



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: October 2025

Date of next review: September 2026

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

Date 19 October 2025

Key Contacts: Also sources of advice and support:-

The Church Safeguarding Coordinator is:-

Name: Mrs Stella Rasdall

Telephone No: 01822 832806

Mobile 07811 924 550

Email: stellarasdall@gmail.com

The Church Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator is:-

Name: Mrs Joanne O'Driscoll

Telephone: 01822 870605

Mobile: 07824 364 843

Email: joanne.odriscoll@hotmail.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer Name: Ms Claire Partridge

Telephone No: 07875 454 064

Email SafeguardingOfficer@urcsouthwest.org.uk

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 1071 mashsecure@devon.gov.uk Out of
hours call 03456000388

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Safeguarding Policy

for our Adults & Children -

The Appendices

Appendix 1- Statement of Intent

The following statement has been agreed by the leadership of Tavistock United Reformed Church.

This Church is committed to the safeguarding of adults at risk and children, and to ensuring their well-being.

- We believe that all adults at risk and children should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our Church.
- We respect the personal dignity and rights of adults at risk and children (for example, as set out in the Human Rights Act 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and will ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.

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

- We report any abuse of adults at risk or children that we discover or suspect.

- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be contacted as a matter of urgency.

- We recognise that MASH (West Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Care Direct do so for adults at risk.

- We acknowledge that MASH (West Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) have responsibility for dealing with all allegations and concerns about people working with children, whether paid or voluntary workers, lay or ordained.

- We recognise that safeguarding is a whole Church responsibility.

We are committed to:

- The establishment of a loving environment, which is safe and caring, and where there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- Following the relevant legislation, statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that we keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with the relevant Voluntary and Statutory Authorities.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a church, everyone works within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect adults at risk and children.
- Following safer recruitment principles in the appointment and selection of all those who work with adults at risk and children, be they volunteer or paid staff, lay or ordained.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with adults at risk and children.
- Ensuring that the adults and children we have contact with know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any abuse of adults at risk or children that we discover or suspect.
- Supporting all those in our church who are affected by abuse.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to adults at risk or children implementing contracts of behaviour, whilst bearing in mind the overarching principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- If an assessment is made that someone poses an unmanageable risk to those in need of protection and could not safely attend our church we will ensure that they continue to be offered pastoral care and will signpost them to appropriate agencies for support

Appendix 2 The Role of a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator

Context

We believe that children and adults deserve the best possible care that the Church can provide, and that the Church should be a safe place for everyone involved. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

Purpose of the role:

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church.
- To provide a first point of contact regarding safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church

Responsibilities

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure in the church:

- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and fit for purpose.
- To make others in the church aware of the Church safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as URC guidelines.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in recruitment of all workers, both volunteers and paid, including, but not exclusively, ensuring that relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Checks.

To be a first point of contact for safeguarding issues.

- To be the named person that adults at risk, children, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.

- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate people within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or MASH of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer at the time of any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory agencies
- To report summary safeguarding information annually to the Synod Safeguarding Officer to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impacts of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and congregation, including both paid staff and volunteers.
- To update their own safeguarding training every 2 years.
- To seek appropriate support, and advice, in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when they are not available, and to publicise who this is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

Appendix 3

Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

We should all be aware that behaviour in a worker's personal life (including online) may impact upon their work with children or young people. Therefore, all workers agree not to behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model within the United Reformed Church.

All workers should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children and young people:

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect. Don't abuse the power and responsibility of your role.
- Don't belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and,
- Don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo).

- Do act inclusively, seeking to make all people feel welcome and valued.
- Don't exclude other children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason.
- Do treat people with equal care and concern.
- Don't show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc.)
 - or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts).

- Do encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules
 - and apply sanctions consistently.
- Don't threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed or make empty
 - threats.

- Do refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning of possible consequences.
- Don't feel you have to deal with every problem on your own.
- Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of
 - physical contact.
- Don't use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent injury. This
 - should be the use of minimum force.

- Do relate to children in public. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an
 - issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk.
- Don't spend time alone with children out of the sight of other people

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

- Don't keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences

Do have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your

- group's activities, in line with people's consent and URC good practice guidelines.
- Don't take photos and video without consent. Store them in a place designated by the church and only use in the ways agreed in line with Good Practice guidelines.
- Do use physical contact wisely - it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child.
 - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult.
 - respectful of the child's privacy, feelings and dignity.
- Don't use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual.
- Do respect children's privacy.
- Don't assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you
 - are a worker.
- Do respect the right of children to wash, change and use the toilet in private.
- Don't walk in unnecessarily or unannounced.
- Do listen to children and do tell the safeguarding officer if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Don't promise to keep something secret if it is about a child at risk of harm, but only tell those who need to know.
- Do respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices.
- Don't work in ways that put your needs and interests before those of the children you work with.
- Do encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture.
- Don't discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged.

I agree to abide by the above Code of Conduct while working with children & young people on behalf of Tavistock United Reformed Church.

Name of worker: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4 Definitions of abuse (Children)

What is abuse and neglect of Children ?

These definitions are taken from *Working Together 2013*

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 a child 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)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Appendix 5 Definitions of abuse (Adults at risk)

Who are adults at risk?

Any adult who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

Definition of abuse in relation to adults at risk

Abuse is about the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. In determining whether or not abuse has taken place, it is important to remember that intent is not the issue. The definition of abuse is based not on whether the perpetrator intended harm to be caused but rather on whether harm was caused, and on the impact of the harm (or risk of harm) on the individual.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can include assault, being hit, slapped or restrained. Misuse of medication, to subdue or control a person is physical abuse, as is denying someone food or water, or failing to help them to keep warm, use the toilet, or conduct their physical care.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

Can involve threatening to hurt someone, to abandon them, preventing access to visitors, friends, and family. Being humiliated, insulted, blamed, controlled, intimidated, bullied, or harassed can constitute emotional abuse. Such abuse can take place face to face, online or in other communications. Being denied access to aspects of life, which are important to a person's emotional wellbeing, is a form of emotional abuse. This may include being denied access to religious or spiritual materials that are important to the person, or in some circumstances, being prevented from attending church or other faith and worship settings.

The withdrawal of care services and support which cannot be justified and appear unreasonable may also constitute a form of psychological abuse.

Sexual Abuse

This includes any form of sexual harassment, inappropriate touching or looking, indecent exposure, sexual teasing or innuendo, being subjected to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and any sexual act that the person did not agree to, or felt pressurised into consenting to, as well as rape.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when there is a deliberate withholding of help, care or other basic requirements, with the intention of causing harm or abuse. Failures to attend to someone's personal care or to provide the right sort of help, or medical care are all forms of neglect. Examples include not having access to enough food and drink, or the right type of food and drink, or not being provided with warmth or basic hygiene arrangements. Being denied access to medication or the inappropriate use of medication is also a form of neglect. Although neglect is a form of abuse, it has close overlaps with other types of abuse such as psychological or physical abuse, because the action of omission leads to other harms as a direct consequence

Financial or Material Abuse

This occurs when monies and valuables have been stolen, or where someone uses coercion or deception, to gain access to money and possessions, and uses them in ways that the person does not wish. It might involve theft of money or valuables, fraud, scams, gaining access to a bank account, or benefits, providing financial services in full knowledge that someone lacks capacity, or inappropriate use of money by someone appointed to look after financial assets on the person's behalf. Financial abuse is a common form of abuse against adults at risk.

Discriminatory Abuse

This involves unfair treatment because of a person's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. It can include some forms of harassment, verbal abuse, and slurs upon the person's character. Physical abuse and other forms of abuse can arise because of discrimination. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals.

Institutional Abuse

Institutional abuse occurs when a place, company, organisation or charity undertakes practices which cause harm and abuse. Examples include: care homes where rotas are arranged for the benefit of staff, instead of the wellbeing of the people in the home, prisons which fail to address practices known to cause harm and when known abuse is ignored to protect adults and/or limit reputational damage. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse and/or intimate abuse is when a form of violence, or other type of abuse, is inflicted by a partner or family member. It can be a single incident or a recurring pattern which involves controlling, coercive or threatening actions. Forced Marriage and so called 'Honour Based' violence are also forms of domestic abuse.

Forced Marriage

When an adult is coerced, pressurised or deceived into a marriage, to which they would/do not consent, this is a forced marriage. It differs from arranged marriages, which are agreed to by both parties. It can also occur when a wedding is arranged for someone with learning disabilities and they are not capable of consent.

Trafficking/Modern Slavery

This is an increasing form of abuse which is prevalent in all areas of the UK. It involves the purposeful movement of an adult for economic benefit to a third party, often involving forced labour, unpaid labour, sexual exploitation, rape or prostitution.

Self-neglect

Self-harm is any form of self-inflicted injury or hurt. This can include self-neglect and/or a failure to attend to basic needs. Adults, who harm themselves for whatever purpose, can be adults at risk. Hoarding is a form of self-neglect, because it can arise from a neglect of home and surroundings and may be illustrative of mental health concerns. Hoarding increases the risk of fire and ill health, as well as financial and other types of abuse.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is a recognised form of abuse which misuses power and is very relevant in Church and faith settings.

The term spiritual abuse covers a wide variety of behaviours and can be summarised as the use of spiritual authority or spiritual means in order to demean, manipulate, control or exploit someone.

APPENDIX 6 Signs of Possible Abuse - Children

Physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries
- Injuries that are inconsistent with explanation
- Injuries that reflect an article used e.g. an iron
- Bruising, especially trunk, upper arm, shoulders, neck or fingertip bruising.
- Burns/scalds, especially cigarette.
- Human bite marks.
- Fractures especially spiral.
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs.
- Serious injury with lack of / inconsistent explanation.
- Untreated injuries.

Psychological/Emotional abuse

- Unusually fearful with adults.
- Unnaturally compliant to parents.
- Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Aggression towards others.
- Wears cover up clothing.

Fictitious Illness by Proxy

This is a psychiatric illness, whereby a parent or carer deliberately inflicts harm onto a child, normally the child's mother. The child has commonly had genuine serious illness in the first year of life and a dependency on medical attention has developed in the mother. It is very difficult to diagnose/evidence.

Female Genital Mutilation

A cultural (not religious) procedure whereby parts of female genitalia are removed - also referred to as female circumcision. This is normally undertaken on pre-pubescent girls who are either taken abroad for procedure or "practitioners" come to UK. There can be no anaesthetic and no sterile equipment used. Complications include - serious infection, septicaemia, numerous gynaecological problems and in some cases death. It is illegal in many countries, including the UK.

Emotional abuse

The classic description of Emotional Abuse is "Low Warmth High Criticism" style of parenting.

- Physical, mental and emotional lags.
- Acceptance of punishments, which appear excessive.
- Over reaction to mistakes.
- Continual self-depreciation.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Fear of new situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).
- Self-harm.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Drug/solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Bullying/Aggression
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Clingy
- Fearful/withdrawn
- Sleep disorders

Neglect

- Tired/listless
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Poor state of clothing.
- Emaciation, potbelly, short stature.
- Poor skin tone and hair tone.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Failure to thrive with no medical reason.

Psychological/Emotional

- Constant hunger.
- Constant tiredness.
- Frequent lateness/non-attendance at school.
- Destructive tendencies.
- Low self-esteem.
- Neurotic behaviour.
- No social relationships.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging.
- Multiple accidents/accidental injuries.

Sexual abuse

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Soreness to genitalia area, anus or mouth

- Repeated stomach aches
- Loss of weight
- Gaining weight
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections, discharges or abdominal pain
- Unexplained gifts/money

Psychological/Emotional

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Sudden changes in personality
- Lack of concentration, restlessness
- Socially withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting - day or night
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Eating disorders

Appendix 7 Signs of Possible Abuse - Adults at risk

Physical

- No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained falls
- Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- Signs of malnutrition
- Failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP

Psychological

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss//gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes

Sexual

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Foreign bodies in genital or rectal openings
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- Fear of receiving help with personal care
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

Neglect

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

Financial or Material

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle/pay bills
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property
- Rent arrears and eviction notices
- A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- Unnecessary property repairs

Discriminatory

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic
- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect

Institutional

- Lack of flexibility and choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc.
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Poor standards of care
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
- Poor record-keeping and missing documents
- Absence of visitors
- Few social, recreational and educational activities
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet

- Absence of individual care plans
- Lack of management overview and support

Domestic abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation - not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

Forced Marriage

- Surveillance by siblings or cousins
- Not allowed to work
- Unable to attend business trips or functions.
- Subject to financial control e.g. confiscation of wages / income
- Leaving work accompanied
- Accompanied to doctors or clinic
- Self-harm
- Attempted suicide
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Isolation
- Substance misuse
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education

Trafficking/Modern slavery

- Signs of physical or emotional abuse
- Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
- Lack of personal effects or identification documents
- Always wearing the same clothes
- Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of law enforcers

Self-neglect

- Poor environment - dirty or unhygienic
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- Very poor personal hygiene

- Unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury

Appendix 8 INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

(See separate form available below)



Tavistock United Reformed Church

INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

Date and time of Incident:

Date on which this report was written:

Your full
name:

Full name of child, young person or adult
concerned:

Address, if known

Date of birth, if known... ..

Location /
Situation:
.....

.....
.....

Other people
present:
.....

.....
.....

Record of Incident:

- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible - do not interpret what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.

Signed:

Date:

(by the person who wrote this report)

Who has been spoken to about this Incident?

Record below the details of all those with whom you have spoken about your concerns:

Organisation	Name	Date	Comments
Local Church Safeguarding Coordinator			
SW SYNOD Safeguarding Officer			
MASH			
Care Direct			
Police			
NSPCC			
Parent / Carer			
Others:			

Feedback and follow up actions:

Signed:

Date:

Position held in the

Church:.....



Tavistock United Reformed Church Safeguarding is a priority here

We are committed to the Safeguarding of adults at risk, children and the safer recruitment of workers. In doing so we follow legislation, government and denominational safeguarding guidelines.

We have a formal Safeguarding Policy, copies of which are available on our website and from the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) named below.

If you have any concerns about adults at risk and/or the safety or welfare of a child you should raise with our Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) listed below:

Name...Stella Rasdall..... Contact numbers: 01822...832806.....

Mobile: 07811 924 550

Email: stellarasdall@gmail.com

Name Jo O'driscoll..... Contact numbers 01822.870605...

Mobile: 07824 364 843

Email: joanne_odriscoll@hotmail.com

Those named above have been trained in Safeguarding and are appointed by the Elders of this Church to respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns you may have.

For more information please see Tavistock United Reformed website.

Signed...Rev...Robert...Weston.....Dated 19 October 2025.....

Other useful contacts

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Non Emergency number for: Police 101
NHS 111

Kidscape: (Advice and Helpline regarding Bullying) 0207 730 3300

Stop It Now! (Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Charity) 0808 1000 900

Action on Elder Abuse: 0808 808 8141

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) 0800 801 0331

Synod Safeguarding Officer: Claire Partridge: 07875 454 064