

Safeguarding policy Re:ignite Church, Blackburn

The policy and procedures have been divided into five sections covering all 10 CCPAS safeguarding standards.

Along with details of the organisation and a statement of intent and commitment to safeguarding, the policy covers the following sections:

- Section 1. Place of worship / organisation details**
Safe and Secure – Standard 1

- Section 2. Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse**
Safe and Secure – Standards 2 and 7

- Section 3. Prevention**
Safe and Secure – Standards 3 and 4

- Section 4. Pastoral care**
Safe and Secure – Standards 8 and 9

- Section 5. Practice guidelines**
Safe and Secure – Standards 5, 6 and 10

- Appendix 1. Leadership safeguarding statement**

- Appendix 2. Safeguarding Poster**

The Safeguarding Policy

SECTION 1

Details of the place of worship / organisation

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: Re:Ignite Church, Blackburn

Address: The Exchange, 71-73 King William Street Blackburn BB1 7DT

Tel No: 07377 630033 Email address: caer@exchangeblackburn.org.uk

Membership of Organisation: Global Awakening UK and the Evangelical Alliance.

Charity Number: 1151318

(Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered name Re:Source Blackburn)

Regulators details: N/A

Insurance Company:

Church Fellowship Connect, Ansvar Insurance, including Public Liability Insurance

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children / vulnerable adults:

We meet every Sunday evening at 10.30am at The Exchange.

We currently have a separate children's meeting run for part of the Sunday morning church services by a dedicated team of DBS cleared volunteers.

We have no separate work with vulnerable adults though they are welcome to attend

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive. (Please be aware that as we meet in a Grade 2 listed building that is classed as ‘under renovation’ we do not yet have disabled toilet facilities or access to the upstairs main hall. We are working to resolve this problem.)
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- file a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with CCPAS and any amendments subsequently published. The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Definitions of Abuse: *please see appendix 3*

Signs and symptoms of abuse: *please see appendix 4*

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse: *please see appendix 5*

Safeguarding awareness

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis through either CCPAS - workers will attend a "Facing the unthinkable" course or follow the distance learning course or in-house training from qualified Safeguarding professionals.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Mrs Susan Farinha (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") tel no: 01254 825857 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to Mrs Caer Butler (hereafter the "Deputy ") tel no: 07377630033. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from CCPAS as above.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 01254 666400. The out of hours emergency number is 01254 587547.

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 01254 292620. The out of hours emergency number is 01254 587547.

The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is 01265 353073/ 353083

- Where required the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should then immediately inform the insurance company.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from CCPAS.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.

- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by CCPAS (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by CCPAS if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively CCPAS can be contacted for advice.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

In addition to this, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Where you are liaising with a SA / LADO discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS.

SECTION 3

Prevention

Safe recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

For further details on safer recruitment, see appendix 6.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation.

Pastoral care will be offered through small group leaders.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

Please see appendix 7 for possible clauses in a contract with a known sex offender who wishes to attend church. Exact clauses will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed ideally by risk assessments from the statutory agencies.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

As a place of worship working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached/will be developed.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. As an organisation using someone else's premises, as part of the letting agreement we have our own policy that meets CCPAS' safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Signed by:



Date: 19.12.16

APPENDIX 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership recognises the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership/organisation on: 29.1.16

This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.

- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation.

Mrs Susan Farinha	Child Safeguarding Coordinator
Mrs Caer Butler	Deputy Child Safeguarding Coordinator
Mrs Susan Farinha / Mr Paulo Farinha	Adult Safeguarding Coordinator
Mrs Caer Butler	Deputy Adult Safeguarding Coordinator

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from Caer Butler, Exchange Manager:
caer@exchangeblackburn.org.uk

A copy of our safeguarding policy has been lodged with CCPAS.

Signed by leadership/organisation

Signed 

Senior Leader, Re:Ignite Church,

Chair of Trustees, Re:Source Blackburn

Date 28.5.18

Safeguarding is a priority here

We are committed to following government and CCPAS guidelines on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good working practice, including safe recruitment of workers.

We work to a formal safeguarding policy and it can be seen on request from:

Mrs Caer Butler

If you have any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child you can speak to:

Mrs Susan Farinha or Mrs Caer Butler

If you have any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a vulnerable adult you can speak to:

Mrs Susan Farinha / Mr Paulo Farinha or Mrs Caer Butler

They have been appointed by the leadership to respond to any safeguarding concerns.

Signed *Alister Munday* Date 28/5/2018
On behalf of the Leadership

Useful Contacts

CCPAS
0845 120 45 50

Childline (for children)
0800 1111

NSPCC
0808 800 5000

Stop it Now
0808 1000 900

Through the Roof
01372 749955

Action on Elder Abuse
0808 808 8141

Childnet Int
www.childnet.com

CEOP
ceop.police.uk

NAPAC
020 3176 0560



CCPAS
setting standards in safeguarding

CCPAS, PO Box 133,
Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.
Tel: 0845 120 45 50
Email: info@ccpas.co.uk
Web: www.ccpas.co.uk

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

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

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

Appendix 4: Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc
- *These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

Appendix 5: How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse: Effective Listening

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

InFocus: Safer Recruitment - Summary

1. Introduction

Safer recruitment is the practice of ensuring that your recruitment processes for both staff and volunteers is as robust as it can be in order to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Whatever the background or organisation we are working in, making sure that we do everything we can not to appoint people who may pose a risk to children when we are recruiting staff or volunteers is an essential part of safeguarding children. As Sir Michael Richard stated in his report into the tragedy at Soham:

“the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed...”

2. Who does this apply to?

Safer recruitment therefore should concern everyone employed in a role (paid or volunteer) within an organisation working with children under 18 who is likely to be seen by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. Those are not only people who regularly come into contact with children, or who will be responsible for children, as a result of their work. They are also people who regularly work in churches or related activities such as children's centres or youth work programmes where children are present, but their role is a support function (e.g. administration, catering, caretaking). The latter people may not have direct contact with children as a result of their job, but are also likely to be seen as safe and trustworthy because of their regular presence in the setting and may have access to personal and sensitive data relating to children.

3. Robust recruitment and selection

Regardless of the size or nature of your church or organisation, a consistently applied and robust process is always needed to ensure the safest levels of paid staff and volunteer recruitment. The '12 Steps to Safer Recruitment' checklist provides a brief overview of the steps that should be taken when recruiting paid staff and volunteers.

"12 Steps to Safer Recruitment":

Before you release your post...

1. Ensure that you have an up to date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process and roles before you begin
2. Ensure that your organisation has a safeguarding policy and that a statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials
3. Ensure that you have an up to date job description and person specification for the role(s) you wish to recruit to, that have been agreed with the recruiting manager
4. Ensure that you have an appropriate advertisement prepared that contains all necessary information about the role, timetable for recruitment and your commitment to safeguarding
5. Ensure that you have compiled a suitable candidate information pack containing all the required information about the organisation, role, recruitment timetable, safeguarding policy/statement and application form

Before you interview...

6. Ensure that each application received is scrutinised in a systematic way by the shortlisting panel in order to agree your shortlist before sending invitations to interview
7. Ensure that all appropriate checks have been undertaken on your shortlisted candidates, including references and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) checks
8. Ensure that all shortlisted candidates receive the same letter of invitation to interview, supplying them with all necessary information

Before you select your preferred candidate...

9. Ensure that a face-to-face interview is conducted for ALL shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job description
10. Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability have been asked, including those needed to address any gaps in information supplied in the application form

Before you formally appoint...

11. Ensure that you are able to make a confident selection of a preferred candidate based upon their demonstration of suitability for the role
12. Ensure that your preferred candidate is informed that the offer of employment (including volunteer positions) is conditional on receiving satisfactory information from all necessary checks

Notes on Volunteers

Volunteers make up a huge part of the children's workforce and are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults. If an organisation is actively seeking volunteers, and is considering candidates about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff.

In other circumstances, for example where an organisation approaches a person who is well known to them to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted: seeking references, checking to ensure others in the community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability, and obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure remain essential. Organisations may also wish to consider the completion of a risk assessment as a matter of good practice in such circumstances.

Where a volunteer's role will be one off, such as accompanying staff and children on a day outing or helping at an event, these measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children.

4. Recruitment and Vetting Checks

Some organisations are required to make checks such as obtaining DBS Disclosures by law, while for others a requirement to make checks is imposed by a regulator such as OFSTED or the Care Quality Commission (CQC), but for all is a matter of good practice. It is important that organisations find out and understand which requirements apply to them and their specific setting.

N.B. From October 2009 it became a criminal offence to knowingly appoint someone to work with children who has been barred from doing so by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (now the Disclosure & Barring Service). Regardless of the legal position, we strongly recommend that all organisations undertake all the checks described here on people they propose to appoint to work with children.

Professional and Character References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.

Ideally, references should be sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, and should be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview. It may not however be possible in all circumstances to obtain references for all candidates prior to interview, either because of limited resources (e.g. in the case of smaller private and voluntary organisations), delay on the part of the referee, or because a candidate strongly objects to their current employer being approached at that stage, but it should be the aim wherever possible. It is up to the person conducting the recruitment to decide whether to agree to a candidate's request to approach his or her current employer only if s/he is the preferred candidate after the interview, but it is not recommended as good practice.

In any case where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, you should ensure that it is received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the offer of appointment is made.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Disclosures enable organisations to check information about individuals held on national and local police records and confidential lists held by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) on those unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults. The DBS, covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Scheme) has been in operation since late 2010.

Enhanced Disclosures (with Barring Data)

An Enhanced Disclosure (with Barring Data) should be applied for where the appointment is defined as 'Regulated Activity' (as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012) involving a substantial degree of contact with children including unsupervised activities such as teaching, supervising, training or providing advice/guidance on well-being (this applies to most people working with, or responsible for, children in a church situation, including the Church Leader, Pastor, Minister, Vicar).

Enhanced Disclosure (without Barring Data)

There remains provision for an employer (if they wish to do so) to request an enhanced disclosure without barring list data where the candidate is working in a role that involves substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults which does not meet the 2012 definition of 'Regulated Activity', but where it previously met the definition. In such circumstances, the check against the barred list must not be requested and a disclosure will then be issued containing all criminal records data excluding the barred list status of the applicant.

All candidates for posts that are eligible for disclosures through the DBS, must make application and receive a satisfactory disclosure BEFORE confirmation of appointment.

NB. The planned registration arrangements under the ISA for those working with vulnerable groups was repealed and will not form part of the DBS responsibilities.

Qualification & Registration Checks

Employers must always verify that the candidate has actually obtained any qualifications or professional registrations claimed in their application that are legally required for the job or that the employer regards as essential (as stated in the person specification).

Previous Employment History Checks

Employers should always ask for information about previous employment and obtain satisfactory explanations for any gaps in employment. If a candidate for a post is not currently employed in work with children and/or young people, it is also advisable to check and confirm with the previous employer to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

Health Checks

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children or young people must be medically fit. Employers should satisfy themselves that individuals have the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before an appointment offer is confirmed.

Further Checks

Checks should also be made for applicants from overseas or who have lived outside the United Kingdom in the same way as for those resident in the UK.

Right to Work in the UK

Employers must confirm the right of those they employ to work in the UK. Further information and details on permission to work in the UK can be found at: www.direct.gov.uk

5. Safer Practice

It is vital that the measures described here (and within the full 'Recruiting Safely' guidance issued by CWDC, 2009) are applied thoroughly whenever someone is recruited to work with children, but that must not be the end of the matter. Settings that work with children (including churches) are safe environments for the great majority of children, and the vast majority of people who work with children have their safety and welfare at heart. But we must remain vigilant and not be complacent. We know that some people seek access to children in order to abuse, and that abused children very often do not disclose the abuse at the time. We also know that some of the allegations of abuse made against staff are substantiated, and we continue to see a number of cases year on year in which staff and volunteers across the children's workforce (including in churches) are convicted of criminal offences involving the abuse of children.

Post Appointment - Induction and Probation

Regardless of role or previous experience of working with children, there should be an induction (and probation) programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in an organisation.

The content and nature of the induction and probation process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction and probation programme should include information about relevant policies, procedures, codes of conduct and how to identify and raise concerns about the welfare of children.

Maintaining a Safer Culture

As described above, there is a real need for continued vigilance with safeguarding issues. It is important that all staff in your organisation have appropriate training, induction, probation (and where possible opportunities for appraisal) so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident about carrying them out. Staff, children and young people and their parents also need to feel confident that they can raise issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children, and that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Monitoring

Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction and probationary arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. Feedback from new appointees and other employees may assist in understanding how improvements can be achieved.

Training

Ongoing training is essential to maintaining a safe workforce. This should include as a minimum safeguarding (and refresher) training at an agreed frequency for all staff and volunteers.

6. Managing Allegations

The framework for managing allegations against staff who work with children and young people applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

The framework also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in his or her present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Further detail about managing allegations against staff can be found at Appendix 5 of the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2010' publication.

APPENDIX 7: Clauses to Consider in a Contract for a Sex Offender

NB this list is NOT conclusive. They are examples of what may need to be taken into account in the particular circumstances of the individual and the place of worship or organisation involved.

Boundaries

- I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- I will attend meetings and activities as directed by the leadership
- I will sit where directed at activities (e.g. religious meetings, social gatherings) and will not place myself near children, young people and vulnerable adults
- I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults are in progress
- I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children, young people or vulnerable adults in the home
- I accept that "x" and "y" will sit with me during activities (e.g. religious meetings, social gatherings) and accompany me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a sex offender.
- I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children, young people or vulnerable adults for whom they care
- I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with leaders as and when necessary (where appropriate)
- I accept that "z" will provide me with pastoral care.
- I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, I may be barred from attending activities. In such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. police, probation, Adult Services, Children's Social Services), and any other relevant organisations, as well as members of the faith community or organisation.
- I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported
- I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every _____ months and will remain for an indefinite period

Pastoral care

As well as outlining the boundaries a sex offender would be expected to keep, it is also helpful to outline the types of pastoral care and support you are able to offer.

'X' and 'Y' and 'Z' have agreed to provide you with pastoral care and support; as part of that undertaking, they and the leadership of the organisation agree to:

- Support you in finding suitable employment opportunity which will not bring you into contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- Support you in seeking any specialist help e.g. attendance on any Sex Offender Treatment Programmes, drug or alcohol or psychiatric rehabilitation or any counselling appointments.
- Liaise with any previous Places of Worship you have attended, with the Prison Chaplaincy Team, or any other organisation you have worked with prior to joining us.
- Work closely as a place of worship / organisation with any statutory authorities with responsibility for you, such as your probation officer, police public protection team or children's social services, cooperating with them in helping and supporting you.
- Where appropriate, ask for any risk assessment in order to determine how best we can meet your needs while protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- Attempt to meet any practical needs you may have, including assisting with options for accommodation.
- Support you in joining Circles of Support or any other similar programme.
- Provide pastoral care and support to anyone with whom you are living with. We recognise that partners of know sex offenders need pastoral care, and 'space' to share without judgement.
- Be there for you and will support you.