



Tavistock United Reformed Church

Safeguarding Policy

for our Adults & Children

Introduction

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Tavistock United Reformed Church. We acknowledge both adults and children's right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of adults & children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice in order to protect vulnerable people in our church.

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

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

We appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and, when possible, a Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator who have specific responsibilities for Safeguarding, whilst acknowledging that Safeguarding is a whole Church responsibility. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be contacted.

We organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to adults and children.

We follow the Safer Recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with adults or children at risk, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources and training to those who work with adults and children.

We use reasonable supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk which could include partners of offenders.

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

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be responded to appropriately.

We will co-operate with the Police, Children's and Adult's Services in any investigation and will maintain reasonable confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We will refer concerns about staff (volunteers and paid, lay or ordained) that seem to meet the relevant criteria, to the URC Synod Safeguarding Officer and then as appropriate to Care Direct or the West Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Our Statement of Safeguarding Principles is attached as Appendix 1.

Aim and purpose of this Policy

The aim of this Policy is to provide procedures for promoting Safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting adults at risk, children and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when Safeguarding concerns are raised involving adults and children within our Church and those who attend our activities and events.

Who this policy applies to

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

- all those who attend our Church / place of worship or lead our services
- our trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- organisations who hire our building with the agreement to operate in compliance with the Church's Safeguarding policy.

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with the most recent United Reformed Church guidance.

Definitions

Adults at risk refers to any adult (over 18) who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care of or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

Children refers to those under the age of 18 years.

Duty of Care and Confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all adults or children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

Preventing abuse

The Church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) for vulnerable adults and children. **A role description is attached as Appendix 2.**

Activities are organised in accordance with URC recommended good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessments are carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used, and appropriate records will be kept together with adequate insurance.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include:-

- asking applicants to complete the application form
- providing workers with role / job descriptions
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring checks wherever legally required to do so
- taking up references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates.

Training in Safeguarding will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervised in their role(s).

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a Code of Conduct (**Code for workers attached as Appendix 3**) and understand that there may be action taken if this Code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working with / volunteering for us.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed adults or children in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a contract to minimise the risk of harm to adults and children.

Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with adults or children must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this Safeguarding Policy as a condition of the letting agreement.

What are we protecting ?

The definitions of abuse differ between adults and children.

The definitions of abuse in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 5.

The definitions relating to children are attached as Appendix 4.

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. **A list of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 7 and in relation to children is attached at Appendix 6.** Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories of abuse.

It is essential to note that these are **only indicators of possible abuse**. There may be other innocent reasons for any of these signs and / or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse in one form or another is a possible explanation for an adult or child's behaviour.

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

If an adult or child makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:-

- stays calm and listens carefully
- reassures them that they are doing the right thing in telling you
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (**using the template in Appendix 8**). This should be given to the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and kept securely.
- Informs the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or Deputy) as soon as possible. If they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police should be contacted.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm:-

- the concern should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants referral to the Synod Safeguarding Officer and to the statutory agencies (see below for the relevant statutory contact details)
- **a confidential written record should be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding the threat using the template at Appendix 8.** This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made or recommended by the Synod Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- the person(s) about whom the allegation is made must not be informed if it is judged that to do so would place an adult or child at increased risk. If the statutory agencies are involved they should provide further guidance
- the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any concerns.

If someone in the Church is alleged or known to have harmed adults or children

We will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support and we will contact the relevant statutory authority.

If the allegation concerns a Church staff member or volunteer

For concerns relating to adults, Care Direct will be contacted. **See Key Contacts on Page 7 for the details.**

For any concerns relating to children, the West Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with MASH. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by MASH about when to inform the worker and the Church should follow this advice. **For MASH contact details, see Key Contacts, Page 7.**

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the Church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with adults / children at risk or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a different position because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct, satisfied the harm test, or committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

In such cases, a report will also be made to the Charity Commission (v the Synod Safeguarding Officer), as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and therefore require notification.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns or complaints please contact the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the Safeguarding Deputy Co-ordinator.

See their details below.

If is essential to have complaints in writing, as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing, complaints will be acted upon and usually within 10 days.

Safeguarding Policy Review

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

Date of the most recent review: draft R3 9th January 2020

Date of next review: September 2020

Signed: (on behalf of the Church Elders)
Revd Robert Weston

Date

Key Contacts: Also sources of advice and support:-

The Church Safeguarding Coordinator is:-

Name: Mrs Stella Rasdall

Telephone No: 01822 832806

Email: stellarasdall@gmail.com

The Church Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator is:-

To be appointed

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Name: Ms Jan Murphy

Telephone No: 07875 454 064

Email SafeguardingOfficer@urcsouthwest.org.uk

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) *(This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)*

24 hour helpline: 0303 003 1111

Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk

Care Direct

Telephone No: 0345 155 1007

Email: csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk

Statutory contact in the case of a child

MASH (West Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Telephone No: 0345 155 1078

mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

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