



River Church Safeguarding Policy - Vulnerable adults

River Church seeks to make church welcoming to all, so that vulnerable people feel included and able to engage with regular worship and other appropriate activities.

River Church has a duty of care to ensure that it provides a safe environment for all. This includes both the physical environment and the support and pastoral care that is offered by the church, both formal and informal.

We at River Church are committed to respectful pastoral care of all adults in our community. We are also committed to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people.

As Christians we are charged to love and care for each other. This is particularly true with regards to the most vulnerable in our community.

It is the responsibility of all members of River Church to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any abuse we discover or suspect, with good reason.

To ensure the safety of vulnerable adults, River Church will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Officer, with overall responsibility for creating appropriate policies and procedures and ensuring they are adhered to Appoint Safeguarding Coordinators within each individual church who will be responsible for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults in their churches.

Have a 'vulnerable adults' policy and procedures.

- As far as is reasonably possible, endeavour to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This includes access to toilets, car parking, and entrances to buildings plus provide appropriate assistance where necessary e.g. hearing loops.
- Draw up a recruitment policy for those working with vulnerable adults, including undertaking DBS checks where appropriate.
- Give appropriate guidelines, training and supervision for those working with vulnerable adults.



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1. Safeguarding Procedures

1. There will be a nominated person for safeguarding vulnerable adults who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection or welfare of adults at risk across River Church. This person will be known as the Safeguarding Officer. In addition, each River Church will have a nominated person to be known as the Safeguarding Coordinator, responsible for the protection and welfare of vulnerable adults in their church.
3. We will implement safe recruiting policies to ensure that workers and volunteers are suitable to work with vulnerable adults by following national and local guidance.
4. All persons working regularly with vulnerable adults will receive safeguarding training. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns, where to get advice and what to do and how to respond to disclosures of abuse.
5. We will do everything possible to make River Church a safe and caring environment by having a code of Good Practice which will be given to all workers and they will be expected to comply with it.
6. Workers and volunteers will be given Job Descriptions highlighting their role and responsibilities including their responsibilities for safeguarding.



2. Code of behaviour

You should:

- Respond to everyone in a friendly and caring way.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language.
- Visit people of the same gender as yourself.
- Aim to visit in pairs.
- Record any concerns/accidents/incidents and pass to your team leader, signed and dated.
- Report any unsafe practices to the safeguarding Coordinator.

You should not:

- Allow your own prejudices to affect your ability to care.
- Allow unknown adults access to the vulnerable adult's home.
- Try to persuade the vulnerable adult to do anything they are unhappy about.

or (unless DBS checked for vulnerable adults and agreed by the primary carer))

- Be involved in any form of personal care including feeding, dressing, washing etc.
- Handle any money belonging to the vulnerable adult, including doing shopping.
- Offer a lift to any health care appointment.

3. Definitions of Abuse

River Church recognises the following definitions of abuse:

Physical Abuse

The mistreatment of an adult which may or may not result in physical harm. These could include: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, inappropriate restraint, withholding or misuse of medication, squeezing, biting, suffocation, poisoning, drowning or killing. It would also include requiring a person to work in an unsafe environment

Emotional and Psychological Abuse.

The use of threats, fear or the power of the carer's or other adult's position to negate the vulnerable person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional or psychological stress. Bullying, sexual and racial harassment would also come into this category if physical harm were not used. It includes lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation, making someone feel worthless,



lack of love or affection, threats, verbal abuse, humiliation, blaming, controlling, pressurising, coercion, fear, or ignoring the person.

Other behaviours which may take place within a working relationship include public or unreasonable criticism, insults and shouting, ignoring a person's wishes or point of view, setting unreasonable work targets, removing areas of responsibility, or undervaluing a person's efforts.

Harassment may include name calling, victimisation and ostracism, unwanted sexual attention, stalking, compromising invitations or gifts, the display of images that are racially or sexually offensive, or the suggestion that sexual favours might further promotion prospects.

Neglect

Neglectful behaviour is any pattern of activity by another person which seriously impairs an individual. Neglect can include: failure to intervene in situations where there is danger to a vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk, not giving personal care, deliberately withholding visual or hearing aids, withholding food, drink, light and clothing, restricting access to medical services, denying social, religious or cultural contacts, denying contact with family, lack of appropriate supervision.

Financial and Legal Abuse

The wilful extortion or manipulation of the vulnerable person's legal or civil rights must be construed as abuse. Such activity may include misappropriation of monies or goods, the misuse of finances, property or possessions, withholding money, the exploitation of a person's resources or embezzlement. Such abuse may involve the use of a position of authority or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts, to leave legacies or change a will.

Sexual Abuse

A sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other individual is abuse. Such behaviour includes contact and non-contact abuse. The issue of informed consent is a fraught one and would need to be carefully investigated. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or have a position of trust.

- Non-contact abuse may include sexual remarks and suggestions, introduction to indecent material, or indecent exposure.
- Contact abuse may include rape, indecent assault, being forced to touch another person, sexual intercourse, or being pressurised into consenting to sexual acts.



Spiritual Abuse

Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly to those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. (See "What to do if you suspect abuse" and "Allegations Policy" sections). Careful supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

5. Recognising signs of abuse.

The following are possible indicators that a vulnerable person is being abused. They are not necessarily conclusive, and care should be taken not to misinterpret. If a worker becomes aware of the following indicators, they should discuss this with their line manager, Safeguarding Officer. (See the "What to do if you suspect abuse" or "Allegations policy" section)

Possible indicators of:

Physical abuse:

- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, bruising, welts, discolouration, black eyes, burns, broken bones, skull fractures.
- Untreated injuries in various stages of healing or not properly treated.
- Poor skin condition or poor hygiene.
- Signs of dehydration and/or malnourishment.
- Weight loss.
- Broken glasses.
- Signs of punishment or use of restraints.
- Inappropriate use of medication.

Emotional/psychological abuse:

- Feelings of helplessness.
- Hesitation in talking openly.
- Implausible stories.
- Confusion or disorientation.



- Anger without an apparent cause.
- Sudden changes in behaviour.
- The person becoming emotionally upset or agitated.
- Unusual behaviour (sucking, biting or rocking).
- Unexplained fear.
- Denial of a situation.
- The person becoming extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive.
- The individual telling you they are being verbally or emotionally abused.

Possible indicators of financial abuse:

- Signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the individual's signature or which are signed when the individual cannot write.
- Any sudden changes in bank accounts including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money.
- The inclusion of additional names on an individual's bank account.
- Abrupt changes to or creation of wills.
- The sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a vulnerable person's affairs or possessions.
- The unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
- Numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone is supposed to be paying bills for the vulnerable person.
- Unusual concern from someone that an excessive amount of money is being expended on the care of the vulnerable person.
- Lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford.
- The unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions such as art, silverware or jewellery.
- Deliberate isolation of a vulnerable person from friends and family resulting in the caregiver alone having total control.

Possible indicators of neglect:

- Dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment.
- Rashes, sores, lice on the vulnerable person.
- Inadequate clothing.
- Untreated medical condition.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Over or under medication.



- Lack of assistance with eating or drinking.
- Unsanitary and unclean conditions.

Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- Bruises around the breasts or genital area.
- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infection.
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.
- The vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped.

Other indications that abuse may be occurring:

- The vulnerable person may not be allowed to speak for themselves, or see others, without the caregiver (suspected abuser) being present.
- Attitudes of indifference or anger towards the vulnerable person.
- Family member or caregiver blames the vulnerable person (e.g. accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act).
- Aggressive behaviour (threats, insults, harassment) by the caregiver towards the vulnerable person.
- Previous history of abuse of others on the part of the caregiver.
- Inappropriate display of affection by the caregiver.
- Flirtations, coyness, etc., which might be possible indicators of an inappropriate sexual relationship.
- Social isolation of the family or restriction of activity of the vulnerable person by the caregiver.
- Conflicting accounts of incidents by the family, supporters or the vulnerable person.
- Inappropriate or unwarranted defensiveness by the caregiver.
- Indications of unusual confinement (closed off in a room, tied to furniture, change in routine or activity).
- Obvious absence of assistance or attendance.

6. Reporting concerns about a vulnerable adult.

If an adult discloses information about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interrogate them but question normally without pressure in order to be sure you understand what is being said.
- Do not put words into their mouth.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing.



- Never promise to keep a secret but tell them you must pass the information on, but that you will only tell those who need to know. Tell them who you will speak to.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.
- Make notes of the date, time, place and what was said and done immediately after the event, not during. Sign the report.

Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report immediately to the congregational Safeguarding Coordinator or deputy. Do not speak to anyone outside the investigation, including the carers.

If you are concerned that a vulnerable adult may be suffering from abuse:

If a vulnerable adult has an unexplained physical injury, symptoms of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional or other abuse:

- Document your concerns, with dates.
- Inform your church safeguarding Coordinator.
- If your safeguarding Coordinator is not available, contact River Church's safeguarding officer or trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. If none of these are available contact Thirtyone:Eight for advice.
- Do not talk to the carers unless advised to do so.

7. Allegations of abuse against a person working with Vulnerable adults.

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the group or organisation including:

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may cause harm.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a vulnerable adult.
- Behaved towards an adult in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work in this role.
- The nature of the allegation or concern should be reported to the
- Safeguarding Coordinator for dealing with allegations within the organisation
- immediately.

The member of staff who has a concern about a team member, or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the adult or investigate the matter further.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for River Church will report the matter to the Designated Officer within Adult Services at the Local Authority. This position was formally known as Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the term is still often in use.



River Church will always report any member of staff or volunteer they have concerns about to the appropriate authorities depending on the seriousness of the situation. We will take all advice offered to us and co-operate fully.

All allegations must be made in writing, signed and dated.

8. Safe Recruitment

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

Procedures for VA DBS checking

The DBS rules only allow for those who "regularly care for, train, supervise or are in sole charge of vulnerable adults" to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure for regulated activity.

This means that only the following kinds of services entitle an Enhanced Disclosure to be supplied:

- a) Accommodation and nursing or personal care in care homes
- b) Personal care or supports to enable someone live independently in their own home.
- c) Any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or NHS body.
- d) Social care services
- e) Any services provided in an establishment chartering for people with learning difficulties.

However, if a person regularly has unsupervised access to vulnerable adults, that is visits weekly (or 4 or more times in a 30 day period) they need to apply for an enhanced disclosure for unregulated activity.

This applies to people visiting the vulnerable in their own homes on behalf of River Church. It does not apply to friends who visit a vulnerable friend as part of being a good neighbour.

There is a written job description / person specification for the post.

Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.

Those short listed have been interviewed.

Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.

Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.

Where necessary a DBS has been completed. (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)

Qualifications where relevant have been verified.



A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
The applicant will be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and know how to report concerns.



Appendix 1: Seven Golden rules of information sharing

In March 2015, the government published revised practice guidance "*Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*". Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends.

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.



Appendix 2: Other forms of abuse

Domestic Violence

Definition – (Home Office, 2013) *For the purpose of this policy domestic violence is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.*

Under the Serious Crime Act 2015, the government announced a new domestic violence law criminalising patterns of coercive, controlling and psychological abuse. The new offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Children are hugely affected by domestic abuse and violence, often going on to become victims of the violence themselves. However, the impact emotionally to children has been seen to cause significant harm to them. A high percentage of serious case reviews, and those children on child protection plans have domestic violence as a key concern.

Forced Marriage

Children from some communities in the UK are still being forced into marriage at a very young age and those of any age, especially those without mental capacity to make a choice. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. This includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place); marrying someone who lacks mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured or not); Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order. Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Honour Based Violence

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion; want to get out of an arranged marriage; want to get out of a forced marriage; wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.



Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based violence however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
 - threats of violence
 - sexual or psychological abuse
 - forced marriage
 - being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go assault
- (Safe.Met.Police.UK)

Honour based violence will commonly start when children try to live and fit in a more westernised culture, starting relationships which causes shame and distress to the family. Take any concerns a person may have about their safety seriously and seek professional help immediately. Do not try to resolve this in anyway yourself.

Female Genital Mutilation

Between April and June 2015, there were 1,026 newly recorded cases of FGM in England, (Health & Social Care Information Centre). City University London figures suggest that nearly 10,000 girls under 14 years of age have undergone FGM in the UK. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to: practice FGM in the UK; take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM, whether or not it is lawful in the country of destination; aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

Trafficking

Human trafficking is essentially the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation, this may include:

- prostitution (or other forms of sexual exploitation)
- forced labour
- slavery
- servitude, or
- the removal of organs

Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence involves the exploitation of susceptible people who are drawn into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. The aim is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. The Prevent Strategy, launched in 2007, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.