



1. Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised.

Who this policy applies to

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

- All members of our church
- All those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- Our Trustees and Elders
- Paid staff (both internal and external e.g. contractors or consultants)
- Volunteers
- Organisations, groups or individuals who hire our buildings on a one-off basis with written confirmation to operate under the Synod, or St John's URC's Safeguarding Policy.

Principles underpinning the policy

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put the welfare of children and adults at risk first
- A willingness to be open and listen
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Definitions

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether children or adults.

We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Sections 2-6 below follow the structure of Good Practice 6 and each section lists the 'key responsibilities' for local churches outlined in the corresponding chapter of GP6

2. Creating a safer culture

We are committed to creating a safer culture in our church which will help us to prevent harm from occurring and provide an environment in which all can flourish.

In line with Chapter two of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles
- Ensure all those working with children and/or adults at risk are given copies of relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in respect of data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings.

3. Ensuring safer activities

Whilst it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, we are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible for activities both on and off church premises.

In line with Chapter three of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for buildings and activities
- Consider the implications of data protection and health and safety requirements for specific activities
- Carry out risk assessments for relevant activities or events
- Ensure adequate staffing for activities and that leaders have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and agree to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- Ensure the hirer's agreement is in place for other organisations using church premises
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer for complex or sensitive risks.

4. Recognising and responding to concerns

We acknowledge that, although promoting Safer Culture and Safer Activities will help to protect all those in contact with the church, some concerns will inevitably arise and we are committed to responding well in such circumstances. The procedure in the event of such concerns is set out on Page 7.

In line with Chapter four of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Promote awareness of different kinds of abuse, other vulnerabilities and types of safeguarding concern
- Seek to create a 'listening culture' and help people develop listening skills to respond appropriately in situations where sensitive information is disclosed
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer as a minimum of any situations where involvement from statutory services is/may be required
- Share information with statutory services as appropriate and co-operate with them during any investigations
- Report any serious safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission and notify the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

5. Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others

In line with Chapter five of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Co-operate fully with any investigative or disciplinary procedures
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer immediately on becoming aware of anyone in the church who may present a risk to others
- Work with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and contribute relevant information for risk assessments
- Alert the Synod Safeguarding Officer or statutory agencies to known breaches of a

safeguarding agreement.

6. Supporting victims and survivors

The key principle underpinning our policy and practice in this area is that all those who have experienced abuse, whether recently or in the past 'will be listened to and offered the pastoral care and support they deem appropriate and relevant, irrespective of type of abuse, context, or when this occurred' (General Assembly policy statement 2021).

In line with Chapter six of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Recognise that the Elders' meeting has responsibility for provision of pastoral care
- Be aware of local support services that people can be referred or directed to
- Ensure those in relevant roles attend appropriate training
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer about provision of appropriate support when necessary.

7. Key contacts

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Andrew Summers
Telephone No 07879413146
Email andrewjsummers@btinternet.com

Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator

David Paul
Telephone No 020 8449 8627 Email david.paul11@btinternet.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Natalie Van Camp
Telephone No 07483994590 Email safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

URC Safeguarding Office (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Office)

Telephone No 020 7520 2729 or 07776 178246.
Email: safeguarding@urc.org.uk

ThirtyOne: Eight website www.thirtyoneeight.org

24 hour helpline: telephone 0303 003 1111 (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact URC)

Designated Officer (DO)

Statutory contact in the case of a child

Phone the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8359 4066. The MASH team are available Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and Friday 9am to 5pm.

Outside these hours you should report any concerns that need an immediate response to Barnet Council's emergency duty team on 020 8359 2000.

Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk

Social Care Direct on 020 8359 5000 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm) or Barnet Council's emergency duty team on 020 8359 2000 (out of hours)

8. Review

This policy was adopted by the elders of St John's URC on 14 May 2024 with the decision noted by the church meeting on 19 May 2024. It will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

Date of most recent review: 8 April 2025

Date of next review: 7 April 2026

Signed by:

(On behalf of the church Elders)

9. Details of other organisations and support services

See Resource L1 for relevant sources of support nationally

10. Electronic Resources

A USB with this Policy and Procedure and the associated resources is to be found in this file. A folder with the same resources is held electronically by the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, the Church Secretary and the Church Administrator and is also available on the church website and the URC website:

<https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>

St John's Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement was agreed by the Church Meeting of 19 May 2024

Safeguarding is taken seriously by St John's Church New Barnet. We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing, harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, disability, sex, race, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults and to ensure the wellbeing and pastoral care of those who are, or may be, at risk.

We will prevent abuse related to extremism or radicalisation and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

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

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a community of Christians we will all work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator are the persons to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available on our posters, websites, or in other communications with the public.

We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of trustees and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the Church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained.

We will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. We will use DBS/Disclosure Scotland checks as part of a wide range of checks on trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, the Designated Officer (DO, known as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO in some areas), Children's Partnership Boards and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining the confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to working with those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, offering appropriate pastoral support where possible as well as challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the church and offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervision, referral to the appropriate agencies, and implementation of safeguarding agreements when appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside the denomination.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment are in alignment with Good Practice 6 – the United Reformed Church's guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the local church trustees.

Procedure in Event of a Safeguarding Concern, Incident or Disclosure

1. If you have a concern that someone is at immediate risk of harm, you should, straight away, contact the police, call 999, or Barnet's Children or Adult Social Care Services, telephone: 020 8359 4066 (out of hours contact the emergency duty team on 020 8359 2000)
2. All concerns (including those in 1 above) should be reported within 24 hours to the:

St John's Church Safeguarding Coordinator, Andrew Summers, telephone 07879413146, email andrewjsummers@btinternet.com or

St John's Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator, David Paul, telephone 020 8449 8627, email david.paul11@btinternet.com or in their absence;

Synod Safeguarding Officer, Belinda Herbert, telephone 07716 640 596, email safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

If one of the people listed above is the subject of the concern, you must report it to the URC Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

3. Make a note, handwritten will suffice, of the key facts as soon as possible after the incident or disclosure. Keep your original notes safely in case they are needed as evidence.
 - who was involved – the names of key people, including actual or potential witnesses
 - what happened – facts not opinions.
 - use the person's own words where possible
 - where it happened – specific location and address
 - when it happened – date and time
 - who it was referred on to including full names, roles and contact details and, if known, what the outcomes were.
 - the name of the person completing the form / record, their signature and date.
4. Complete the Safeguarding Concern Form (Resource F1). Printed copies are to be found in a folder attached. Electronic copies accessible on the URC website <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/F1.pdf> pdf and Word version are available but not a version you could complete on-line.
5. Within 24 hours of the incident or disclosure, take, or email a photograph of, the completed Safeguarding Concern Form to the St John's Church Safeguarding Coordinator, Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator or, if they are **not** contactable, to the Synod Safeguarding Officer. Do not use the post.
6. The St John's Church Safeguarding Coordinator, Deputy or Church Safeguarding Coordinator will then convey a finalised Safeguarding Concern Form to the Synod Safeguarding Officer.
7. The Synod Safeguarding Officer will then advise on the next steps to be taken and by whom.