



A Safe Place

**SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Statement on Vulnerable Adults and the Church

Church Details: Hope Church in association with



The policy was written for Hope Church, following the guidance provided by 'thirtyone:eight', a charity that promotes best practice in safeguarding children and adults in churches (formerly CCPAS).

- As leaders of this church, we commit ourselves to the valuing, nurturing, protection and safe keeping of all, especially our vulnerable adults and will ensure that the church is kept aware of this policy.
- It is the responsibility of each member of the church to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of vulnerable adults, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- We recognize our work with vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church.
- The leadership is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with vulnerable adults, and to providing supervision.
- Workers with vulnerable adults must undergo the selection process and know the recommendations and the Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and undertake to observe them. If required by guidance set out by 'thirtyone:eight', they must have a clean DBS.
- As part of our commitment to vulnerable adults, the leaders have appointed a vulnerable adults and children's advocate. The major duties of the advocate are to input on policy matters, check that records are correctly kept and respond to requests from leaders for help on particular issues. This role will be explained, as appropriate, to vulnerable adult workers and the advocate's name, and telephone number publicised. The vulnerable adult and children's advocate will meet the leader responsible for child protection yearly to review policy and records.
- The leadership will ensure that clear boundaries are set for any church attendees who are known to be a risk to adults.
- A vulnerable adult is anyone over the age of 18, who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be due to one or more characteristics, including disability, mental health, drug or alcohol dependency, language barriers, being a victim of abuse, or other factors.

Guidelines for appropriate behaviour

- 1 Expectations of behaviour are clear. Establish ground rules regarding swearing, racism, name calling, respect for property etc.
- 2 Be consistent and persistent.
- 3 Never use physical punishment or humiliation.

- 4 Discuss inappropriate behaviour out of love, never anger; make sure the adult knows what action will be taken if they do not keep to expectations.

Good Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

These guidelines are for the protection of both the vulnerable adult and the workers in the church. The measures given below will help protect team members from false accusation. Unfortunately, touch can sometimes be misunderstood; words or actions can occasionally be taken out of context. It is, therefore, important to be aware of how misunderstandings can occur.

1 The leadership should ensure that:

- Regular workers have undergone the selection process, received guidance in respect of these procedures and completed a vulnerable adult protection training course.
- Anyone 18 years old or over without a clean Hope Church Luton DBS under 3 years old:
 1. is not left unsupervised with vulnerable adults.
 2. must have a clean Hope Church DBS within 3 months of first serving with vulnerable adults, or stop serving with them.
- A worker should not be alone with a vulnerable adult where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- In a counseling situation with a vulnerable adult, where privacy and confidentiality are important, ensure an Elder, Leader or the Vulnerable adult's Advocate should know the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building and the vulnerable adult should know they are there. It is advisable to have the majority of meetings in a public place i.e. McDonalds, supportive conversations and Godly wisdom can be given rather than delving into circumstances that might open issues that should be dealt with by a qualified counselor.
- Access to the church buildings is safe and well lit.

2 You, the worker, should:

- Treat all adults with respect and dignity (watch language, tone of voice and where you put your body).
- Not engage in any of the following;
 - Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form.
 - Any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting of an adult.
 - Invading the privacy of an adult.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to an adult, even in "fun".
- Not let adults involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

All members of the church

If you see a church member or a fellow member of the team acting in ways which causes concern all people should be prepared to speak to them or the Vulnerable Adult's Advocate about your concern. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. Members of the church should feel able to encourage good attitudes and draw to leader's attention any areas they feel may cause concern or be misunderstood.

People who may pose a risk to others

Where someone attending Hope church is known to be a risk to others, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the 'Vulnerable Adult's Advocate', Leadership Team or appointed person on their behalf will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. A written agreement will be entered into by the individual with the "Vulnerable Adult's Advocate" and an Elder, outlining relevant boundaries.

Helping people protect themselves

- 1 Encourage vulnerable adults to talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable or anxious
- 2 Consider how you present Christian truths such as obedience to those leading. Make it clear that if a vulnerable adult is asked to do something that they feel is wrong that they can check it out with another adult.

Procedure if abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered

The leadership and all the appointed workers are committed to the protection of vulnerable adults from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse. If you have a concern, pass it on to your 'Vulnerable Adult's Advocate.'

The main types of abuse are defined in the UK Department of Health government guidance 'No Secrets' (2.7) as follows:

- **physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
- **psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- **financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- **neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating; and
- **discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness known as FII (fabricated or induced illness/Munchausen's syndrome by proxy).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional well being.

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

Sexual Abuse

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

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or well being. Neglect may involve a carer failing to:

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

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

Additional identified areas:

Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting an individual's right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire

consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Domestic Abuse

The Home Office definition of domestic violence is 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
- emotional

Hope Church recognises that female genital mutilation is illegal and will report any cases to the relevant authorities.

How to react

If a vulnerable adult starts to talk about something which suggests that abuse has occurred you should remember the following:

- Listen and don't appear to be shocked. (It is not for you to judge whether what is said is right or wrong)
- Accept what the vulnerable adult says (however unlikely it may sound).
- Don't ask "leading" questions.
- Don't promise confidentiality.

If in doubt of what to do next speak to the Vulnerable Adult's Advocate, tell the person you will be doing this, don't make promises you can't keep.

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered

1. Do not start to investigate, but make a note of anything you are told, what the child said or did, what you said, what the circumstances were with date and times.
2. Do not contact family members, close friends or discuss with others except the Vulnerable Adult's Advocate or an Elder.
3. Do not delay or act alone. If you have doubts it is better to share these rather than risk something being missed.
4. Inform the Vulnerable Adult's advocate or an Elder. (Unless this creates unnecessary delay or these people are in some way involved)
5. The person who you inform will make a decision as to whether it is appropriate to contact the social services or the police. The response will be very dependent on the particular circumstances.

If you have concerns about a church leader or elder, then you should speak to the vulnerable adult advocate, who will seek advice outside the Church. If you have concerns about the advocate, you should speak to a Church Elder who will seek advice outside the Church.

Social Services Involvement:

If social services or the police are contacted, they will instigate an investigation. It is very important you do not discuss the incident/disclosure with anyone; neither should you ask the individual any questions. If you require prayer with regard to being involved with the disclosure, do not discuss the disclosure in your request for prayer.

Contacts:

Position	Name	Telephone Number
Church Leader/Elder	Tony Thompson	01582 968821
Vulnerable Adult's Advocate	Ruth Simons	07748187269
Luton Social Services	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	01582 547653 Out of hours 0300 300 8123

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