (The National Association for People Abused in Childhood)

Provides support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse: www.napac.org.uk
Free confidential support line: 0808 801 0331

One in Four

Specialising in supporting childhood survivors and current survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, abuse and trauma: www.oneinfour.org.uk

Rape Crisis England and 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
Telephone: 0808 500 2222

SurvivorsUK

Helping men who have been sexually abused and raises awareness of their needs. Sexual violation includes both childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault/rape:
www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/
Telephone: 0808 800 5005

The Survivors Trust

An umbrella agency for over 135 specialist voluntary sector agencies providing a range of counselling, therapeutic and support services working with women, men and children who are victims/survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse:
www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Thirtyone:Eight Listening Service

Telephone service which offers the chance for adults with lived experience of abuse to talk about their experiences in detail and in confidence with a sensitive listener:
www.thirtyoneeight.org/safeguarding-services/consultancy/listening-service



Modern slavery

Clewer Initiative

Seeks to raise awareness of all aspects of modern slavery and help support victims and vulnerable groups by mobilising local churches and communities: www.theclewerinitiative.org

Hope for Justice

Fighting human trafficking and helping victims and survivors all around the world: www.hopeforjustice.org/church-partners

UK Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline

www.unseenuk.org

Telephone: 0800 0121 700

Services for those considering or displaying harmful behaviour

Respect Phonenumber

A confidential helpline, email and webchat service for domestic abuse perpetrators:

www.respectphonenumber.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Stop it Now!

Confidential helpline for people who are struggling with sexual thoughts and behaviours towards children, or are concerned about someone else's behaviour: www.stopitnow.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 1000 900



Appendix 1

Safeguarding Policy Statement



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 6 – 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 2

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



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 guidance 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 ensure that Elders and others in the church understand church safeguarding policies and procedures, including URC guidance and Charity Commission responsibilities
- To collaborate with the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when there is one), the minister, and the Synod Safeguarding Officer on all matters around safeguarding
- To act as the DBS / Disclosure Scotland verifier and / or liaise closely with other designated verifiers in the church
- 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 DBS / Disclosure Scotland checks.
- To follow the measures set out in the Hirer's agreement 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 the Police or statutory services 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 may pose a risk to children and adults at risk at church
- To cooperate with statutory services and 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, 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 abuse
- To promote positive safeguarding 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 seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role (eg, from the SSO)
- To make arrangements for the Deputy CSC (or other suitable person if there is no deputy) 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 and keep updated on matters related to safeguarding
- Be willing to be easily contactable – and prepared to make contact details public to enable direct contact when needed.

Appendix 3

Code of Conduct for working with children or young people



Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

All those working with children in the church (in either paid or voluntary roles) should agree to the following code of conduct. The word 'child' refers to all those under the age of 18.

Training, policies and procedures

- Attend all necessary training which helps to support you in your role
- Have a good awareness of, and comply with, URC policies, procedures and guidance
- Refresh all necessary safeguarding training at least every three years
- Be aware of different types of abuse and the key signs and symptoms of abuse.

Safer ways of working

- Do not spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Be aware that it is illegal for an adult in a position of trust to engage in any sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year-old
- Use of physical contact/touch should be: only 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 and inclusive working

- Respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture
- Make all reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities and additional needs.

Managing behaviour

- Encourage everyone to follow any ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Don't show favouritism or encourage excessive attention from a particular child
- Refer to a more experienced or senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning.

Photos and videos

- All images should be appropriate and, beyond first names, not reveal any personal information about children if uploaded to the Internet. Images should only be uploaded with permission from the parent/carer, as well as the child (for those old enough/able to give their consent)
- Avoid taking images on personal devices. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, it should be agreed in advance or reported promptly to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator. Images of children should be stored securely on the church computer, never on personal devices, including memory sticks.

Reporting concerns

- Know who the Church Safeguarding Coordinator (CSC) is and how to contact them
- Tell the CSC if you have any concerns about a child's welfare
- Do not promise to keep anything a secret; if a child is being harmed, or is at risk of harm, you will need to share that information but only on a need-to-know basis.

Working with children online

- Make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies.

Approval/consent

- Ensure that all types of online communication and activity you engage with have been formally approved by your line manager/team leader/Eldership
- 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



- Ensure that you have parental consent for every type of online communication and activity you engage with – if need be, issue multiple consent forms (as for other activities and events). If signed consent forms are difficult to obtain, confirm emailed consent by phone/video call and keep a register of consent given (when, by whom, for what).

How to engage online

- Ensure that any communication online is done through a work or church account and do not engage with children or young people through your personal social media or mobile account – this may require setting up an extra account for that purpose
- Ensure, where possible, parents or guardians are present in the building or other workers are aware when children 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
- Where possible, ensure that another adult is present in the room with you if communicating 1:1 via social media with a child or young person, or ensure that a second leader is present online and communicate in a group chat environment
- Do not use private messaging
- Tell the CSC of any attempt by children or young people to contact you through your personal accounts and profiles, and block any further contact.

Use of content generated online

- Ensure any images or videos from online engagement are stored in the safe place designated by the church and not on your personal accounts or equipment
- Ensure you have clear parental and participant consent (for older children) before sharing any content from online engagement more widely, and only use it in the ways agreed, in line with URC good practice guidelines.

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

Code of conduct for working with adults



Code of conduct for working with adults

This code describes the standards of conduct expected of all those working with adults, including adults at risk (p3 provides definitions of 'adults at risk'). It sets out general principles for good practice but cannot cover every type of activity or situation. Further details on specific issues can be found in Good Practice 6 and the accompanying resources.

Training, policies and procedures

- Attend all necessary training which helps to support you in your role
- Have a good awareness of, and comply with, URC policies, procedures and guidance
- Refresh all necessary safeguarding training at least every three years
- Be aware of different types of abuse and the key signs and symptoms of abuse
- Be familiar with your church safeguarding policy and know who to raise concerns with.

Promote the privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing of people

- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect and compassion
- Ensure that an adult at risk is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than other people would be treated in a comparable situation
- Put people's needs, views and wishes first and ensure they participate as fully as possible in decisions being made, helping them control and choose the help they receive
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts
- For home visits, follow the guidance in Good Practice 6.

Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion

- Treat all adults equally and inclusively and do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, religion/belief, cultural background, sexual orientation or disability.

Effective communication

- Make efforts to assist and facilitate communication, using whatever method is appropriate to the needs of the individual
- Always explain and discuss any help and support you are offering with the person
- Communicate respectfully with people in an open, accurate, effective and straightforward way
- Maintain clear and accurate records of any help and support the church provides.

Respect people's right to confidentiality

- Treat all information about people you are working with, and their family or carers where applicable, as confidential
- Only discuss or disclose information in accordance with legislation and URC policy, and seek advice from your Church Safeguarding Officer about information sharing.

Online engagement

- Ensure you are familiar with your church online safety policy
- Apply the principles of respect, inclusion, clear communication and confidentiality to online work as you would with in-person interaction
- When engaging online with adults at risk, additional care should be taken, for example:
 - Ensure another adult is present, either with you or the other person
 - Use a work or church account rather than a personal one.

**Physical contact/touch**

- Physical contact should be appropriate to the situation and the age, gender, culture of the other person
- Physical contact should be in response to the needs of the other person, not the wishes of the worker.

Financial matters

- Do not accept offers of loans, gifts or benefits from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them (unless to do so would cause serious offence, in which case it should be declared to someone at church, eg treasurer or elder)
- Report any concerns about adults who might be subject to financial abuse to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator.

Challenging inappropriate behaviour

- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour
- Tell your leader/supervisor or person in charge of safeguarding if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.

Feedback and complaints

- Share any feedback received with your leader/supervisor/colleagues to promote learning and continued development of good practice
- Refer any complaints to your leaders/supervisor/elders as appropriate.

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 5

Signs and symptoms of abuse

Signs and symptoms of abuse

Signs and symptoms of abuse can be broadly grouped into three areas:

- physical indicators
- behavioural indicators
- emotional indicators.

Some indicators may be common to different types of abuse, others may be more specifically linked to one particular kind 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.

As in Section 4.2 of Good Practice 6, abuse defined in statutory guidance or procedures is covered first here, followed by additional detail on some other safeguarding concerns which combine these different types of abuse.

Definitions used in statutory guidance or procedures

- **England: Children**
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Neglect.
- **England: Adults**
 - Physical
 - Sexual abuse
 - Psychological abuse
 - Neglect and acts of omission
 - Financial or material abuse
 - Domestic abuse
 - Organisational abuse
 - Self-neglect
 - Modern slavery
 - Discriminatory abuse.

Other types and examples of abuse

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Child-on-child abuse
- Domestic abuse experienced by children
- Child abuse linked to faith or belief
- Radicalisation
- Spiritual abuse
- Mate crime.

More details of Signs and symptoms of abuse can be found at:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/S5.pdf>

Appendix 6

Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders



Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders

Introduction

The DBS Code of Practice, published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, makes it a requirement that DBS applicants who have a criminal record are treated fairly and are not discriminated against because of a conviction or other information revealed in a DBS check. The Code also obliges bodies that undertake checks to have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders; a copy of which can be given to DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. The sample policy statement below can be used or adapted for this purpose.

Policy statement

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice when assessing an applicant's suitability for positions within the church which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and to not discriminate against any subject of a criminal record check based on convictions or other information revealed.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will only request that an individual disclose details of convictions or cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where the position advertised is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order, a DBS certificate at either a basic, standard or enhanced level can legally be requested. Where a position falls within the legal definition of Regulated Activity, a check against the Barred Lists for Children and/or Adults will also be undertaken.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will only ask potential candidates about convictions and cautions that are not protected in law. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records and regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will only make an application for a criminal record check through the DBS service where the law indicates that this is proportionate and necessary to the position advertised, such as those roles which involve working with children and adults at risk in a regulated or unregulated activity. Where this is the case, application forms, job adverts and recruitment information will contain explicit reference to the fact that this position requires a criminal record check in the event that the applicant is offered the position.

At interview or during an appropriate discussion, Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will ensure that an open conversation takes place with the applicant regarding any offences or other information that may be relevant to the position. Failure of the applicant to share any information that is relevant to the position sought may result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary position.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church ensures that all those who are involved with the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will also ensure that they have received appropriate training and guidance in the relevant legislation and understand the importance of confidentiality throughout the recruitment process.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church will discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before a decision is made whether to continue with the offer of employment. A risk assessment will be conducted with the applicant and only in cases where the



disclosure impacts upon the applicant's ability to safely hold the offer of employment will it be withdrawn. This is provided that the information revealed has been brought to Plume Avenue United Reformed Church's attention prior to disclosure being received.

Plume Avenue United Reformed Church makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and makes a copy available on request.

Appendix 7 Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form

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: