

Ickenham United Reformed Church

Church Safeguarding Policy

Supporting Document United Reformed – Good Practice 6 – Safeguarding for everyone

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 church meeting 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 and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church 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 the 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.

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. In line with Chapter 4 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

Where allegations are made against individuals within the Church, we are committed to following all required investigative and regulatory procedures. We will work in collaboration with the Synod, wider Church staff, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations. In line with Chapter 5 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' (URC General Assembly policy statement 2021).

In line with Chapter 6 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 Code of Conduct

Attention is drawn to Good Practice C1 and C2 which set out the standards to be adhered to. In particular attention is drawn to the following, staff and volunteers are required to

- Attend all necessary training which supports them in their role (see Training document Good Practice S2)
- Have a good awareness of, and comply with, Ickenham URC policies, procedures and guidance.
- Refresh all necessary training every three years
- Be aware of different types of abuse and the key signs and symptoms of abuse

8 Safeguarding and Hiring agreements

Please refer to the full Hiring agreement document for further information relating to the Hirers responsibilities.

1. The Hirer is responsible for ensuring that when children, young people or adults at risk are present on the Premises all legislation and best practice in connection with their safeguarding, supervision and safety is observed.
2. The Hirer is responsible for ensuring that children, young people and adults are protected at all times by taking all necessary steps and by having an appropriate insurance policy in place.
3. The Hirer must respond, record and report to the statutory agencies and to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator without delay every complaint/concern/investigation associated with the Hirer's activities on the Premises which suggests that a child, young person or adult at risk has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The Hirer must also co-operate with the police and Children's and Adult Services in any investigation and inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator (see contact details below) of its outcome.
4. The Hirer must as a minimum follow safer recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers involved in leading their activity including all those who require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for the role they are undertaking (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>).
5. The Hirer must abide by their own safeguarding policy if they have one. In any event, the Hirer must as a minimum comply with the policy set out in this document.
6. The Hirer will provide a copy of their insurance and safeguarding policies, and other documents in accordance with URC Good Practice guidance, to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator for information only, to enable the Church Safeguarding Coordinator to verify the existence of such documents. For the avoidance of doubt, the Church Safeguarding Coordinator in receiving a

copy of the Hirer's safeguarding policy or insurance does not warrant to undertake a detailed review of the documents to assess the suitability of the documents, etc., or assume any responsibility for the Hirer's obligations whatsoever. The responsibility for implementing, maintaining and adhering to all legislation and best practice in connection with safeguarding, supervision and safety associated with the Hirer's activities on the Premises lies solely with the Hirer. (See www.urc.org.uk/safeguarding for the URC Good Practice guidance, which includes information about contacting statutory agencies, reporting, safer recruitment practices, etc.).

8. Key contacts

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name **Mrs Esme Young**
Contact details Ickurcsafe@gmail.com

Ickenham URC Elder supporting the Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Name **Mr Keith Holland**
Contact details Ickurcsafe@gmail.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Name **Mrs Belinda Herbert (nee Nelson)**
Contact details safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

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

Email: safeguarding@urc.org.uk

Local statutory services: Children

Name **Stronger Families Hub**
Contact strongerfamilieshub@hillingdon.gov.uk
Telephone **01895 556006**

If you think a child is in immediate harm or danger call the Police on 999

NSPCC help@NSPCC.org.uk
Telephone **0808 800 5000**

Local statutory services: Adults

Name **Adult Social Care**
Contact socialcaredirect@hillingdon.gov.uk
Telephone **01895 556633 / Out of Hours 01895 250111**

9 Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, updated as required and adopted by the church meeting.

Date of most recent review: -----

Date of next review: -----

Signed by: -----

(On behalf of the church Elders)