



# Protect the Vulnerable

Riverside Church, Sleaford  
Policies relating to the protection of children,  
youth and adults at risk

Version 1.1 June 2018



## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: “Protect the Vulnerable”**

Working with children, youth and adults at risk.

### **About this document**

“Protect the Vulnerable” is a document designed to help Riverside Church and all of the organisations that operate under the covering of Riverside Church to provide a safe environment for children, youth and adults at risk, so that they may thrive and develop physically, intellectually and spiritually. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages, and it is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or other abuse of all people, not just children, young people and adults at risk. We also seek to protect our workers (paid or unpaid) from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways which may be well-intentioned but inadvisable.

“Protect the Vulnerable” is therefore a number of Policies and statements that have been adopted by Riverside Church that together form the policy of the church. This document is also used as part of the training for Youth and Children’s workers and those who work with adults at risk. Many of the policies contained in “Protect the Vulnerable” are explicitly written with youth and children’s work in mind, but most of the principles and many of the details are equally applicable to working with adults at risk.

Each volunteer or paid worker in these areas will be issued with a copy of policy statement on protecting children\* and adults at risk\*\*, and a notice drawing attention to the policy is displayed in the Church Sanctuary and Hall. They will also have access to “Protect the Vulnerable”, and training will be regularly offered in the contents of the document and the implications of the various policies it contains.

“Protect the Vulnerable” uses the Home Office code of practice for working with young people ‘Safe from Harm’ as a cornerstone for the work with children. This document has been based on the United Reformed Church’s “Good Practice” guide (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), and the policies recommended by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board and those in use at River Ministries (Norfolk).

“Protect the Vulnerable” is not a threat to existing work. Rather, it is a way of making even more effective the care and love which inspires both the work and the workers.

Finally, it must also be understood that all of us are vulnerable at different stages in our life. All those associated with Riverside Church and working on our behalf at any time is expected to treat every other person with due courtesy, care and respect. Some of the policies in this document apply to many other situations (for example, the policy on confidentiality is relevant to all pastoral care situations.)

(\* From this point onwards, the term “children” is used in its legal sense – any person under the age of 18. Teenagers, “Youth” and “young people” are therefore included in this term.

\*\* From this point onward, the term “adult at risk” refers to the CCPAS definition, ie: ‘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’.)

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**POLICY STATEMENT on the protection of children and adults at risk**

As one of its major activities, Riverside Church, Sleaford ("the Church") seeks to serve the needs of young people, promoting holistic development. We also regularly work with adults who are at risk by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

In doing so, the Church takes seriously the welfare of all adults at risk, young people and children who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

The Church aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

The Church recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent all forms of abuse including the neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of adults at risk and children and to report any abuse discovered, disclosed, or suspected.

The Church recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with adults at risk and children, and to providing appropriate supervision.

The Church is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care and community or social care authorities.

**Any groups or organisations who work with adults at risk or children and who wish to hire/use the Church premises must have their own Child & Adult at risk Protection Policy in place and/or undertake to follow the Home Office code of practice Safe from Harm for children.**

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009.

Document revised by Dominique Heads in June 2018.

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### **POLICY DOCUMENT – The Protection of Children and Adults at risk**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children and adults at risk attending any activity organised and/or run by Riverside Church, Sleaford are kept safe. This policy will also ensure that concerns about children and adults at risk are followed up in the right way, and it will also ensure that everyone including parents/carers, employed staff, volunteers, children and adults at risk know what should happen, and what is expected of them. Many concerns about children and adults at risk arise on a day-to-day basis, and in most cases these can be dealt with quickly and easily through discussions between staff and parents/carers, when further help and advice may be offered, if needed. These discussions must be recorded using an incident report form. A sample is given at the end of the information document “Children and Adults at Risk,” which is part of “Protect the Vulnerable” (page 15). “Children and Adults at Risk” also discusses the types of abuse and ways in which abuse might be recognised.

#### **Responding to Concern**

It is the role of Social Services and/or the Police to investigate allegations or concerns about abuse. The role of Riverside Church workers (which includes both employees and unpaid volunteers) is to help to identify concerns and pass them on to the relevant agency for action to be taken.

If a worker has a concern about a child or adult at risk, they should:

- Take appropriate action if the child/adult at risk is in need of urgent attention;
- Collect as much information as possible about the situation – this may be from the child/adult at risk in question, a parent or carer, or other workers, and should include the date and time of the incident or disclosure/allegation of abuse, parties who were involved, what was said or done and by whom, and any further actions. It may also be helpful to record the worker’s perception of emotional and physical presentation;
- Be open about the concern and make it clear that the worker WILL have to tell others;
- Take their concern to their line manager/supervisor as soon as possible, and in any case within 24 hours;
- Complete an Incident Report Form, and date and sign it.

It is the responsibility of the line manager/supervisor to consider the information given on the Incident Report Form and to decide on what action needs to be taken. This must be recorded clearly on the Incident Report Form, and if the line manager/supervisor needs help in making a decision they must contact the church’s Child and Adult at risk Safeguarding Coordinator, the Minister or Senior Leader, or either of the Umbrella Organisations – contact details are given on page 28 of the “Protect the Vulnerable” document. If no further action is considered necessary, the reasons why must be documented on the Incident Report Form, and the form placed on file. The Church Secretary is responsible for secure storage of these records. Whether or not those responsible decide to report the allegation or suspicion to the authorities, the parents/carers of the child or adult at risk should normally be made aware of this record, unless they are the subject of the allegation or suspicion and sharing the details might place the child/adult at risk at risk of further harm.

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### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

It is the policy of Riverside Church that all employees and volunteer workers who are likely to have regular and/or unsupervised access to children or adults at risk shall apply for an Enhanced DBS check. Other workers may also be required to apply for either a Standard or Enhanced DBS check, according to the outcome of a risk assessment which shall be carried out by the church. For further information, consult the policy document, "Recruitment of Children's Workers" on page 37 of "Protect the Vulnerable." It is the policy of Riverside Church that no worker (employee or volunteer) shall have unsupervised access to children or adult at risks until a satisfactory Disclosure has been obtained and satisfactory references (one of which must be from their former church when applicable) have been received and reviewed. All new workers with children and adults at risk shall be subject to a supervised probationary period until they have completed training in child/adult at risk protection procedures.

### **Procedures for dealing with allegations against workers**

If an allegation is made against any Riverside Church worker (whether employed or operating in a voluntary capacity) that causes concern that they have:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/adult at risk, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/adult at risk, or
- Behaved towards a child/adult at risk in a way that indicated that s/he is unsuitable to work with children/adults at risk, then the Children and Adults at risk Safeguarding Coordinator will ensure an Incident Report Form is completed, and if there are reasonable grounds for the allegation to be investigated further, they will contact Social Services and/or the Police for investigation to take place.

If referral to the authorities is judged to be appropriate, they shall also notify the Minister or Senior Leader of the Church and the URC East Midlands Synod's Children and Youth Development Officer, and, if a Minister of the United Reformed Church is the subject of the allegation, they shall also notify the Moderator of the East Midlands Synod of the URC. Suspension from duty is not an automatic response to an allegation, but the Children and Adults at risk Safeguarding Coordinator shall consider the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to the child/adult at risk, and the possibility of tampering with evidence or seeking to influence the complainant or witnesses, as well as the interests of the subject of the allegation and the church. Where suspension from duty is judged to be appropriate, it is understood that suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt. Suspension from duty must be for the minimum period necessary to enable a proper investigation of the facts to take place, and any follow-up action (which might include a return to duties, a period of further training, permanent removal from those duties, a report being made to the statutory authorities, or some other measure) must also take place without any undue delay.

### **Maintaining a safe environment**

It is impossible to create a completely safe environment in which services and activities for children, adults at risk and others are completely free from risk of harm. However, in common with all organisations, Riverside Church has a duty to minimise unacceptable risks as far as is possible to provide a safe environment for work, learning, and play. Leaders of any activity have the first responsibility to ensure that risks in their immediate environment are minimised, and rooms and other areas and all equipment that will be used for the activity must be checked for safety on each occasion that they are to be used. Most of the measures that will need to be taken are simple and common-sense. For example, are doors locked to keep unauthorised visitors out? Are chairs stacked safely (or removed from the room) so that a child won't cause them to fall?

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Have items of equipment been damaged since they were last used, perhaps presenting sharp edges or small pieces that might be hazardous to health? See the Riverside Church Health & Safety Policy for further details on risk assessment and safety in general.

Additional precautions for events involving children and adults at risk include:

- Ensuring that a telephone is available or the location of one is known;
- Keeping a register of those attending, including workers;
- Adopting a 'signing in and out' procedure for a youth group;
- Ensuring that others, not part of the event, who enter the building are monitored.

There are some particular safety considerations that apply to work with children, and the following sections deal with those and set out policy for them.

#### **Adult/child ratios**

It is the policy of Riverside Church that a minimum of two adults will be present for any activity involving children, and ideally a minimum of three; if a second adult is not present, the activity must not commence. Wherever possible, activities should be planned to allow at least one male and at least one female adult, but it is understood that this will not always be possible. Depending on the size of the group, more adults may be required, and children's workers will conform to the requirements of the Children Act 1989 as follows:

- For indoor activities with children aged 0-2: 1 adult to three children;
  - For indoor activities with children aged 2-3: 1 adult to four children;
  - For indoor activities with children aged 3-7: 1 adult to eight children;
- always subject to the requirement to have at least two adults present.

The Children Act specifies the adult/child ratios for children under 8; for indoor activities with children aged 8 and over the recommended ratios are two adults for up to 20 children, then one extra adult for every extra ten children (or part thereof). For outdoor activities and activities that inherently contain a greater degree of risk, the number of adults should be increased so that a greater degree of supervision and vigilance can be maintained.

Always subject to the minimum-two-adults-present rule, the recommended ratios for outdoor activities is:

- For children aged 0-2: 1 adult to three children
- For children aged 2-3: 1 adult to four children
- For children aged 3-7: 1 adult to six children
- For children aged 8-13: 2 adults to fifteen children and one further adult for every extra eight children (or part thereof).
- For children aged 13-18: 2 adults to twenty children and one further adult for every extra ten children (or part thereof).

For journeys abroad, a minimum of three adults must be present, with at least one male and at least one female adult. The recommended ratio is at least one adult to ten children, subject to the minimum of three adults.

#### **Arrangements for leaving and collecting children**

Parental consent for children taking part in Riverside Church activities is assumed when the parent/carers accompany their children and remain with them throughout the activity. For any activity where the children are left in the care of Riverside Church staff, a signed parental consent form MUST be obtained.

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For regular children's work activities, parental consent may be obtained and renewed annually, but consent will only be valid for the named activity (i.e consent to attend Boys' Brigade activities does not imply consent for the child to attend youth club or Junior church activities).

Parental consent should be obtained for any activities that take place away from the normal venue for the activity. For instance, if consent has been given for a child to attend Girls' Brigade, which normally meets on the church premises, additional consent will be required to take the children to visit the park, attend a church parade away from the town, or to go tenpin bowling. It would be acceptable, however, to obtain a "blanket" consent for all Girls' and Boys' Brigade activities, including events around or away from the town provided that is made clear on the form that consent for these additional activities is being sought. Notwithstanding this, additional, specific, consent will be required for all residential activities where the children will not be accompanied and under the supervision of their own parents/carers, regardless of any existing consent obtained for the children to take part in other activities run by that particular group or organisation within the church. The consent form must include the name, date of birth and address of the child, emergency contact details for the parents/carers, and any allergies, health or other special needs that the child has. A sample form is included at the end of this policy (see page 16 of "Protect the Vulnerable.") When children are collected at the end of the activity, the leaders are responsible for ensuring that the child only leaves with an adult named on the consent form, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. It is acceptable, however, for young people over the age of 13 to sign in and out of the event, unless parental objection has been made. The time that the teenager arrives and leaves must be noted, and where young people arrive more than ten minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early, the parents/guardians should be informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

On occasion it will be helpful for workers to collect or drop off children at the child's home. This should only be done with the prior knowledge and consent of the parent/carer. On all such occasions, if the law requires a child to use a booster seat, this must be provided by the parent/carer and the worker is responsible for seeing that the child uses it. In any case, all children travelling in cars, minibuses or coaches must use an appropriate restraint (seat belt or approved child seat) at all times that the vehicle is moving. Wherever possible, the child(ren) should be in the back seat of the vehicle, and the worker should not be alone in a vehicle with one child.

### **Use of photographs**

Photographs taken during Riverside Church activities may be used for display on the church premises, used in the press, or published on our own website. Any such photograph may be used only if, under the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), permission has been received from the subject of those pictures or in the case of children under 16, a parent/carer of those children.

Photographs used publicly will not:

- Show the outside of the building identifiably;
- Use the surname of children or any identification of home address or other contact details;
- Be used to embarrass or humiliate any individual;
- Be of any person who is dressed unsuitably or in a sexually provocative pose.

Where children appear in the photograph, they will only be used if the activity or group has obvious adult supervision. Subject to having met the other conditions above, children may be identified by giving their first name and age.

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### **Code of behaviour for workers with children and adults at risk**

In any organisation, there are boundaries for appropriate behaviour. Those who work in any paid or voluntary capacity for Riverside Church are expected and required to operate with the highest degree of integrity and honesty at all times. Offensive, violent, unethical or otherwise illegal behaviour is unacceptable at all times, and workers may not discriminate against any person on the grounds of age, race, sex, ability or sexual orientation.

Workers with children and adults at risk are also forbidden from engaging in the following behaviours:

- Sexual conduct;
- Lending or borrowing of money or property;
- Giving or receiving gifts\*;
- Exclusive or secretive relationships;
- Taking people who use your services into your home;
- Physical restraint except when in accordance with the terms given in the policy statement on the use of force to control or restrain children or adult at risks (see page 31 of "Protect the Vulnerable").

\* An exception to this rule is made where a group leader gives a gift of small monetary value to every member of the group at times such as at Christmas, but it is greatly preferable if the gift is clearly understood to be from the group itself, rather than from an individual worker. Similarly, if an individual child/adult at risk presents a worker with a gift of small monetary value on similar occasions it may be accepted, provided other workers or the worker's line manager/supervisor are immediately informed that the gift has been made. If the nature of the gift to a worker is outside these parameters it must be politely declined or returned, in the presence of another worker. Relationships between workers must be based on mutual respect. All workers are expected to contribute and take responsibility to ensure a positive working environment and to conduct themselves accordingly. Helpful measures for this are found in Matthew 22:39: "*Love your neighbour as yourself*" and in Ephesians 4:29: "*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*"

Therefore, workers (paid and unpaid) are expected to:

- Treat all children and adults at risk with respect;
- Provide a positive example of the good conduct you wish others to follow;
- Respect the right of a child/adult at risk to personal privacy
- Encourage children/adults at risk to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like;
- Remember that other people might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well intentioned;
- Be aware that any physical contact with children or adults at risk might be misinterpreted;
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children and adults at risk;
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all suspicions/allegations of abuse.

Furthermore, all workers must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or adults at risk;
- Allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour;
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or adults at risk;
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;

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- Either exaggerate or trivialise issues of abuse;
- Show favouritism to any individual;
  - Rely on the good name of Riverside Church to protect themselves;
- Believe that, “It could never happen to me”;
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or good practice suggests a more prudent or cautious approach.

### **Intimate care**

It may sometimes be necessary for a worker to do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk, particularly with young children or people with disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer. In an emergency situation that requires this type of help, parents/carers should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible. In such situations, it is important that all staff are sensitive to the child/adult at risk and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion. In all cases, an Incident Report Form (see “Protect the Vulnerable” p.15 for a sample) must be completed so that there is a record of the actions taken. This is primarily to protect the worker from malicious allegations.

### **Complaints procedure**

This procedure provides people with a “safe” way of voicing complaints or concerns, and includes the area of “whistle-blowing” by other workers to highlight unacceptable, abusive or unethical practices by other workers or to highlight institutional weaknesses.

#### Introduction to the complaints procedure

A complaint is any clear dissatisfaction with Riverside Church, its organisations and activities, people working for Riverside Church (paid or unpaid), or the services provided by Riverside Church which calls for a response. This procedure deals with specific concerns including: a risk to the health or safety of any individual or improper conduct or unethical or inappropriate behaviour in relation to children or adults at risk.

Anyone can make a complaint, including children, parents/carers, volunteers, employees, members of the Church or its organisation, and users of the services provided by the Church. Complaints are treated seriously whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax or by e-mail.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely, and with respect. We aim to deal with complaints within 14 days of receiving them. The aim of dealing with complaints is that the Church can learn from them and use them to improve our services.

At Riverside Church people are encouraged to deal with their complaints and disputes on a one-to-one basis in the first instance wherever possible, and then to go to the subject of the complaint with a witness to try to resolve their differences before making it a matter of formal complaint before the Church. (See Matthew 18:15-17). The Church also encourages matters of complaint and dispute to be settled at the lowest possible level within the Church and/or its organisations. However, we recognise that there are some situations where this will be either impossible or unreasonable to the person making the complaint. It is not a requirement that the matter is dealt with informally between the two parties before the formal complaints procedure is followed.

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**How to make a complaint**

Complaints may be made in any way, as noted above. It may be possible to resolve the complaint immediately in a face-to-face discussion with the person who is the subject of the complaint or their line manager/supervisor. If the person making the complaint is unable or does not wish to discuss the matter in person, they may take up their complaint with the Minister or Senior Leader of the Riverside Church or with the Church Secretary, who will take the matter to the Leadership Team. It must be understood, however, that all workers at Riverside Church have the right to work without facing personal abuse. Any face-to-face meeting or discussion that becomes abusive will be terminated, although we will continue to work to resolve the complaint.

Contents of a formal complaint

A formal complaint should include:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- Copies of any relevant correspondence;
- Name(s) of any people that the complainant has written or spoken to up to the point of making a formal complaint;
- Details of what has gone wrong or has been handled improperly;
- A statement of how the complainant would like the complaint to be resolved.

How Riverside Church will respond to complaints

On receipt of a formal complaint, the line manager/supervisor of the person who is the subject of the complaint will contact the complainant to acknowledge that the complaint is being considered. This will normally be done within 48 hours of receipt, but in any case should be done within one week. If the complaint is about the Senior Leader or Minister of the Church, the Church Secretary will be responsible for dealing with the complaint, and making the Leadership Team aware of the complaint and seeking their counsel at all stages whilst trying to resolve the matter.

Within no more than fourteen days of receiving the complaint, the person dealing with it will speak to the person who is the subject of the complaint and put the matter to them with a view to identifying a resolution. A response will be communicated without delay to the complainant.

If the complainant feels that their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, they provide their written reasons for dissatisfaction to the Senior Leader or Minister of the Church, or the Church Secretary where the Senior Leader or Minister was the subject of the original complaint who will re-examine the original complaint in the light of the statement of continuing dissatisfaction. In such a case, the Church Secretary shall raise the matter at a full meeting of the Leadership Team. In either case, at the person(s) considering the ongoing dissatisfaction may call in an independent mediator to try to help the parties resolve their dispute.

As a result of receiving and considering a complaint, the person dealing with it may consider it necessary to invoke the Staff Disciplinary Procedure for employees. It is explicitly understood that any investigation, discussion, or attempted resolution up to that point will not be prejudicial to the outcome of that disciplinary process. At the point of invoking the Staff Disciplinary Procedure the complaints procedure will immediately cease, and the matter will be dealt with on its own merits solely under the scope of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure. The person who had been dealing with the complaint will inform the complainant that this procedure is taking precedence but state that it is without prejudice to any eventual outcome to either the Staff Disciplinary or this complaints procedure. At the conclusion of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure, including any appeal by the employee has been considered; the Senior Leader or Minister of the Church will review the complaint and see if any further action is

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necessary to conclude this Complaints Procedure, and communicate accordingly with the complainant. The Senior Leader or Minister shall give due weight to the decision of the panel that dealt with the Staff Disciplinary Procedure, especially, but not only, if the panel exonerated the employee from any wrong-doing.

In all cases, once the complaint has been dealt with to the satisfaction of all parties, the Leadership Team will review the complaint with a view to seeing what can be learnt for future delivery of services and activities.

"Whistle-blowing" at Riverside Church Whistle-blowing, known in law as Public Interest Disclosure, is when any worker (paid or unpaid) wishes to raise a complaint against either Riverside Church or other workers. All workers have the right and individual responsibility to disclose matters of concern regarding poor practice at work, and employees have a great deal of protection in law if they engage in whistle-blowing activities. Volunteers are not covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act, but the Leadership of Riverside Church undertake to give the same serious consideration to whistle-blowers who are volunteers as they would to employees. Any whistle-blower who acts "in good faith" for the benefit of the Church and its service users will not be subject to discrimination or unfavourable treatment and will be both protected and supported by the Leadership of the Church. This does not apply where the worker is seeking to make personal gain by their disclosure, or where they act out of ulterior motives. It is a disciplinary offence to victimise any worker who engages in whistle-blowing activities, as it knowingly raising malicious and untrue allegations.

It is natural that workers will feel a sense of loyalty to their fellow workers, but where there is a serious failing in conduct or operation, addressing that failure must take higher priority than any sense of loyalty to colleagues. A whistle-blower is not a complainant, but a witness to the wrong-doing when there is a reasonable suspicion of serious poor practice at work, or where they have been told of serious poor practice by a service user.

If any worker is unhappy with any aspect of the working environment they should raise this initially with their own line manager/supervisor. If they are unhappy with the performance or actions of another worker, they should raise this with that other worker's line manager/supervisor. However, if the worker feels unable or unwilling to raise it with the appropriate line manager/supervisor, they should take the matter directly to the Senior Leader or Minister. If the whistle-blower fears they may be victimised, or that a cover-up is taking place, or if the matter has already been raised, wider disclosures can be made and still be protected. Wider disclosures might be to the police, an MP, the media etc. The disclosure should still be reasonable in all circumstances, taking into account the seriousness of the matter and likelihood of reoccurrence. Reasonableness would also include consideration of whether the worker first followed an internal whistle-blowing procedure. However if the wrongdoing is of an 'exceptionally serious nature', (such as involving a major theft) the whistleblower need not fear victimisation or cover up to make a protected disclosure to an external body, although it should still be reasonable particularly with regard to whom the disclosure is made. Any person who makes a whistle-blowing disclosure may remain anonymous on request, unless a court orders that their identity is revealed. Workers will be informed about the progress and outcome of enquiries following a disclosure and the outcome of that enquiry, and policies and procedures will be adjusted as needed and communicated to all workers.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009 (document revised in June 2018)

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**Incident Report Form**

NAME OF CHILD/ADULT AT RISK.....

NAME OF WORKER .....

POSITION OF WORKER .....

DATE & TIME OF REPORT .....

NATURE OF INCIDENT OR CONCERN  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

[If you have not already done so make a factual written record of your observations and any conversations. Sign and date it].

---

WHO HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO ABOUT YOUR CONCERNS?

Child/Adult at risk	Yes/No	
Carer	Yes/No	
Senior Staff / 'link' person	Yes/No	Name .....
Social Services	Yes/No	Name .....

Feedback  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

Signature of Worker: .....: Date & time .....

Signature of 'Link' person/Line Manager: .....

Date & Time: .....

[Use the reverse of this sheet for further comments if necessary].

## Parental Consent and Medical Form

To be completed by a person with parental responsibility for all under-18's. Over 18s and leaders also fill in as appropriate.

Group: .....

Event/Activity\*: .....

Venue\*: ..... Date(s): .....

(\* specify "All" for annual consent)

**To the child/young person handed this form: You cannot take part in the above event or activity unless this form has been signed by your parent/guardian and returned by ..... (date).**

This is for your own health and safety, concern to see that the event is properly organised and that we have a good time. If you are 18 years or over, you may complete the form yourself, but it must still be returned. Leaders/workers should also complete the record of information for use if needed.

**To the parent/guardian: We want young people under the age of 18 years to enjoy activities to the full and to feel secure and protected during their participation in them. Please understand that children and young people cannot participate in events unless this parental consent form has been completed and returned.**

This form must be completed and returned to:

Name: .....

Please keep a note of the contact telephone number: .....

Address: .....

Full name of participant: .....

Address: .....

Date of birth (if under 18): .....

**1. I, the undersigned** ..... (name of parent/guardian/participant over 18) **give permission for him/her to take part in the event/activity named above.**

2. I have read the programme/information leaflet about the event/activity/group and understand what is involved. I acknowledge the need for obedience and responsible behaviour on his/her part throughout the period and the need for him/her to take special note of any safety instruction. I am satisfied that all reasonable care will be taken for the safety of those participating and that adequate staffing and other insurance and safety measures have been taken. I understand the extent and limitation of the insurance cover provided. I understand that my son/daughter will not be able to participate unless this form has been returned, completed and signed by me. I understand that during periods of free time, close supervision by leaders may not be possible at all times. I consider my son/daughter to be medically fit to participate in the activities outlined above.

3. I require my son/daughter to be excluded from the following:

4. I would like you to be aware of the following special needs, not mentioned elsewhere on this form:

**DECLARATION**

a) I agree to .....(name) receiving emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.

b) The person to contact in case of emergency during this event is:

Name: ..... Relationship: .....

Address: .....

Tel: Day ..... Eve ..... Mob .....

c) Should the above not be available, please contact:

Name: ..... Relationship: .....

Address: .....

Tel: Day ..... Eve ..... Mob .....

d) The participant's doctor is:

Name: ..... Practice:.....

Address: .....

Tel: .....

e) The participant's NHS No is: .....

f) The participant has the following allergies.....

g) The participant has the following medical conditions that you should be aware of (e.g. asthma, fits, migraine.....

.....

h) The participant has the following disability that you should be aware of: .....

.....

i) The participant is taking the following medication at present\* :.....

.....

\* If the participant will or might need to take this medication during the event/activity named overleaf, please ask for and complete either the form "Request to administer medication" or "Request for Young Person to carry his/her own medication."

j) The participant was last immunised against tetanus on: .....

**Please note that all information given on this form is treated in the strictest confidence and only used if necessary.**

Signed ..... Date: .....

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**Request to administer medication**

There is no obligation in law for the leaders to administer medication. The leaders will not do so unless you complete and sign this form.

Group: .....

Event/Activity\*: .....

Venue\*: ..... Date(s): .....

(specify "All" for annual consent)

Full name of participant: .....

Address: .....

.....

Male/female: ..... Date of birth: .....

Condition or illness: .....

.....

Name/type of medication (as described on the label): .....

Full directions for use: Dosage and method: .....

Timing: .....

Special precautions: .....

Known side-effects: .....

Is the participant capable of self-medication and permitted to do so?    Yes / No

Contact details: Name: ..... Relationship: .....

Address: .....

Tel: Day ..... Eve ..... Mob .....

I understand that I must deliver the medicine personally to my son/daughter's group leader. Procedures for emergency action are noted overleaf and will be discussed with the leaders beforehand.

Signature: ..... Name: .....

Relationship to young person: .....

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**Request for young person to carry his/her own medication**

Group: .....

Event/Activity\*: .....

Venue\*: ..... Date(s): .....

(specify "All" for annual consent)

Full name of participant: .....

Address: .....

.....

Male/female: ..... Date of birth: .....

Condition or illness: .....

.....

Name/type of medication (as described on the label): .....

Contact details: Name: ..... Relationship: .....

Address: .....

Tel: Day ..... Eve ..... Mob .....

I would like my son/daughter to keep his/her own medication with him/her for use as necessary.  
Procedures for emergency action are noted overleaf and will be discussed with the leaders  
beforehand.

Signature: ..... Name: .....

Relationship to young person: .....

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**Permission to Use Photographs**

Photographs taken during Riverside Church activities may be used for display on the church premises, used in the press, or published on our own website. Any such photograph may be used only if, under the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), permission has been received from the subject of those pictures or in the case of children under 16, a parent/carer of those children.

Photographs used publicly will not:

- Show the outside of the building identifiably;
- Use the surname of children or any identification of home address or other contact details;
- Be used to embarrass or humiliate any individual;
- Be of any person who is dressed unsuitably or in a sexually provocative pose.

Where children appear in the photograph, they will only be used if the activity or group has obvious adult supervision. Subject to having met the other conditions above, children may be identified by giving their Christian name and age.

**Permission to Photograph form (for use by adults and young people aged 16 or over)**

I do / do not give my permission for my photograph to be used, following the guidelines above, for use (delete as appropriate):

In the building YES / NO

In the press YES / NO

On our web site YES / NO

Signed: .....

Date: ..... Name (BLOCK CAPITALS): .....

**Permission to Photograph form (for use by parents/guardians of those under 16)**

I do / do not give my permission for photographs of ..... to be used, following the guidelines above, for use (delete as appropriate):

In the building YES / NO

In the press YES / NO

On our web site YES / NO

Signed: .....(Parent/guardian)

Relationship to child/young person: .....

Date: ..... Name (BLOCK CAPITALS): .....

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### **INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

#### **Children and Adults at Risk**

##### **Purpose of Document:**

The purpose of this document is to inform those working with children about child abuse, and to advise them of the procedure to be carried out if abuse is disclosed to them, or if abuse is suspected. This will assist us in providing a secure environment to children.

First and most important - whether it is your first contact with suspected child or adult at risk abuse or not:

- a) Ensure the welfare of the person concerned.
- b) Talk to someone – don't ignore it, don't cover it up.

Should you encounter any situation involving a child or adult at risk which gives you cause for concern; make a written note of the conversation, observation, dates, times, names, etc. A sample Incident Report Form is included in "Protect the Vulnerable" on p.15, and copies are available in the Church Office and in and the Hall Kitchen. Pass on this information immediately to your line manager. (In the case of Riverside Church this is the Senior Leader or one of the Leadership Team; in the case of one of the church organisations this will be your senior officer, co-ordinator or leader).

Do not be afraid to be wrong.

**1. What is a child?** Any person under the age of 18 years.

**2. What is an adult at risk?** Any person aged 18 years or over who is vulnerable to abuse by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, who is or may be in need of community care services and who is or may be unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

##### **3. What is abuse?**

- a) Physical abuse - includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/drowning, excessive force.
- b) Neglect - a failure to meet basic essential needs of a person, or if a child of young age or adult at risk unable to care for him/herself is left unsupervised. "Neglect" therefore includes acts of omission in providing appropriate care as well as acts of commission.
- c) Emotional abuse - people harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.
- d) Sexual abuse - involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.
- e) Financial or material abuse – the illegal or improper use of a person's money or property where that person has not given or cannot give informed consent, which may include forcing or improperly influencing changes to a will and testament, or preventing access to money, property or possessions. A person may suffer more than one category of abuse.

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### **4. Who abuses children and adults at risk?**

- a) Very rarely a stranger.
- b) Often someone close to a child/adult at risk, e.g. parent/child, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family – somebody known and trusted.
- c) Sometimes, someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or, very sadly, a church worker/leader.
- d) Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children or adults at risk.

### **5. How might we recognise abuse?**

Children and adults at risk who are being or have been abused can be very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.

#### **Warning signs**

The following signs are only a guide, and are not necessarily proof of abuse, but may be an indication of it.

- a) Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child or adult at risk withdraws or becomes clingy.
- b) Nervousness/watchfulness.
- c) Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- d) Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- e) Attention seeking behaviour.
- f) Persistent tiredness.
- g) Running away/stealing/lying.

Other areas where leaders should be vigilant

- a) Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them, or where differing explanations have been received.
- b) Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- c) Injuries and illnesses, which have not received medical attention.
- d) Instances where children or adults at risk are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- e) Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- f) Any signs of neglect, under nourishment or inadequate care.
- g) Any allegations made by a child or adult at risk concerning sexual abuse.
- h) A child or adult at risk with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, a child with detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play.
- i) Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- j) Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- k) Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- l) Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

One or more warning signs may be evident. Many symptoms of distress in a child or adult at risk can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This (together with conflicting medical opinion) has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents and others of sexual abuse. It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

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### **6. What to do if abuse is suspected.**

This general advice must also be read in conjunction with the document, "The Protection of Children and Adults at risk" (see "Protect the Vulnerable" p.7) which gives the adopted policy of Riverside Church, Sleaford.

- a) We have a responsibility: the Children's Act 1989 was enacted as a means to promote and protect the welfare of all children. The community as a whole has a responsibility for the well-being of children. This means that everyone should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed.
- b) Social Services note the following in their preamble when dealing with voluntary social work agencies involved in childcare.
  - (i) Voluntary agency staff involved with families and children are likely to receive referrals/information/allegations or witness concerns suggestive of the need for a child protection investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. It is the responsibility of the voluntary agency to refer concerns to the Social Services department.
  - (ii) (ii) The role of the voluntary agency in these circumstances, except in the case of medical emergency, is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation, and provide information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. The role of the voluntary agency is not an investigative one.

### **7. Responding to abuse.**

If a child or adult at risk has a physical injury or symptom of neglect .

- \_ Contact your line manager/church leader immediately (at Riverside Church this will be the minister or a member of the Leadership Team), or the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- \_ Speak with the parent or carer and suggest medical help/attention is sought for the child/adult at risk. The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary. Alternatively, encourage the parent/carer to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- \_ If a parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, then offer to go with them. If they still fail to act you may need to seek help yourself, via Social Services.
- \_ Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctor of any suspicions you may have.

If there are allegations of sexual abuse:

- \_ Contact your line manager/church leader immediately or contact Social Services or the Police direct for advice. Do not speak to the parent/carer (or anyone else) if there is a possibility that they could be involved. The fact that you may feel the child/adult at risk's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that he/she has been abused by an older young person when in reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.
- \_ It is the responsibility of the church worker to pass on the possibility of abuse to the Social Services Department. The role of the church is essentially collecting and clarifying the precise details of the allegation and providing the information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

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### **Further guidance in responding to abuse**

Whilst the church worker will normally consult with their line manager/church leader before reporting incidents/suspicions of child abuse to the Social Services Department, the absence of the line managers should not delay referral to the Social Services Department. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the worker and line manager as to the appropriateness of such a referral, the church worker nevertheless retains the right as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

All church workers, whether in paid employment or acting as volunteers, should be aware that any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, and therefore church members have no rights to this information. The sharing of information is therefore limited to a “Need to Know” basis. This will protect the interests of all the parties concerned.

N.B. - Church leaders will often experience difficulty in making appropriate judgments. Professionals such as family doctors are advised that they should discuss their suspicions with a specialist colleague first, with a view to then informing the statutory agencies. Similarly, Riverside Church leaders will seek the advice of an umbrella organisation.

### **8. Third party /anonymous referrals / allegations.**

Families not known to the church:

\_ In cases where allegations are made by a third party, the role of the church worker is to elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include the referrer's details (name, address, telephone number) and as much factual detail as possible about the child/adult at risk and family concerned (names of family members, address, name, date of birth of subject child/adult, ethnic origin, etc). Information as to the cause of concern/nature of injuries/observations should be included.

\_ The church worker must inform the referrer that information relating to any child/adult at risk, will be shared with their church leader and may result in referral to the Social Services Department, and in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of the child/adult at risk protection investigation.

\_ The church worker will then report the above information to the church leader and the latter will then seek the advice from the umbrella organisation and then if there are sufficient concerns to make a referral to the Social Service Department.

Families known to the church:

\_ In cases known to the church where the church suspects from either direct observation, third party, from the child/adult at risk, or from a parent/carer, that the child or adult at risk is suffering or has in the past suffered sexual abuse, the matter must be reported immediately to the line manager/church leaders (in the case of Riverside Church, the Minister, a member of the Leadership Team, or the Safeguarding Coordinator) with a view to referral to Social Services Department or directly to the authorities if the church leaders are implicated.

\_ Should a child or adult at risk allege sexual abuse, the parents/carers should not under any circumstances be informed. Where a parent/carer alleges sexual abuse by another person of their child, the parent/carer should be advised not to inform the alleged perpetrator. Should the church worker by direct observation suspect sexual abuse, they should discuss this immediately with the Minister, a membership of the Church Leadership Team or the Safeguarding Coordinator, with a view to discussion with Social Services as to how the matter will be dealt with.

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\_ In cases of physical, emotional abuse or neglect where the church worker, by observation, considers that such concerns exist, the church worker should suggest to a parent/carer that they should seek medical help. Approaching the doctor is less threatening and it is then up to the medical practitioner to decide whether there is a question of abuse, which needs to be referred to Social Services. If a parent/carer is reluctant, then the worker could consider going with them or, if they fail to co-operate, then the matter should be immediately discussed with the line manager/Minister/church leader/Safeguarding Coordinator, who will refer to Social Services Department if appropriate. Of course, in cases of serious injury, the church worker should summon medical help immediately.

### **9. How should we react if a person tells us he/she has been abused?**

Church workers are in a unique position and your relationship with children and adults at risk cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven, and perhaps the only place where a child/adult feels comfortable and able to talk. It is therefore possible that a child or adult at risk may approach you to talk about abuse. The following guidance may be of help.

#### **a) General points:**

- (i) Accept what the child/adult at risk says.
- (ii) Keep calm, do not appear to be shocked.
- (iii) Look at the child/adult directly.
- (iv) Be honest.
- (v) Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality.
- (vi) Even when a child or adult at risk has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse.
- (vii) Be aware the child/adult may have been threatened.
- (viii) Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child/adult said, including their name, age, address, relevant family information, and details of the situation and the activity that preceded disclosure.
- (ix) Never push for information or question the child/adult at risk.

#### **b) Helpful things to say:**

- (i) "I believe you."
- (ii) "I am glad you have told me."
- (iii) "It's not your fault."
- (iv) "I will try to help you."

#### **c) Avoid saying:**

- (i) "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- (ii) "I can't believe it."
- (iii) "Are you sure this is true?"
- (iv) Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- (v) Never make false promises.
- (vi) Never make statements such as "I'm shocked, don't tell anyone else".

#### **d) Concluding:**

- (i) Again reassure the child/adult at risk they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- (ii) Let the child/adult at risk know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
- (iii) Immediately refer to your line manager. Even if abuse is no longer happening, it is still important to report the matter, as the perpetrator may be abusing other people. Also it may be that the child/adult at risk will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse, plus the police may wish to prosecute.

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### **10. Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children involved in children's work.**

#### a) Guidance

- (i) Avoid being on your own with any child. This may mean groups working in one large room, or adjoining rooms.
- (ii) Never take a child home on your own - preferably have another helper with you, or else ensure that the last two children are dropped off together. (Remember an allegation could also be made against you!).
- (iii) Be wise in your physical contact with children.
- (iv) Be wise with your relationship with the children - do not be over friendly with some at the expense of others. No favourites.
- (v) Male helpers need to be particularly careful in what they say, and in being around forward young females. Female helpers similarly need to be careful with forward young male children.
- (vi) Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child except by "holding" which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person.
- (vii) If you feel that a child may have a "crush" on you, pray about it and talk to your line manager for advice and guidance.
- (viii) In order to help children, we need to develop healthy relationships by listening to them and respecting them.
- (ix) We must be mindful of the safety of the children at all times, and in all circumstances.
- (x) Whenever possible have two or more adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the church premises. A parent may want to accompany their child, however, because of our policy they should either act as observers or only help their own child.
- (xi) Children should not be taken on trips or away from the premises without permission of parents and church leadership.
- (xii) Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.
- (xiii) Prayer works and helps in each and every circumstance.

#### b) Boundaries

- i) The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate and related to the age of the child - accepting that some children have additional needs.
- (ii) Guidance on touch. For example, physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and to be encouraged in public places, but should be discouraged in circumstances where an adult/child are on their own.
- (iii) Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- (iv) Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activity (e.g. rough/sexually provocative games or comments).
- (v) If you invite a child to your home, ensure another adult is present and the parent is aware.
- (vi) If transporting a child on their own, then it is better that the young person is seated in the back seat.

#### c) Feedback

- (i) It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way which could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the line manager about the concern.

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- (ii) Regular workers to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance.
- (iii) Encourage report back to such a meeting when departure from guidelines becomes necessary - this provides protection to the individual and draws the leadership's attention to shortcomings and problem areas.
- (iv) Keep brief records of issues/decisions discussed at workers meetings.

### d) Helping children to protect themselves by:

- (i) Teaching safety generally/strangers/good and bad secrets and touches, etc.
- (ii) Help children develop common sense rules.
- (iii) Talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable.
- (iv) Examine the way in which we present Christian truths, e.g. children obeying parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused - are we telling the child to accept the abuse? Tell children that if they feel uncomfortable or that something may be wrong, they can always check things out with another adult.

### **11. Confidentiality:**

No church worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child or adult at risk, or his/her family/carers or anything the child/adult at risk may tell them to anyone other than the designated people previously mentioned. This is in order to protect the interests of the child/adult. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are "off duty" or no longer involved in the work.

Riverside Church, Sleaford has a Confidentiality Policy that is included in the "Protect the Vulnerable" document (see page 35) to provide help in the way church workers should treat any confidence entrusted to them.

**Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

**Contact Names for advice or when abuse is suspected/disclosed :**

**Minister:** Revd Robert Bushby (01529) 304518 e-mail: randkbushby@aol.com

**Principal Leader:** Revd Peter Harding (01529) 306055 e-mail: pgh77@outlook.com

**Safeguarding Coordinator:** Mrs Anne Annison (01529) 240043 e-mail: [anne.fowler@sky.com](mailto:anne.fowler@sky.com)

**East Midlands Synod Safeguarding Officer:** Mrs Jane Henderson **07572 291007**  
e-mail: cydo@urc5.org.uk

**Social services :**

**Child protection team:**

\_ 8 am – 6 pm Monday – Friday - Please call their Customer Service Centre on **01522 782111** or via e-mail: **CSC\_SocialCare@lincolnshire.gov.uk**

\_ Out of hours (as detailed below): contact the Emergency Duty Team re children and/or adults at risk: 01522 782333

- Monday to Thursday - from 5 pm to 8.45 am the following morning.
- From 4.45 pm on Friday through to 8.45 am the following Monday morning.
- All day (24 hours) on Bank Holidays.

**Adult protection team:** (01522) 552222

Adult Social Care

Monday to Friday – 8 am to 6 pm

Tel: 01522 782155

Fax: 01522 554006

Email: [CSC\\_SocialCare@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:CSC_SocialCare@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

**Police:** In an emergency ring 999. For non-emergency calls: ring 101 and ask for the Central Referral Unit of the Public Protection Unit (direct line: 01522 947590).

**Umbrella organisations:**

**Churches Agency for Safeguarding** Telephone number 0207 467 5216

Email address [cas@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:cas@methodistchurch.org.uk)

**Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)** 24-Hour helpline 0303 0031111

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** Paul Fisher Tel: (01522) 554674

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **POLICY DOCUMENT – Discipline in Youth & Children's Work**

**1. What is discipline?** Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

**2. Why discipline?** It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. See Hebrews 12:6 and Proverbs 22:6.

### **3. Do's and don'ts of discipline in children's work**

- a) We need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.
- b) NEVER smack or hit a child.
- c) Discipline out of love NEVER anger. (It is better to let a matter pass than discipline in anger - you may say something you regret, and that damage cannot be repaired).
- d) Do not shout in anger or put down a child.
- e) Lay down ground rules, eg. no swearing, racism, or calling each other names, a respect for property.
- f) Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedures will be followed if they are not kept.
- g) Talk to a child away from the 'group', not publicly. (Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse and leave them on a positive note).
- h) Never reject a child, just the behaviour. (Encourage the child to understand that you want them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour).
- i) Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to ask ourselves:
  - (i) Why is the child behaving like that?
  - (ii) What is the best method for disciplining and encouraging that child?
  - (iii) What encourages and builds children up?
- j) Some other important things to do:
  - (i) Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them to each other.
  - (ii) Work on relationships.
  - (iii) Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding.
  - (iv) Be a good role model and set a good example. (Don't expect children to do what you don't do and vice-versa).
  - (v) Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy.
  - (vi) Don't say something you don't mean, and do stick to what you say. Be careful to think before you speak.
  - (vii) Pray for the children and with the children.

### **4. Some practical ideas for managing and avoiding bad-behaviour**

- a) Change the tone of your voice.
- b) Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. (These children are often friends, don't separate them straight away, give them a chance, perhaps warn them and only separate if they continue to be disruptive).
- c) Have the child sit right in front of you.
- d) Get a helper to sit next to the child.
- e) Pay no attention to them. (Their behaviour is often attention-seeking, so do not reward bad behaviour with that attention. Find an early opportunity to praise good behaviour to reinforce the message that this deserves your attention).
- f) Be proactive and encourage helpers to be proactive and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

- g) Take the child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.
- h) Warn a child that you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. (With some non-churched children we need to be wise in this, as speaking to parents may incur parent's wrath on the child and a ban from attending.)
- i) If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from your line manager.
- j) Don't be afraid of discipline but do not make empty threats. If you promise a disciplinary measure or consequence and do not follow through, you will lose all respect and control. Equally, be careful not to make threats of discipline without thinking through and understanding the consequences.
- k) Warn them, send them away from the rest of the group (but take care to ensure that they are supervised and remain safe), back into the worship service or ban them for a week. (Never give a total ban without reference to your line manager and ensure parents are advised in case of banning).
- l) Encourage good behaviour.
- m) Remember each child is individual and unique. We need God's wisdom and love to encourage each one to reach their potential and to recognise their needs.
- n) Pray for peace and good behaviour before you meet – do not underestimate the importance of this.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009. Revised June 2018.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **POLICY STATEMENT on the use of force to control or restrain children or adults at risk**

#### **Objectives**

Occasionally and exceptionally it will be appropriate for employees and volunteers ("staff") working for Riverside Church, Sleaford ("the Church") to use physical means to control or restrain children or adults at risk.

The key objective in using these physical means is to maintain the safety of other children or adults present. The reasons when these measures may be taken are to prevent serious injury, serious breaches of discipline or serious damage to property. "Serious injury" would include, for example, actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of others, injury to self or another by any wilful or reckless act or behaviour and includes self-poisoning.

It is **expressly forbidden** to use any physical force as a means of punishing children or adults at risk. It is also forbidden to use any physical means purely to force compliance with a member of staff's wishes or instructions.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that any person using these means must have good grounds to believe that the immediate use of physical means is necessary.

#### **Minimising the need to use force**

All staff are expected to continually work towards creating a calm environment that will minimise the risk of incidents that might require the use of physical means to control or restrain children or adult at risks.

Using non-physical methods to de-escalate incidents are always to be preferred, but sometimes the need to act immediately will mean this is not possible. Taking a planned, programmed, approach to teach children and adults at risk how to manage conflict and strong feelings is encouraged in all work carried out by church staff.

It is only acceptable to use any physical means to control or restrain children or adults at risk when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force. Staff are not expected to put themselves in personal danger, and are always encouraged to call for help from other leaders or the police if necessary. If staff members do not feel confident in their ability to control the situation with the help available, they should consider whether it is necessary to withdraw, evacuating other children/adults at risk as appropriate and where possible, and await further support.

Some children and adults at risk have particular behavioural tendencies through either emotional limitations or specific learning difficulties. In these circumstances, Staff members are encouraged to carry out risk assessments to plan appropriate behaviour management and intervention strategies.

#### **Using physical force**

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a child or adult at risk in order to protect the child/adult from harming themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. Riverside Church staff are not trained in methods of restraint and both great care and sound judgement must be exercised in attempting to restrain a child/adult at risk. In all cases, the onus is on staff members to determine the degree of force or restraint needed and staff must be careful not to over-react.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: “Protect the Vulnerable”**

### **Working with youth, children and adults at risk**

Where the use of physical means to restrain or control a child/adult at risk is necessary, only the minimum amount of force required may be applied to prevent injury or damage. If at all possible within the bounds of safety and the need to act immediately, staff members should act in the presence of other adults who may be called upon as witnesses that the act was both necessary and reasonable, and who may also assist the staff member if needed.

The actions taken by a staff member will normally be to avert danger by preventing or deflecting the actions of a child/adult at risk, or by removing a physical object that could be used to harm the child/adult at risk or others or create serious damage to property. If any form of physical restraint is necessary it must be applied for the minimum time necessary to control the situation and should be eased by degree as the child/adult calms down. If in doubt as to their own ability or safety, staff members should retreat from the situation and call for urgent assistance.

It may be appropriate for a staff member to use their physical presence to obstruct an exit to a building and thereby create an opportunity to express concern and remonstrate with a child/adult at risk who indicates their intention to leave without permission or where the staff member has grounds for concern for the safety of the child/adult at risk.

**In all cases**, staff members are required to evaluate whether the need to act immediately and the potential consequences of not acting are sufficiently serious to warrant the use of physical means of control. If the chances of achieving the desired outcome by other means are sufficient, those means should be explored first. Staff members are expected to give a verbal warning to the child/adult at risk that physical force could be used if they do not desist in their behaviour. It is accepted that on some occasions it will not be possible to give advance warning.

Staff members must never use any form of restraint which is likely to injure a child/adult, particularly any means which might constrict breathing, except in the most extreme of emergencies and then only when there is no viable alternative.

#### **Recording and reporting incidents**

In all cases where physical force is used to control or restrain the behaviour of a child/adult at risk, an Incident Report Form **must** be completed as soon as possible after the event and in any case no later than 24 hours after the incident. A sample Incident Report Form is attached to this policy (see page 34).

The report form must be forwarded to the staff member’s line manager immediately upon completion. The line manager, in consultation with the designated Safeguarding Coordinator, will review whether the incident should be reported to external agencies (such as the local authority’s Children’s Services department, the police, etc.)

#### **Post-incident support**

After every incident where physical force has become necessary, the staff member(s) involved will be debriefed by their line manager or the Minister of the church or member of the Leadership Team (“the Reviewing Officer”) to see if any lessons can be learnt to avoid similar incidents in the future. Those lessons might be applicable to the particular staff member, but also to other Staff members working for Riverside Church. A record of any actions to be taken as a result of the incident are to be recorded on the Incident Report Form.

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It might be necessary to meet physical needs (such as providing treatment for any injury sustained, help in replacing damaged personal equipment or clothing), and support may be needed to repair broken relationships. It is the policy of the Church that this support will be offered to staff members involved in these incidents wherever possible and practical and subject to any legal advice received or instruction from the Church's insurers.

The Reviewing Officer is responsible for referring any case where this policy or the Church's Child and Adult at risk Protection Policy may have been breached to the Safeguarding Coordinator, who will then follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

The Reviewing Officer is also responsible for ensuring that the parents, guardians or other principal carers of the child(ren)/adult(s) at risk involved in the incident have been notified of the incident and the circumstances that led to it, and noting any comments they make concerning the incident.

**Complaints and allegations**

Any child, adult at risk or other staff member who wishes to make a complaint or allegation of misconduct arising from incidents covered by this policy may do so freely and without fear of recrimination. Such complaints and allegations should be made either to the staff member's line manager or to the Safeguarding Coordinator. If the complaint is not made in writing, the person receiving the complaint must put it into writing, and take action in accordance with the Child and Adult at risk Protection Policy.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009. Revised June 2018.

**Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**  
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**USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK: INCIDENT RECORD**

Details of child(ren)/adult(s) at risk on whom force was used by a member of staff (name, address if known)	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other people involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of those involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used.	
Any injury suffered by staff or children/adults at risk and any first aid and/or medical attention required	
Reasons for making a record of the incident	
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against children/adults at risk involved	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies	
When and how those with parental or other caring responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)? Yes / No	
Reviewing Officer: Name and role:	
<u>Report compiled by:</u> Name and role:	
Signature:	Date:
<u>Reviewing Officer:</u> Name and role:	
Signature:	Date:

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

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### **POLICY DOCUMENT on confidentiality**

Proverbs 11: 13 -"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. "

The definition of confidentiality is, "the act of keeping private or secret, information or material entrusted", whether this is spoken or written. Information entrusted does not become the property of the confidant, but remains the property of the one who confides. However, the practice of confidentiality in a truly caring community is more complicated and requires explanation.

The Leadership of Riverside Church, Sleaford will seek to provide a private, warm and caring environment for people who may need to speak about things that are sensitive and/or personal. Riverside Church, Sleaford believes that those in ministry and leadership of the church have a duty of confidentiality to the confider. The confider who seeks advice or counsel has, in the act of asking, given their implicit consent for any information to be shared within the leadership structures of the church.

The different leadership and ministry teams working in Riverside Church, Sleaford will only share confidential information on a "need to know" basis. On receiving confidential information that will or may affect pastoral care, team members are required to "debrief" with the Minister or one of the Leaders. Any information shared with a leader will be discussed with other leaders on a need to know basis. The Leadership will act as one for the well-being of the church and to promote effective prayer.

If any written information is kept it must be stored in a locked file in a secure place, and the confider shall be allowed access to any such information about themselves, upon request to the Minister or Church Secretary. The person allowing access to this written material must take due care to ensure that the confidentiality of other people is not breached.

The duty of the church to preserve a confidence is a prima facie duty but one that can be overridden by other more compelling duties which the confidant should recognise within the principle of "paramountcy". In these cases a confidence may be shared with others, including outside agencies.

#### **Grounds for overriding the duty of confidentiality:**

1. The protection of the confider from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
2. The protection of an identified second party from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
3. The protection of non-identified individuals or society at large from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
4. The protection of the church community from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual. The confidant should believe that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality but he or she is not required to be certain, or provide proof or evidence that the belief is justified. Before such a sharing of information takes place, it may be appropriate to discuss the matter with the Minister or the Leaders of the church meeting in council. This would apply only where the information is shared outside of the normal debriefing policy operated by the church.

It is important to clearly state how this policy statement will work within the church. Two of the pillars of the policy are "paramountcy" and "need to know", and these are explained below, together with the necessity of "debriefing".

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **Paramountcy**

This is the basis by which it may be decided whose interest is of paramount importance. For instance, a person in pastoral counselling may, in confidence, share that they are abusing a child or adult at risk. By the simple application of the rules for overriding the duty of confidentiality, one can see that the duty to the child/adult at risk is paramount to the duty of confidentiality.

### **Need to know**

This is the basis for deciding the detail of the information that is being shared, either through the usual debriefing requirements or where it is believed that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality ("paramountcy"). The question one should ask is: "does this person need to know this detail of the situation?"

When dealing with statutory agencies, every assistance should be given.

### **Debriefing**

The confider should be aware that debriefing to the Minister and/or Leaders of the church is in their best interest. It means that the church leadership is able to offer their experience, and provide the ministry team members with the means of discharging their responsibility to provide appropriate pastoral care, within the jurisdiction of the church.

This policy is in place for the protection of everyone in the church environment. If the policy guidelines are not followed in a given situation, it should be understood that this falls outside the covering and responsibility of the church.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to the Minister of the Church first (or Principal Leader), or to a meeting of the Leadership Team.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009. Revised: June 2018.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: “Protect the Vulnerable”**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **POLICY DOCUMENT – Recruitment of Children’s Workers**

The recruitment procedures and the appointing of Youth & Children’s Workers is an essential part of protecting children, therefore Riverside Church, Sleaford has developed a policy to cover the whole selection and appointment process.

#### **Recruitment Procedure**

An important part of recruiting Youth & Children’s Workers is forward planning. Appointing such workers can take up to three months. For the safety of all concerned, it is important that no steps are taken to short circuit the process.

Step 1: Identify the recruitment needs

Step 2: Prepare Job/Role description

Step 3: Advertise vacancy in Church notices

Step 4: Prepare list of candidates

Step 5: Send out Application Packs

Step 6: First Interview

Step 7: if candidate is suitable, take up references. If candidate is not suitable, write a letter of refusal.

Step 8: If the two references (one of which should be from the candidate’s previous church, if possible) are positive, give Safeguarding training to the candidate. If not, write a letter of refusal.

Step 9: If the Safeguarding Training is positive: second interview.

Step 10: If the second interview is positive, apply for DBS checks for the candidate. If not, write a letter of refusal.

Step 11: If the DBS checks return clear, make the appointment. If there are issues with the DBS check, write a letter of refusal.

Step 12: Candidate starts a 3 months trial period.

#### **Job/Role Description**

It is important that the recruitment needs are clearly identified and that the approved job/role description is used in the preparation work. (NB: The term “role description” is preferred when dealing with voluntary –unpaid- posts to help distinguish between posts for which a contract of employment is required). If none of the approved job/role descriptions are suitable or adequately describe the recruitment needs, then it is important that the Leadership Team approve a new job/role description that does meet the needs of the position.

#### **Church Notices**

All positions will be advertised in the Church Notices, thereby giving people the opportunity to make an application. Any announcements at the beginning of or during worship will be made through the Church Secretary or Worship Leader, with the approval of the Church Leadership.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: “Protect the Vulnerable”**

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### **Application Pack**

The Application Pack should be issued to the candidate at least one week before the first interview to enable them to read through all the documents. The Application Pack consists of the following:

- \_ Policy statement on Protecting Children and Adult at risks
- \_ Details of “Protect the Vulnerable”, which includes:
  1. About “Protect the Vulnerable”
  2. Safe from Harm Introduction
  3. Policy Statement
  4. Children and Adult at risks at Risk Policy
  5. Discipline in Children’s work Policy
  6. Confidentiality Policy
  7. Recruitment of Children’s Workers Policy
  8. The Policy in relation to the use of Criminal Records Information
- \_ Application Form
- \_ Job or Role Description

### **Interviews**

Interviews are an important tool to find the best person for the post described in the job or role description. There should be two interviews, and each should serve a different purpose.

#### *First Interview*

The first interview is to go through the person’s application form and to explain the responsibilities of the post. It is important at this interview to ask direct questions to discover any history that would assist the decision-making process.

It is also important to discover any personal information that would be relevant to the decision-making process, including referees etc. There should be a maximum of two people responsible for the first interview with each interviewer keeping notes that should be collated afterwards.

#### *Second Interview*

The second interview is to go through the collated notes from the first interview, and the returned references. It is important at this interview to seek clarification of any issues or problem areas. There should be a maximum of five people and a minimum of two people responsible for the second interview with each interviewer keeping notes that should be collated afterwards. People eligible to serve on the interview board are the Minister, members of the Leadership Team, and current Youth & Children’s workers.

The Disclosure request form (the form required for DBS checks) should be completed and checked as being correct at this interview or DBS checks should be applied for online.

### **Making an Appointment**

All appointments to work with children, young people and adult at risks are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and are for a three-month (minimum) probationary period. All appointees are subject to at least one appraisal interview before the end of the probationary period.

All appointments of the Church are subject to annual re-appointment at the church’s Annual General Meeting, with the exception of paid employees, the Minister and the members of the Leadership Team.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: “Protect the Vulnerable”**

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Where workers (paid or voluntary) are successful during the probationary period, a one-year appointment shall be made, which is open to renewal subject to satisfactory review of performance.

### **References and Training**

It is important that at least two references are obtained for any candidate. These references together with the recommendations from the Child Protection trainer and the collated notes from the first interview will form the basis for the decision whether to invite the candidate to a second interview. It is important that any decision about a candidate is fair and will be based on the candidate’s skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values of the organisation.

Training in Child Protection matters, covering the Church’s policy on Child Protection, information on how to recognise the signs of abuse and any other relevant policies must be carried out prior to the second appointment, and the person carrying out the training must submit a short statement to the Second Interview Panel to the effect that training has been carried out and that the candidate’s attendance and engagement with the training was satisfactory. The Minister, a member of the Leadership team, or a suitable person appointed by the Minister will carry out the training.

### **DBS checks (previously known as Police checks)**

Whilst DBS checks have a value, they are no substitute for following the policies set out in “Protect the Vulnerable” and current best practice. Although a DBS disclosure notice will provide information about previous investigations and convictions, it is by definition a record of the candidate’s known history. If previous actions have not come to the attention of the police, the DBS Disclosure will show no record. The Disclosure notice must therefore be seen as one of many tools that should be used by any voluntary organisation, such as a church.

Riverside Church, Sleaford has a Policy in relation to the use of Criminal Records Information to ensure that we comply with the DBS code of practice.

### **Appointments**

All appointments made by Riverside Church, Sleaford for positions working with children and young people or adult at risks will in the first instance be for a probationary period of three months and thereafter for fixed terms of one year.

### **“Grandfather rights”**

Where someone has been accepted as a Children’s Worker for Riverside Church before the adoption of this policy and they have been in continuous fellowship within the church, then there will be no requirement to follow the full recruitment process. Enhanced DBS checks will be required, and all Children’s Workers will be offered and expected to attend regular training in Child Protection matters.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **POLICY STATEMENT on the secure storage, handling, use, retention & disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information**

#### **General principles**

As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Riverside Church, Sleaford complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

#### **Storage & Access**

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personnel file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

#### **Handling**

In accordance with section 1245 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

#### **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

#### **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

#### **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosures or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure must be stored securely. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009. Revised in June 2018.

## **Riverside Church, Sleaford: "Protect the Vulnerable"**

Working with youth, children and adults at risk

### **POLICY STATEMENT on the employment of those with a criminal record**

#### **Background**

As a local church using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) through the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust Riverside Church, Sleaford complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the bases of conviction or other information revealed.

**This policy applies equally to paid and voluntary (unpaid) workers.**

#### **Equality of treatment**

We are committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff, volunteers or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all; with the right mix of talents, skills and potential, and we welcome applications from a wide range of candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

We have written a policy on the recruitment of those with a criminal record, which is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

#### **Using DBS disclosures**

A disclosure is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. Those seeking appointment as officers or helpers in the Boys' or Girls' Brigade companies at Riverside and those working in Junior Church will always be required to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure. Applicants for other voluntary or paid posts may also be required to obtain an Enhanced or Standard Disclosure. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all job/voluntary post advertisements and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Unless the nature of the position allows this church to ask questions about your entire criminal record we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Working with children under the age of 18 and in most circumstances working with adult at risks are exempt posts within the meaning of that legislation, and applicants will be required to disclose all convictions, even those that would normally be considered as 'spent'.

The people responsible for the recruitment and selection of Children's workers are:

- \_ The Youth & Children's Work Leader together with the Minister and other members of the Leadership Team,
- \_ The Church Meeting, and
- \_ The Child and Adult Safeguarding Coordinator.

These people will assist the prospective worker in obtaining the Disclosure Application form from the Umbrella Body and assist the prospective worker in the completion of the form and then return the form to the registered body. All recruitment decisions involving the disclosure process will be made sensitively and fairly. In the event of a problem / query / complaint, these will in the first instance be dealt with by the Church Leadership Team but may also be referred to the registered body for advice.

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We ensure that all those in Riverside Church who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary service.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or voluntary service. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

Policy adopted: January 31, 2009 Revised: June 2018.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Application form**

Riverside Church, Sleaford

**APPLICATION FORM for Youth & Children's Workers**

Everyone who is involved in any capacity in working with children and young people and/or adult at risks will want to ensure care and protection within a safe environment. This application form is for volunteers (unpaid) and paid workers to record information and ensure that the best possible care is taken for the protection and safety of all.

**PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLACK INK**

**APPLICATION for the post of:**.....

Voluntary worker (unpaid)

Paid worker

**IMPORTANT: If you are applying for voluntary (unpaid) work, you do NOT need to complete the sections marked "for paid posts only".**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

**Surname** ..... **First Names** ..... **Title** .....

**Address** .....

..... **Post Code** .....

**Telephone Numbers:** Home ..... Work ..... Mobile .....

**Email** .....

**All/Any former names** .....

**Date & place of Birth** .....

If you have lived at the above address less than three years please give previous address/es with dates:

**EDUCATION from age 11** (Complete this section only if you are applying for paid posts)

School (s)

Qualifications gained (Total GCEs; GCSEs/A levels only)

**FURTHER EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS** (for paid posts only)

College(s)/University

Qualifications gained

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**TRAINING** (for paid posts only)

Please list your training with the most recent first – use extra sheets if required and mark them with your name and post for which you are applying.

Course	Length of course	Qualification
--------	------------------	---------------

**PRESENT EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTARY WORK** (for paid posts only)

Name and address of Employer or Organisation

Position held	From	To
---------------	------	----

Brief outline of Duties and Responsibilities

Reason for Leaving

If Paid – Salary £ p.a. Value of other benefits

**PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTARY WORK** (for paid posts only)

Please include any previous paid or voluntary work with children and young people

From	To	Employer/Organisation
------	----	-----------------------

Brief details of duties and reasons for leaving

**SKILLS, ABILITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE** (all posts)

Why do you want to apply to do this work?

What ability, knowledge, commitment and experience do you have?

What is your church background and current place of worship?

Is there any other information you think should be known?

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**REFERENCES (all posts)**

References will be taken up as one way of checking your suitability and to demonstrate the church's attention to proper care for children. Please give the name, address and contact number of two people who can provide an assessment of your suitability for the post, if applicable, one of the two references should be from a person in position of authority in your previous church. (You must not be related to either referee).

**First reference**

Name

Address

Telephone

How this person knows you

**Second Reference**

Name

Address

Telephone

How this person knows you

**DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS (all posts)**

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex offenders have to disclose their criminal convictions when applying for Exempted posts. Work with Children and Young People is 'Exempted'.

Do you have any criminal convictions, cautions or bindovers: Yes  No

If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form.

Is there any other information you should declare that might affect your suitability for working with children and young people? (e.g. Allegations which have been the subject of investigation; any current criminal investigations)

No  Yes  If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form

**DBS DISCLOSURE (all posts)**

Do you agree to undergo the relevant vetting processes, including 'Enhanced Disclosure' through the Disclosure Barring Service, that shall be in place from time to time to establish your identity and your suitability for work with children and young people. The processes are in accordance with legal requirements and Good Practice guidelines of the United Reformed Church.

No  Yes  A separate form will be issued for the implementation of this procedure

**DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 (all posts)**

**This information will not be used in the short-listing process.**

If you have a disability according to the DDA, please give details. If you fulfil the criteria for the post you will be given an interview. It will only be used in the interview process to assess whether any adjustment would be needed for you to carry out the work of the post.

**ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION ACT 1996 (For paid posts only)**

National Insurance Number:

If you have no NI number available do you have evidence of your entitlement to live and work in the UK?

**DECLARATION (all posts)** I declare that the information in this application is true and complete. I agree to references being taken up. If I am successful in obtaining this post and the information is later discovered to be incorrect I understand that the appointment can be cancelled.

Signed..... Date.....

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**MONITORING FORM**

**ALL INFORMATION IN THIS FORM IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** AND WILL ONLY BE USED FOR MONITORING PURPOSES TO ENSURE THAT ALL APPLICANTS ARE TREATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES.

**AGE**

- Under 16     16 - 17     18 - 20     21 - 25     26 - 34     35 - 54  
 55 - 60     61 - 65     66 +

**GENDER**     FEMALE     MALE

**ETHNICITY**

The categories for ethnic origin reflect those chosen by the Office for National statistics for the 2001 UK Population Census. Please tick one box only.

**White**     British     Irish     Other white (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Black or Black British**     African     Caribbean     Other Black (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Asian or Asian British**    Bangladeshi    Indian    Pakistani  
Other Asian (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Mixed**     White & Black Caribbean     White & Black African  
 White & Asian     Other mixed (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese or other ethnic group     Chinese     Any other ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_

**DISABILITY**

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please note that under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 you are considered to be disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term adverse effect upon your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

- Yes     No

Please give details:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix 2: Job/Role Description Template**

*Riverside Church, Sleaford*

**ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Under Home Office Guidelines this form should be completed for all workers with children and young people. If the role changes substantially a new form should be completed. Copies should be retained by the worker, and the Church Secretary.

**TO BE COMPLETED ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH MEETING**

Name of worker .....

Name of Group (e.g. Junior Church) .....

Where/when they meet ..... Age range .....

Name & position of person to whom immediately responsible (Line Manager)  
.....

**Main Duties and Work to be undertaken:**

1. To encourage emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth and well being, in accordance with meaningful membership of Riverside Church, Sleaford.
2. To undertake such duties that advance the work and vision of Riverside Church, Sleaford, as decided by your Line Manager.
3. To provide pastoral support for group members, and their parents/carers where appropriate, within the church's child protection policy and the United Reformed Church Good Practice Guidelines.
4. To keep within the guidelines laid down in the child protection policy and Good Practice Guidelines.
5. To maintain confidences, on and off duty, within the terms of the church Confidentiality Policy.
6. To ensure that you are regular in worship at Riverside Church or another Christian Church and continue to seek your own spiritual growth.
7. To ensure that NO unauthorised person, except a parent, is allowed to remain in any children's group.
8. To ensure that prior permission is granted by your Line Manager and/or Church Meeting for any activities outside the group's normal meeting time and place.
9. To act always in a manner that will protect the health and safety of yourself, your coworkers and group members.

Group to whom responsible (e.g. Church Meeting) .....

Signed on behalf of the Church Meeting .....

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE WORKER WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE**

I have understood the nature of the work I am to do with children / young people. I have read the guidelines produced by the church for the protection of children & young people and adult at risks called PROTECT THE VULNERABLE. I understand that it is my duty to protect children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or suspected.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

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### **Appendix 3: DBS Code of Practice for Disclosure Information and Barring Service Registered Persons**

#### **Introduction**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was established in December 2012 under Part V of the Protection of Freedoms Act (POFA) to undertake disclosure and barring functions. There are specific legal requirements around these checks. Disclosure functions are set out in Part V of the Police Act 1997, which requires Registered Bodies to adhere to this Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice applies to all Registered Bodies with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) under section 120 of the Police Act 1997 (Registered Bodies) and recipients of Update Service information under section 116A of the Police Act 1997.

This includes those Registered Bodies that provide an umbrella function to non registered organisations. The Code refers to any information exchanged between DBS and the Registered Body. The Code of Practice does not apply to other third parties. The DBS will seek to ensure compliance with the Code through the full range of DBS assurance management processes.

All applicants for a DBS check should be made aware of this Code of Practice and provided with a copy on request (see Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>)

#### **Disclosure Offences: Sections 123 and 124 of the Police Act 1997**

Although certificates are now provided directly to the applicant, registered bodies will receive personal information related to applications and, where registered bodies are also employers, voluntary sector organisations or licensing authorities, will receive disclosure information when certificates are provided to them by their employees or applicants for posts, including volunteers.

Recipients of disclosure information, through electronic means or via the applicant’s copy of the disclosure, must note that it is an offence to disclose information contained within a DBS Certificate to any person who is not a member, officer or employee of the Registered Body or their client, unless a relevant legal exception applies. Furthermore, it is also an offence to:

1. Disclose information to any member, officer or employee where it is not related to that employee’s duties
2. Knowingly make a false statement for the purpose of obtaining, or enabling another person to obtain, a Certificate.

Registered Bodies and those in receipt of Update Service information believed to have committed an offence will be liable to prosecution, suspension or de-registration.

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Registration) Regulations 2006 sets out conditions of registration. Regulation 7(h) is for compliance with the Code of Practice issued under section 122 of the Act. Failure to comply with Conditions of Registration can result in the suspension or cancellation of registration. This follows a set legislative process with clear timescales.

Failure to comply with requirements set out in the Data Protection Act may also result in enforcement action from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Registration) Regulations 2006 sets out the obligations a Registered Body must meet in order to retain its registration.

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Registered Bodies must:

1. Provide up-to-date information to the DBS in respect of their registration information and counter signatories in line with current procedures.
2. Maintain all accounts, online or otherwise, for all DBS products and delete when no longer required.
3. Ensure any electronic system used complies with specifications set out in the above regulations.

### **Application Process**

Registered Bodies must:

1. Submit applications for a DBS product in the format determined by DBS.
2. Ensure that applications for a DBS product are completed accurately and that all data fields determined by DBS as mandatory are completed in full.
3. Ensure that any application submitted electronically complies with DBS specifications as stipulated in line with current requirements.
4. Ensure that, where evidence checkers complete any part of the administration of the application process, sufficient training has been provided to enable same degree of accuracy required by DBS of the counter signatory.

### **Identity Verification**

Registered Bodies must:

1. Verify the identity of the applicant prior to the submission of an application for a DBS product by following the current guidelines issued by DBS.
2. Ensure that any person undertaking identity verification checks on their behalf follows the current guidelines issued by DBS.
3. Make sure lead or counter signatories do not validate their own applications for any DBS products.

### **Data Handling**

Failure to comply with DPA requirements could result in enforcement action from the ICO.

In line with the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Registered Bodies and those in receipt of Update Service information must:

1. Have a written policy on the secure handling of information provided by DBS, electronically or otherwise, and make it available to individuals at the point of requesting them to complete a DBS application form or asking consent to use their information to access any service DBS provides.
2. Handle all information provided to them by DBS, as a consequence of applying for a DBS product, in line with the obligations under GDPR.
3. Handle all DBS related information provided to them by their employee or potential employee in line with the obligations under GDPR.
4. Ensure that a result received as part of an application submitted electronically is not reproduced in such a way that it infers that it is a certificate issued by DBS.
5. Ensure any third parties are aware of the Data Protection Principles and provide them with guidance on secure handling and storage of information. For Data Protection purposes, information passed to a Registered Body by DBS remains the responsibility of the Registered Body even if passed to a third party.
6. Ensure business continuity and disaster recovery measures are in place and comply with Data Protection requirements.

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7. Must comply with security requirements under GDPR.

### **Suitability Policy**

Registered Bodies and those in receipt of Update Service information must:

1. Have a written policy on the suitability of ex-offenders for employment in relevant positions. This should be available upon request to potential applicants and, in the case of those carrying out an umbrella function, should be made available to their clients. Clients of Registered Bodies should make this policy available to their potential or existing employees.
2. Ensure that all applicants for relevant positions or employment are notified in advance of the requirement for a Disclosure.
3. Notify all potential applicants of the potential effect of a criminal record history on the recruitment and selection process and any recruitment decision.
4. Discuss the content of the Disclosure with the applicant before withdrawing any offer of employment.

### **Payment of Fees**

Registered Bodies must:

1. Pay all registration fees in line with time periods set out in current procedures.
2. Pay all fees relating to DBS products in line with time periods set out in current procedures.
3. Pay all fees related to criminal records check applications submitted after any decision by the DBS to suspend registration or deregister the organisation.
4. Correctly apply the Police Act definition of a volunteer to each criminal records check application to assert eligibility that no fee should be charged for that application.
5. Publish all fees, in relevant documentation, associated with the processing of criminal records check applications when you do so on behalf of others.
6. Notify the DBS in writing of any change to the fees associated with the processing of Criminal records check applications when you do so on behalf of others.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility for DBS checks is set out in the following legislation:

- Standard checks – to be eligible for a standard level DBS certificate, the position must be included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.
- Enhanced checks – to be eligible for an enhanced level DBS certificate, the position must be included in both the ROA Exceptions Order and in the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) regulations.
- Enhanced checks with children's and/or adults' barred list check(s) – to be eligible to request a check of the barred lists, the position must be eligible for an enhanced level DBS certificate and be specifically listed in the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) regulations as being eligible to check the appropriate barred list(s).

Registered Bodies must:

1. Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that they only submit Criminal Records check applications in accordance with the legislative provisions which provide eligibility criteria for relevant positions or employment.
2. Ensure that before allowing a DBS check application to be submitted they have assessed the role to be eligible under current legislation, correctly applied the right level of check, and correctly requested the appropriate barring list information.
3. Ensure they are legally entitled to request any DBS product being applied for.

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### **Compliance Requests**

Registered Bodies and those in of Update Service Information must co-operate in full and in line with the timescales in current procedures, when DBS enquiries are made in relation to:

1. Ongoing compliance of Registered Bodies and those in receipt of Update Service information with the obligations under this Code.
2. Implementing the suspension or de-registration of a Registered Body where non-compliance is established in line with current procedures.

### **Appendix 4: Glossary of terms**

#### **Child/Adult at risk Protection Policy**

All organisations working with children and/or adult at risks should formally adopt a child and adult at risk protection policy. Such policies are recommended in government guidance such as "Safe from Harm" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children". The Charity Commission require organisations (including churches) to have a child protection policy in place before granting new registrations. Policies are also an expectation of many insurance companies.

#### **Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS)**

The CAS is the Umbrella Organisation used by the United Reformed Church to process applications to the Criminal Records Bureau.

#### **Code of Practice**

This Code sets out the requirements that employers and other bodies must comply with in order to use standard and enhanced disclosures.

#### **Client**

Company or individual engaging umbrella functions from a registered body.

#### **Criminal Conviction**

Criminal conviction is a finding of guilt by a criminal court. Criminal convictions form part of the criminal record.

#### **Criminal Record**

A criminal record relates to a person's convictions, whether spent or unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; cautions; reprimands; final warnings and other non-conviction information such as acquittals.

#### **Counter-signatory**

An individual within a registered body or umbrella organisation (authorised to support applications for a criminal records disclosure).

#### **Disclosures**

The criminal records certificates. There are three types of disclosure: basic, standard and enhanced.

#### **Disclosure Barring Service**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (*DBS*) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

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### **DBS Product**

Any level of check available from DBS.

### **Employment**

Employment in CRB terms is interpreted widely and covers volunteer and paid work.

### **Lead signatory**

The person in the registered body (or umbrella organisation) heading up the service and authorised to support applications for criminal record checks.

### **Police National Computer**

The police national database against which all checks will be made. This is the only source of information, which will be used for basic and standard disclosures. For enhanced disclosures, checks against local police records will also be made.

### **Recruiter**

The description given to the individual within the church or organisation responsible for recruitment of workers. The recruiter/verifier is required to see and check evidence of identity of each applicant and will be the person in direct contact with the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) in the checking process. The CAS disclosure unit will only be able to deal with the named recruiter in any matters concerning an individual application. Recruiters are required to handle all disclosure information in a sensitive and confidential manner.

### **Registered body**

The registered body is an employer or other agency registered with the DBS to process and submit applications for DBS products.

### **Safe from Harm**

Issued by the Home Office in 1993, "Safe from Harm" contains various recommendations to be adopted by voluntary **organisations** working with children.

### **Umbrella body/organisation**

Umbrella organisations are registered bodies (see above) processing and submitting applications for DBS products from employers not eligible to register with the DBS.

### **Verifier**

See Recruiter above.

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

The current edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children was issued in December 1999 by various government departments. The volume is addressed to statutory and voluntary agencies providing services to children and contains details on how agencies should work together to protect children in each local community.

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**Appendix 5: Safe from Harm - the Home Office Code of Practice**

Safe from Harm was prepared to provide voluntary organisations with guidelines for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in their care. It applies to all workers in voluntary organisations, including the churches, whether they are paid or volunteers. It encourages the development of good policies and practice to prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and young people while they are in their care. At the same time it protects those who work with children and young people from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways, which may be well intentioned but inadvisable.

The Home Office guidelines are a challenge to every church and their workers (paid or unpaid):

- to shoulder responsibilities in caring for children and young people and those who work with them
- to be committed to good practice in work with children and young people
- to recognise that safeguarding the young is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children and young people
- to be prepared to work in different ways, where necessary, seeing this as a new opportunity for service and mission

**THE "SAFE FROM HARM" GUIDELINES**

**Guideline 1**

Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.

This is the responsibility of the church meeting. Please see the statement on page 9 for the statement of policy on the protection of Children and Adult at risks.

**Guideline 2**

Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.

Please see the Children's work policy documents, "Children and Adult at risks at risk" (page 10), "Discipline in Children's Work" (page 19), and "Recruitment of Children's Workers" (page 23).

**Guideline 3**

Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.

Please see the policy document, "Children and Adult at risks at risk" from on page 10, especially the contact details on page 18.

**Guideline 4**

Apply agreed procedures for children to all paid staff and volunteers.

All new helpers and leaders will be expected to show that they have knowledge of the procedures agreed by the church council.

**Guideline 5**

Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.

All leaders and helpers will be expected to work within the roles agreed to in their job description. The leader or helper and the church council will both retain copies of the Job description (see page 23 "Recruitment of Children's Workers" Policy).

**Guideline 6**

Use supervision as a means to protecting children.

Leaders should regularly review with the helpers ways and means of implementing these guidelines. Please see the Children's work policy documents, "Children and Adult at risks at risk" from page 10 onwards.

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**Guideline 7**

Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.

All leaders and helpers will be expected to complete the approved application form before an interview is conducted (see page 23, "Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy).

**Guideline 8**

Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.

All applicants will be expected to provide a personal referee before an appointment is made (see page 23 "Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy).

**Guideline 9**

Explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.

All applicants will be interviewed by a church leader or another person nominated by the church council (see page 23 "Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy).

**Guideline 10**

Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.

All situations that involve work with children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions, which relate to children and young people, however old, must be declared. Information about other convictions must also be given, as these may be relevant to the suitability of the person. The Church Council will also undertake to have an applicant Police checked before an appointment is made (see page 23, "Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy)

**Guideline 11**

Make paid and volunteer appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.

Applicants for paid or volunteer work with children or young people must have the appointment confirmed by the church council and then begin a probationary period, which shall normally be for at least three months, but may be extended or reduced as required (see page 23, "Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy).

**Guideline 12**

Issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse.

Please see the Children's work policy document "Children and Adult at risks at risk" (see page 10)

**Guideline 13**

Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

All workers with children whether paid or volunteers shall agree to undertake training as preparation for the service applicable to the work they wish to do (see page 23, Recruitment of Children's Workers" policy)