



Three Counties churches of Christ

Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy

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Three Counties churches of Christ Safeguarding policy

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1.0 Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk

Version 1.0 June 2024

1.1 Place of Worship / Organisation Details

This policy covers all meetings under the charity of Three Counties churches of Christ, hereafter, **"The Church"**. Registered charity number: 1092123.

A **"child"** is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (The Children Act 1989). They are referred to as children, young people or teen(s) throughout this document.

An **"adult at risk"** as defined by the Care Act 2014 which became law on 1st April 2015 is:
"Any adult aged 18 or over who:

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The **"Children's Ministry"** generally covers the children prior to entering the Teen Ministry.

The “**Youth Ministry**” covers both “Children’s Ministry” and “Teen Ministry”. **In some circumstances it may be appropriate for an adult at risk to remain in the teen ministry for an extended period of time beyond their eighteenth birthday.**

“**Worker**” refers to volunteers fulfilling roles outlined in section 4.1 and staff working within the youth ministry.

1.2 Church Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Trustees take seriously the Church’s responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risk entrusted to the Church’s care.

As part of the church’s mission, the Trustees are committed to:

- Endorsing and following national and local safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- Ensuring that youth ministry workers are given support and training in any action they may need to take in order to protect children.
- Promoting well-being and safety of children and adults at risk within youth ministry activities.
- Encouraging and supporting parents / carers.
- Having a system for dealing with concerns of possible alleged abuse.
- Making the Safeguarding Policy available on the church website.
- Review this policy every two years.

1.3 Theology & Areas of Policy

“If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matthew 18:6 (NIV)

Our Church’s aspiration is to do everything we can to engage purposefully and wholeheartedly in ensuring scripture underpins our ministry to all people.

The Trustees recognise that many children and adults at risk, today, are the victims of different forms of abuse. Accordingly, the Trustees have adopted the policy contained in this document, (hereafter “**the policy**”). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Prevention (recruitment of youth ministry workers, safeguarding certification etc.)
- Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse
- Pastoral care

- Practice guidelines

The Trustees recognise the importance of building constructive links with the Child Social Services and Adult Social Care agencies.

As a result, the Trustees have decided to work with Thirtyone:eight. Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals and organisations such as ICC Missions protect vulnerable people from abuse. They act as an umbrella agency for criminal record check administration, they provide training courses as mentioned above and also specialist support and advice with any safeguarding concerns.

The content of the policy forms the basis of all training workshops which are available externally through Thirtyone:eight at various nationwide seminars, details of which can be found on their website www.thirtyoneeight.org.

The implementation and application of this policy is to be carried out by those fulfilling the roles of TCCOC Trustees, full-time ministry staff including contractors, and by all youth ministry workers outlined in section 4.1 of this policy.

2.0 Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

2.1 Definitions of Abuse - children

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance and are as follows:

2.1.1 England (Country of operation)

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

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 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.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

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.

2.2 Recognising Abuse: Children

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical signs of abuse

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fracture etc., which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts / scratches / substance abuse.
- Any bruises in an immobile infant.

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child 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 signs of abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also 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.

Indicators of neglect

- under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.

2.3 Definition of Abuse: Adults at Risk

England & Wales

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14. The legislation is relevant across England and Wales but on occasions applies only to local authorities in England.

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Links:

- a. The Care Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>
- b. Care and Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/careand-support-statutory-guidance>

Scotland

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 defines an adult at risk as someone over 16 years. It will depend on the exact

2.4 Recognising Abuse: Adults at Risk (England)

This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances and settings in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Physical abuse

Examples of physical abuse could include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or overuse of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation.
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite.
- Person flinches at physical contact and/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather.
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.

Domestic violence

Examples of domestic violence could include coercive behaviour, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars.
- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

Sexual abuse

Examples of sexual abuse could include rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

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

- Emotional distress.
- Mood changes.
- Disturbed sleep patterns.

Psychological abuse

Examples of psychological abuse could include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful.
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer.
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes.
- Unexplained paranoia.
- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety.
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness.
- Loss of appetite.
- Helplessness or passivity.
- Confusion or disorientation.
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour. ● Low self-esteem.

Financial or material abuse

Examples of financial or material abuse could include theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money.
- Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt.
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf.
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property.
- Missing personal belongings.
- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney.

Modern slavery

Examples of modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Physical appearance: unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished.
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.
- Few personal possessions or ID documents.
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

Discriminatory abuse

Examples of discriminatory abuse could include forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect.
- Poor quality or avoidance care.
- Low self-esteem.
- Withdrawn.
- Anger.
- Person who puts them self down in terms of their gender or sexuality.
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves.

Institutional/Organisational Abuse

Examples of institutional abuse could include neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Low self-esteem.
- Withdrawn.
- Anger.

- Person who puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality.
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves.
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.

Neglect and acts of omission

Examples could include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Deteriorating despite apparent care.
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention.

Self-Neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour, such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

Illustrative guide to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to concern:

- Hoarding inside or outside a property.
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs.
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene.
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food.
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions.

3.0 Responding appropriately to a suspicion or allegation of abuse

This section identifies actions that should be taken when receiving a safeguarding concern. The concerns may be about current or past events, but the response should be the same. Past events can still give rise to current safeguarding concerns.

3.1 Should Concerns Raised about Children & Adults at Risk be treated differently?

The answer is NO. When a concern is raised about an 'adult at risk' it should be treated in the same way as a concern about a child.

Some further background on Adults at Risk

It is not the role of the church to decide whether someone has mental capacity and is therefore able to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand. Always share your concerns with your Safeguarding Officer even if you do not have the consent of the adult at risk to do so – in this instance, make sure your Safeguarding Officer knows that the person concerned has not given consent for the information to be passed on.

The Care Act 2014 provides helpful guidance on these situations:

“If the adult has the mental capacity to make informed decisions about their safety and they do not want any action to be taken, this does not preclude the sharing of information with relevant professional colleagues. This is to enable professionals to assess the risk of harm and to be confident that the adult is not being unduly influenced, coerced or intimidated and is aware of all the options. This will also enable professionals to check the safety and validity of decisions made. It is good practice to inform the adult that this action is being taken unless doing so would increase the risk of harm”.

The Safeguarding Officer will consider all the information to hand and decide whether it is appropriate for the information to be reported to the statutory authorities. If there are any concerns about an adult's mental capacity, the Safeguarding Officer will contact the Local Safeguarding Adults Board for advice.

3.2 Action to be taken if you SUSPECT that abuse may have occurred?

In the event of a suspicion of abuse, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer must be informed, who will consider taking the most appropriate course of action as follows:

- Contact in order: The TCcoC Safeguarding Officer is responsible in the first instance to collate and clarify the precise details of the suspicion. If further assistance is required contact Thirtyone:eight.
- The specifics of each case will then determine if the suspicion of neglect or abuse is to be referred to the statutory authorities.

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone in the Church before contacting the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer.
- Thereafter you (and the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer) should follow their guidance on any appropriate further communication including sharing any information with TCcoC Ministry Staff, Ministry Contractor or a Trustee.
- A safeguarding incident reporting must be completed in each instance .The report is filed centrally by the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer.

Note: Whilst suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer should not delay referral in the first instance for obtaining guidance if needed from Thirtyone:eight or a Trustee which may in turn result in contacting Social Services or the Police.

It is, of course, the right of any individual to seek advice from Thirtyone:eight and/or make direct referrals to the child protection agencies, although we hope that members of the Church will use the procedure outlined above. It is imperative that the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer and the Trustees must be informed when any situations are directly referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Services or the Police.

The Trustees may also be required by conditions of the Church insurance policy to immediately inform the insurance company.

If the suspicions in any way involve the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to the Trustees.

If the suspicions in any way involve both the TCCOC Safeguarding Lead and Trustees, the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight, on **0303 0031 111** (emergency out of hours are between 5pm and Midnight and 7am to 9am). Alternatively contact your local Children's Social Services team.

3.3 Action to be taken if you receive an **ALLEGATION of sexual abuse?**

In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer must be informed, who will take the following course of action:

- Contact in order: The TCcoC Safeguarding Officer will NOT speak to the parent/carer. They should speak with Thirtyone:eight before then contacting the Social Services duty social worker for Children and Families/Adult Social Services or Police Safeguarding team directly. It is the normal operating procedure of Thirtyone:eight to confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- Under no circumstances will the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicion of sexual abuse. The role of the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation and to provide this information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate the matter.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, this step or his/her absence should not delay referral to the Social Services department.
- Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation and the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services department, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services department, and should do so without hesitation.
- The Trustees must be informed when any situations are referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Services or the Police.
- In addition, the TCcoC Ministry (staff and non-staff) should also be advised of any safeguarding situations referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Service or the Police.
- A safeguarding incident reporting must be completed in each instance. The report is filed by the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer.

If the suspicions in any way involve the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to TCCOC Trustees and the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight, on **0303 0031 111** (emergency out of hours are between 5pm and Midnight and 7am to 9am). Alternatively contact your local Social Services team.

3.4 Action to be taken if you receive an **ALLEGATION of other forms of abuse?**

In the event of an allegation of abuse, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer must be informed, who will consider taking the most appropriate course of action as follows:

- Contact in order: The TCcoC Safeguarding Officer will speak Thirtyone:eight and/or Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's/adult's at risk safety. Contact with parents / carers should be left to Social Services or the Police. The parents / carers should not normally be informed by the Church in these circumstances.

- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The TCcoC Safeguarding Officer will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- If appropriate the parent / carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- Where the parent / carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer will offer to arrange for somebody to go with them. If they still fail to act, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
- Where the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from the Thirtyone:eight will be sought and followed. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- The TCCOC Safeguarding Lead must be informed when any situations are referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Services or the Police.
- In addition, the lead TCcoC Ministry (staff and non-staff) and Trustees should also be advised of any safeguarding situations referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Service or the Police.
- A safeguarding incident reporting must be completed in each instance. The report is filed by the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer.

If the suspicions in any way involve the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to TCCOC Trustees and then the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight, on their 24-hour helpline **0303 0031 111** (emergency out of hours are between 5pm and Midnight and 7am to 9am). Alternatively contact your local Social Services team.

3.5 How to respond to a child or adult at risk wanting to talk about abuse

If approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow the basic guidelines below:

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen. ● Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound). ● Try to be reassuring & remain calm. ● Look at them directly. ● Be honest. ● Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. ● Take action – don't ignore the situation. ● Be supportive. ● Tell the child /adult at risk that you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality (see sections 3.3 and 3.4). ● Even when a child / adult at risk has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse. ● Be aware that the child / adult at risk may have been threatened or bribed not to tell. ● Never push for information. If the child / adult at risk decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen. <p>Helpful things you may say or show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "I believe you" (or showing acceptance of what the child / adult at risk says). Be empathetic by acknowledging their feelings ● "Thank you for telling me." ● "It's not your fault" or "I will help you" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval. ● Do not minimise what is being said. ● Do not ask probing or leading questions or push for more information e.g. "did they hit you". ● Do not offer false reassurance. ● Do not delay in contacting your TCcoC Safeguarding Officer. ● Do not contact the alleged abuser. ● Do not investigate the incident any further. ● Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know. See also point three below under "Concluding". <p>Don't say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why didn't you tell anyone before? ● I can't believe it! ● Are you sure this is true? ● Why? How? When? Who? Where? ● Never make false promises ● Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell
<p>Concluding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reassure the child / adult at risk that they were right to tell you and show acceptance. 2. Let the child / adult at risk know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to the Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or adult at risk returning home if you consider them to be at risk of further abuse). 3. Contact in order: The TCcoC Safeguarding Officer, Thirtyone:eight for advice, or go directly to Social Services / the Police. 	



3.6 What to do once a child or an adult at risk has talked to you about abuse

The Procedure

1. **Make notes** as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child/adult at risk talking to you), writing down exactly what the child / adult at risk said and when she / he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Include dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period by the church.
2. **Report your discussion as soon as possible to the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer.** If the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer is implicated, report to the TCCOC Trustees. If both are implicated, report to the Thirtyone:eight or to the Social Services if preferred.
3. **You should not discuss** your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in point two above.
4. **Once a child has talked about abuse**, the worker / TCcoC Safeguarding Officer should consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation (this may be a parent, grandparent or other relative). On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and / or the police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child / adult at risk so that they do not return home.

3.7 Allegations of abuse against any person who works either professionally or as a volunteer, outside of TCCOC, with children or “adults at risk”.

If an accusation is made against a worker in the youth ministry (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact Children Social Services or Adult Social Services. The TCCOC Trustees must be informed when any situations are referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Services or the Police. In addition, the TCcoC Ministry staff or non-staff should also be advised of any safeguarding situations referred to Thirtyone:eight, Social Service or the Police.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer - a person who manages allegations against adults who work with children.) if they are involved.

Whilst an investigation of the allegation is ongoing, the volunteer should not serve in any capacity within the youth ministry.

3.8 Assessment of Risk

In all situations, consideration of the following risks should be reviewed regularly in regard to the circumstances of any concern raised:

- risks to the victim/survivor.
- risk to members of vulnerable groups within the church and involved with church activities.
- risks to the person believed to be responsible for the issue and their family.
- risks to the wider congregation or attendees at church activities.
- risk of loss of information/records.
- risk to the reputation of the Church.

It is the responsibility of everyone to consider the risks presented by any situation from the first point that they become aware of a possible safeguarding concern through to actions taken to deal with that issue. Measures to manage risk could include suspension, specific arrangements for activities or church attendance, communication or liaison with others within and outside of the church. In most cases, the ongoing consideration of risk should be an integral and continuing part of responding well to an incident.

3.9 What to do if a safeguarding incident occurs on school premises which TCCOC has hired?

With effect 1st September 2023, the Department for Education required that schools report to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), **all child/ "adult at risk"** safeguarding incidents which occur **on their school grounds**.

In the event of an allegation of abuse **whilst carrying out youth ministry activities on school grounds**, the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer must follow the guidance provided in this safeguarding policy and in addition notify the school.

4.0 ROLES, RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

4.1 Roles within Children's Ministry

There are generally seven roles within our Children's Ministry and Teen Ministry. They may involve some overlap depending on the congregation size and number of children in the congregation but are defined as follows:

1. **Trustee oversight role**

This role includes oversight over key areas such as safeguarding the wellbeing of all children, assisting with recruitment, providing administrative and training support for the local leadership and Children's Ministry volunteers.

2. **TCCOC Safeguarding officer**

Responsible for managing all aspects of safeguarding for ICC Missions from providing training support, to oversight of recruitment procedures and enhanced disclosures, providing safeguarding advice and when necessary specific direction to ministry staff. The TCCoC Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring the application of this policy. They will monitor compliance with this policy and notify the Trustees of any non-compliance.

The Safeguarding Officer is also responsible for ensuring that situations where abuse is suspected, and disclosures of information are made and handled correctly and that the necessary support is provided. The Safeguarding Officer is accountable to the Trustees.

3. **TCCoC Safeguarding Administrator**

They will conduct administration procedures for criminal record checks for their local congregation in accordance with Thirtyone:eight recommendations. This will be through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) for England & Wales. They are accountable to the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer.

4. **TCCoC Children's Ministry Co-ordinator / Preteen Co-ordinator / Teen Ministry Leader**

These would be people who oversee the Children's / Preteen / Teen Ministry work at TCCoC level. Their key responsibilities are to manage the Children's / Preteen /

Teen Ministry teaching programmes, activities, rotas and observance of operational guidelines and policies. They would also identify training needs and facilitate the provision of discussion and training relating to roles and responsibilities. They are accountable to the Safeguarding Officer for safeguarding issues and to the Trustees for all other matters.

5. Children's Ministry Class Teachers / Preteen Teachers / Teen Ministry Workers

These would be people who have charge of a Children's Ministry / Preteen Ministry / Teen Ministry class / activity and manage the day to day running of the class / teen group and pastoral situations that arise within. This would include communication with parents as well as identifying areas of need and support and communicating this to the TCcoC Children's Ministry Co-ordinator / Preteen Co-ordinator / Teen Ministry Leader.

4.2 Recruitment: appointment of workers

The Trustees should appoint Children's Ministry Co-ordinators, Preteen Ministry Co-ordinators and Teen Ministry Leaders.

The procedure for appointment of all workers outlined in section 4.1 of this policy will be:

i. TCCOC Staff

- Before participating in youth ministry regulated activities, TCCOC staff members must follow procedures outlined in the TCcoC People policy.

ii. Members of TCcoC

- A local pastoral interview should take place between the worker a member of the congregation who is an appointed leader. This interview will involve finding out about the applicant's past background, spiritual and sin struggles, as well as the person's spiritual gifts and character strengths. This could have been done in the context of a personal Bible Study that is commonly carried out on becoming a member of the Church or a local pastoral interview when a member moves from one congregation to another.
- Each volunteer must complete a criminal record check (DBS check for England) in accordance with church process and specific to the role they will be undertaking. They should not take on their role until a disclosure has been returned and reviewed.

Each person fulfilling roles noted in section 4.1 above, must have the relevant safeguarding certification in place before serving in youth ministry.

Children's Ministry / Preteen Ministry volunteers will work under the supervision of the local Children's Ministry / Preteen Ministry Co-ordinator and / or Class Teacher for their age group.

Teen Workers will work under the supervision of the local congregation's Teen Ministry Leaders.

Note 1: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, a United Kingdom Act of Parliament, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

Note 2: The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) was legislation introduced to help exoffenders re-enter the workforce. Some regulated roles are exempt such as roles working with children where they may pose a risk to children.

4.3 Criteria for appointments

The criteria for appointing Children's Ministry and Teen Workers for any of the above roles will be:

1. Previous criminal convictions or other issues that are brought to light as a result of an enhanced disclosure check will disqualify an individual from serving if they are considered to pose a risk to the safety and security of children.
2. If there is any reason to doubt an individual's suitability to work with Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry which may arise from an individual's personal history, behaviour, lifestyle, attitudes or spiritual commitment the individual concerned, a risk assessment is to be carried out to assess the risk of harm that an individual might pose if they were to work with children. The risk assessment should be carried out by the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer.
3. **Non completion of an enhanced disclosure application form or incomplete / unsatisfactory supporting documentation will automatically discount any individual from being able to serve in Children's Ministry or with the Teen Ministry in roles 1-6.**
4. If it is perceived that an individual's spiritual gifts are best used elsewhere in the congregation then it may be appropriate to decline an application to serve in this capacity.

Children's Ministry and Teen Ministry workers' suitability for the roles will remain under continual review, and the same criteria for not appointing may also be used to remove an individual from a particular role. Enhanced disclosures will also be under regular review and further disclosures will be requested periodically.

Safeguarding certification for each of the roles described in 4.1 above, are valid for a three-year period.

4.4 Training

The Church will provide ongoing training and support for all Children's Ministry and Teen Ministry. One on one feedback and training will be provided on an ongoing basis by the local Children's Ministry Co-ordinator, Preteen Ministry Co-ordinator and Teen Ministry Leader respectively.

5.0 Pastoral Care

5.1 Working with offenders with a criminal conviction relating to children or adult(s) at risk

Where someone who is attending or wishes to attend Church has been convicted of a criminal offence in relation to a child or adult(s) at risk, the Trustees will ensure that a meeting between the TCcoC Safeguarding Officer and the individual will take place to discuss the extent to which the individual will be able to be part of the fellowship and if so, boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. This may require a written undertaking from the individual concerned to the Trustees to address these matters and incorporate any legal restrictions resulting from any conviction(s). Decisions of this nature will take place in consultation with Thirtyone:eight.

5.2 Supporting those affected by abuse

As a Church we are committed to offering pastoral care with a compassionate response in supporting those who have been affected by abuse. At all times, due regard will be given to the right of privacy of those directly involved. The individual(s) designated with the responsibility of providing pastoral support should do so in consultation with the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer, who will in turn seek appropriate advice from the Thirtyone:eight or another appropriate recognised professional organisation.

6.0 General Guidance

6.1 Ratios

The following ratios are recommendations for each age group. There are certain situations where this may not be practical or the best use of resources. Any variance with these recommendations should be discussed with the TCCOC Safeguarding Lead or the TCCOC Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

2-3 years

1 Adult: 4 children

4-8 years	1 Adult: 6 children
9-12 years	1 Adult: 8 children
13-18 years	1 Adult: 10 children

There should never be the case that an adult is alone with a child.

Consideration should also be given whether youth ministry workers should be male or female workers, or both. The above ratios do not take into account special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratios.

All children should be taken to the toilet before the class by the adult they have come to church with. If a child needs the toilet during the lesson.

If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios

6.2 Children with Special Needs or Complex Needs

Children who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc. It is good practice to speak with the parents / carers of children with special or complex needs and find out from them how best to assist the child. This may require a one-on-one classroom assistant or the parents taking part in any classes the child attends.

6.3 Individual Appointments

Where a child or adult at risk is being seen on their own (e.g., Teen Ministry appointment) this should occur in a public place or in a location where others are present. If confidentiality is important and a level of privacy is necessary the appointment where possible should be undertaken by someone of the same sex in a building where others are present and a group leader, the parent or member of the TCcoC Trustees should be informed that such a meeting is taking place.

6.4 Boundaries

All Children's Ministry and Teen Ministry workers and anyone supporting an adult at risk should treat everyone under their care with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions. The following guidelines should be considered:

- **The level of personal care**, e.g. toileting must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special or complex needs. Parents should deal with nappy-changes and any child being toilet-trained. Where possible with younger classes two adults should escort the children to the toilet and the children should be encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves. Girls should only be escorted to the toilet by women.

- **Physical contact** with children / adults at risk should be kept public. A hug in a group is very different to a hug behind closed doors.
- **Touch** should be related to the child's / adult's at risk needs and not the worker's.
- **Touch** should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child/adult at risk rather than the worker.
- **Avoid** any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child/adult at risk.
- Children / adult(s) at risk have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything, which could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse should always be reported.
- If you invite a child to your home, ensure that this is with the full knowledge and consent of their parent(s) / carer(s) and the Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry leaders. If an adult at risk is part of the Teen Ministry, ensure that this is with the full knowledge and consent of their parent(s) / carer(s).
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children and travelling with children / adult(s) that you have parental permission. If an adult at risk is part of the Teen Ministry, any travel arrangement should be made with the full knowledge and consent of their parent(s) / carer(s).

6.5 Under 18's working in Children's Ministry

No person under the age of 18 should be left in charge of any children of any age nor any adult(s) at risk. When under the supervision of an adult, persons between the ages of 16 to 17 may supervise / lead activities. Class Teachers and Teen Ministry Leaders must be 18 or over.

6.6 Registration and Record Keeping of Children's Ministry Classes

A register of children attending Children's Ministry classes should be kept along with a register of all assistants. You should also note if someone other than the parent / guardian is to be collecting the child. This should be kept for an indefinite period by the Children's Ministry Coordinators.

6.6 Registration and Record Keeping of Children's Ministry Classes

All activities for children and adults at risk will comply with the relevant health and safety requirements. Buildings being used for children and "adults at risk" groups should be risk assessed to consider all aspects of safety.

6.8 Accident Book & First Aid Kit

Each congregation should have an accident book and at least one adequate First Aid kit. All accidents and injuries should be recorded and in the case of children, parents / guardians

should be asked to sign the accident book. Older children should also be asked to sign the book next to the entry relating to their accident / injury. Accident books should be kept for an indefinite period by the local Children's Ministry Co-ordinator / Teen Leader.

Each congregation should maintain a separate logbook reporting any untoward incidents. One logbook can cover both the Children's Ministry and Teen Ministry. Workers should record unusual events with each leader recording what they witnessed. This can be very helpful if leaders have to deal with a difficult young person who may subsequently make accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

Logbooks should include records of incidents such as fights or extreme behavioural issues and what action has been taken by the leaders. As the information in a logbook is likely to be very sensitive, the logbook should be kept separate from the accident book, which is used to record any accidents or injuries. Logbooks should be kept for an indefinite period by the Children's Ministry Coordinators / Teen Leaders.

6.9 Fire Procedures

It is a legal requirement that all responsible persons are familiar with the emergency procedures in the event of a fire. The local congregation emergency evacuation procedures have a specific procedure for the youth ministry to include who will inform them, the routes, assembly points and the collection of children by parents. It is advisable that a Fire Drill be carried out at least once a year where regular meetings are held.

6.10 Daytrips and Residential activities

All daytrips and residential activities should take place in consultation with the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer. They will advise on best practices, risk management, child protection and insurance and provide parental consent forms where applicable.

Day trips and residential activities organised by and sponsored by TCCOC are covered by this policy. For events organised by parents e.g. a preteen activity to a climbing centre / sleepovers, safeguarding is the responsibility of the parents and adults involved.

6.11 Safe Working Practice Audit

The TCCOC Safeguarding Officer may carry out or request that a safe working practice audit is carried out at any time.

6.12 Miscellaneous situations

Situations that are unclear or not covered in this policy document should be dealt with in consultation with the TCCOC Safeguarding Officer who will seek external advice and direction if necessary.

6.13 Using images of Children / Adult(s) at Risk

TCcoC take the issue of child / adult at risk safety very seriously, and this includes the use of personal images. We occasionally include images of children / adults at risk on our website and social media pages. We have a duty of care which means that children / adult(s) at risk must remain unidentifiable, reducing the risk of inappropriate contact, if images are used in this way.

When taking group pictures or filming, permission should be obtained for everyone who will be photographed / filmed. This can be done by parents / carers and adults at risk (with capacity). The onus will be on the parent / carer or adult at risk to let the photographer know if they do NOT want their child / adult at risk to be photographed / filmed.

6.15 Contacts

The contact details for the following are:

- a) TCcoC Safeguarding Officer
Charl Olivier
075 27801336
- b) TCcoC Safeguarding Administrator
Penny Cox
07984978534
- c) Thirtyone:eight *
0303 0031 111
- d) Local Authority Social Services and Police Protection Team
0300 123 4043.

* Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals and organisations such as ICC Missions protect vulnerable people from abuse. They act as an umbrella agency for criminal record check administration, they provide training courses as mentioned above and also specialist support and advice with any safeguarding concerns.