



# Central Church

*Love God - Love People*

# **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN AND PROTECTED ADULTS**

Updated: September 2025



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Feb 2025	Barred/Under Consideration for Listing Policy
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Sept 2025	Supporting Our Community Team Document

# SECTION 1: Introduction

This document has been adopted by the church Leadership of AOG Central as our Policy for the Protection of Children and Protected Adults. Throughout the document, the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ means the Leadership of the church. This document is applicable for both employees of the church and volunteers, referred to herein as ‘workers’.

## 1.1 Glossary of Terms

<b>AoG</b>	Assemblies of God, Great Britain
<b>NLT</b>	The National Leadership Team of AoG
<b>The Board</b>	As appointed in accordance with the church’s working practices, also known as the Trustees
<b>Leadership</b>	The body of individuals with overall responsibility for the organisation including The Board, Pastors and Church Leadership Team (CLT)
<b>Disclosure Scotland</b>	Helps employers make safer decisions through disclosure processes
<b>SG</b>	Scottish Government
<b>GIRFEC</b>	Getting it Right for Every Child (The Scottish Government’s national childcare strategy)
<b>SHANARRI</b>	GIRFEC outcome indicators comprising Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi-agency public protection arrangements
<b>OSCR</b>	Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator
<b>PVG</b>	The Scottish Government’s Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (includes criminal records checks)
<b>SAG</b>	Safeguarding Advisory Group
<b>SL</b>	The designated Safeguarding Lead in the local church
<b>Deputy SL</b>	Deputises for the SL if they are absent or cannot be contacted
<b>Thirtyone:eight</b>	The external safeguarding advisory body the church consults for advice and training.
<b>Volunteer Scotland (VS)</b>	An agency funded by the Scottish Government to support the voluntary sector to undertake criminal records checks through the PVG scheme.

## 1.2 The legal framework

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 provides for the protection of two vulnerable groups: children and adults at risk of harm. For the purpose of this Act, a child is defined as an individual aged under 18 years (Section 97). *See our appendices for more information on the legal definition of a child.* Any work regularly undertaken by the church with children and youth (not accompanied by their parent/carer) is termed as 'regulated work.'

The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 introduced significant changes to the disclosure system in Scotland, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Key changes included a new focus on 'regulated roles' instead of 'regulated work', making membership in the PVG scheme a legal requirement for those in a 'regulated role'. A 'regulated role' is defined as a position that involves contact with children or protected adults, including tasks like supervision, teaching or providing personal services.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places the protection of children within the Scottish Government's *Getting It Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) framework. GIRFEC promotes the need to improve the well-being of children and young people in eight areas. These well-being indicators, known as SHANARRI, require that children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 remains in place and places a duty on social work departments and police to investigate if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child living in their area 'is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. This makes clear that protecting children in Scotland from harm includes preventing future harm where there is good reason to believe that the child is 'at risk of significant harm'.

This church is committed to implementing the Scottish Government's pledge to all children and young people at risk of abuse ('Protecting Children and Young People - The Charter' Scottish Government, 2004) that:

- They will get the help they need when they need it
- They will be seen by a professional such as a teacher, doctor or social worker to make sure they are safe and not put at more risk
- They will be listened to seriously, and professionals will use their power to help them
- They will be able to discuss issues in private when, and if, they want to
- They will be involved with, and helped to understand, decisions made about their life; and
- They will have a named person to help them.

### **and that those helping them will:**

- Share information to protect them
- Minimise disruption to other parts of their life
- Work together effectively on their behalf
- Be competent, confident, properly trained and supported and
- Rigorously monitor services to continually improve how and what is done to help children and young people.

Scottish legislation of the protection of adults refers to the risk of harm rather than abuse. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 provides ways to offer support and protection to certain adults who may be at risk of harm or neglect.

The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, replaces the previous term 'adult at risk of harm' with the new term 'protected adult'.

A 'protected adult' is defined as a person aged 18 or over who may be unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests, and who is at risk of harm. Additionally, they may be more vulnerable to harm due to a disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity.

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It is important to note that any contact within a church context will only be regarded as a 'regulated role' if it is specifically set up for the purpose of supporting a protected group of adults, e.g., a dementia group or a bereavement counselling service. For more information on the definitions of children and protected adults, and indications of harm or abuse please see the appendices.

## 1.3 The Biblical framework

We believe in the Biblical directive “*Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.*” Psalm 82:3-4 (NKJV)

## 1.4 Our Relationship with thirtyone:eight

AOG Central is a member of thirtyone:eight along with over 10,000 other organisations. Thirtyone:eight provide advice, training and policy guidance. Providing churches with all the tools they need under one roof.

Thirtyone:eight is referred to throughout this policy, either by name or as the church’s external safeguarding advisory body. More information can be found at:

[www.thirtyoneeight.org](http://www.thirtyoneeight.org)

## 1.5 Our relationship with Volunteer Scotland

It is a legal requirement of organisations working with children or providing specific services for protected adults that no person appointed to work with them, whether paid workers or volunteers, is unsuitable to do so. We will ensure that our safeguarding measures include provision for carrying out criminal records disclosure checks for ‘regulated roles’ (see below). In Scotland this is achieved through ensuring that staff and volunteers who work with protected groups are members of the Scottish Government’s *Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme*. Under the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the PVG scheme became a legal requirement, making it an offence to work in a regulated role without being a member of the PVG scheme.

New legislation included:

- the introduction of simplified disclosure products and people having more control over their information
- an individualised approach to the disclosure of childhood offending and rights of review for convictions disclosed, to enhance fairness and proportionality
- replacing the concept of ‘regulated work’ with ‘regulated roles’, making it more easily understood
- Membership of the PVG scheme will be a **legal requirement** from 1st April 2025 for those carrying out a regulated role.
- the ability for Disclosure Scotland to impose conditions on PVG scheme members who are under consideration for listing.

*Volunteer Scotland* ([www.volunteerscotland.net](http://www.volunteerscotland.net)) is funded by the Scottish Government to support the voluntary sector with these checks. Qualifying volunteers may become members of the PVG Scheme free of charge. Volunteer Scotland will also process checks for paid workers, but a fee is charged for these checks. We will enrol with Volunteer Scotland for the purpose of carrying out disclosure checks and to avail ourselves of their other services.

We acknowledge that membership of Volunteer Scotland does not negate the importance of joining an external safeguarding advisory body in order to have access to their support and advice.



## **1.6 Safeguarding Awareness**

The Leadership is committed to ongoing training and development opportunities for all workers in order to develop a culture where everyone is aware of our responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and protected adults.

The Leadership shall appoint a Safeguarding Lead (SL) and two Deputies who will oversee arrangements for protecting children and protected adults. They will also be the church's signatories for PVG checks

It is the responsibility of the SL to inform appropriate agencies promptly of any notifiable events of concern including allegations, disclosures or suspicions of abuse concerning children or protected adults.

The church provides all workers (paid or voluntary) with induction training and undertake appropriate safeguarding training regularly according to 'good practice' guidelines, and training should cover signs and indicators of abuse and how to respond as an absolute minimum.

This may be provided either by the SL (if confident and competent to do so), by an external safeguarding body, or by another recognised body, organisation or qualified individual.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and protected adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

# **POLICY**

## Section 2: Place of Worship

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### 2.1 Organisation Details

<b>Name of Place of Worship / Organisation</b>	AOG Central
<b>Address:</b>	Fraserburgh – Central Church, Albert Street, Fraserburgh, AB43 9JJ Invercairn - Rathen Road, Cairnbulg, AB43 8TB
<b>Tel No:</b>	01346 518006
<b>Email address:</b>	<a href="mailto:ineed@aogcentral.co.uk">ineed@aogcentral.co.uk</a>
<b>Charity Number:</b>	SC048510
<b>Company Number:</b>	130646
<b>Denomination/Membership</b>	Assemblies of God (GB)
<b>Insurance Company</b>	Public Liability with Ansvar Insurance

<b>Name of Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Avril Sutherland 07765 181582
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk">safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk</a>

<b>Name of Deputy Safeguarding Leads:</b>	Joyce Allan Gary Sutherland
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:pvg@aogcentral.co.uk">pvg@aogcentral.co.uk</a>

## 2.2 Organisation Activities

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

AOG Central is a vibrant church with a vision to love God and love people. There are many activities and programmes taking place in the church. Regular ministry and programmes are outlined below:

- Central Kids Children's Ministry: working with children from birth – P7 during the Sunday morning services Creche/Kids' Church pre-school & primary as well as Prayer Breakfast, Toddlers, Glo and Fuse during the week, regular Kids' Camps and Jump Holiday Clubs.
- Young Lions Juniors (P7 & S1)
- Central Youth: working with young people aged 11-18+ mainly on Friday evenings including football at the all-weather pitch. Also, Sundays and activities throughout the week, annual events and residential trips.
- Community Café every Tuesday, a place to come and connect/have a hot meal.
- Food Bank
- Helping Hands
- Parish Nursing
- Visiting Team

AOG Central also meets in the village of Cairnbulg and is known as AOG Central, Invercairn.

- Central Kids Children's Ministry: working with children from birth – P7. Kids' Church during monthly Sunday evening service, Epic Kids Club weekly, occasional holiday clubs.
- Mainly Music for birth to pre-school

## 2.3 Leadership Commitment to Safeguarding

As the Leadership, we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people, and adults. We recognise the importance of our ministry with children, young people and adults and our responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm. All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse. Adults in our church should be enabled to live fulfilling, autonomous lives, and where appropriate should have access to every aspect of church life. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church is the responsibility of the whole church. As a leadership, we endeavour to make our church a safe environment for all.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to *“all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from *“all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”*

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding. We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

## 2.4 Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership undertakes to:

### 1. Promote a Safe & Healthy Church Culture

We respect the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We value and respect children and want to hear their voices.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to *“all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*.

We share the Scottish Government's vision for all children and young people in Scotland that they should be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included. These areas of a child's well-being are also known as the eight well-being indicators within the SG's GIRFEC strategy (See 'Getting it Right for Every Child', 2008). We share the Scottish Government's vision that all protected adults because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity should be able to live their lives with choice and without fear of harm. We understand the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive, safe and healthy environment and are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, implementing all other relevant legislation as part of safeguarding.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures and practice guidance reflect this, so that adults can have access to every aspect of the life of our church.

We are committed to supporting parents and families and ensuring that our church is a safe place for all.

The leadership has appointed a Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads as points of reference, to act on all allegations or suspicions of abuse in reporting to the statutory safeguarding authorities. In our commitment to openness, should anyone have a concern that our church or the Safeguarding Lead(s) have not dealt appropriately with a safeguarding concern we would encourage that person to make a direct referral to Social Work or the Police.

## **2. Work with Safeguarding authorities**

We recognise the role that the statutory safeguarding authorities (Social Work and the Police) have in investigating all suspicions and allegations or discovery of child abuse and the abuse of adults and will cooperate fully with all agencies to protect those at risk of harm or abuse:

- Children's Social Work has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there is a concern about a child.
- Adult Social Work has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse when concerned about the welfare of an adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

We will follow the requirements for Scottish legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.

We will act in accordance with national and local safeguarding guidance and acknowledge that "safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility" and that "everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play".

We will liaise with the local statutory safeguarding partnerships where appropriate.

We shall ensure that our premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.

We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding and sharing relevant information where appropriate.

## **3. Support those in our Church who serve Children and Adults**

The Leadership have appointed a Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads to respond to any safeguarding concern or suspicion of abuse. The Leadership fully

supports them in their role of acting in the best interest of the child or adult and reporting to the statutory authorities all allegations or suspicions of abuse.

We commit to providing a robust recruitment process, safeguarding training and development opportunities for all our workers (paid and voluntary) and will regularly review the training needs, and the operational guidelines attached to this policy.

We will also support, resource, monitor and provide supervision to all those who undertake work with children or adults, and those in positions of trust.

We commit to providing induction training for all those working with children and protected adults.

We take seriously our responsibility for ensuring that everyone is safe in our care and that their dignity and rights are maintained.

*(See appendices 2 & 19)*

#### **4. Safeguarding in Practice**

We commit to supporting, listening to, and working towards recovery for everyone affected, either directly or indirectly by any form of abuse.

We are a welcoming Church, which recognises that in following our mission, we may have offenders join us. In such circumstances we will talk with the person concerned, and with any safeguarding professional involved to ensure that their involvement in church does not compromise the safety and well-being of children or adults. To ensure this we will take appropriate and proportionate measures, including working with relevant partners to complete a risk assessment and ensuring the individual adheres to a safeguarding agreement.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.

Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be closely managed by the Church Leadership. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed using our safeguarding procedures and through obtaining professional guidance where appropriate.

All safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead in the church. No one in receipt of a disclosure of abuse, or suspicion of abuse should investigate the matter.

Where an allegation or suspicion of abuse is made against someone working with children, or adults, or is in a position of trust, then the Safeguarding Lead will make contact with our designated professional safeguarding advisors for advice.

We shall support the Safeguarding Lead(s) in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children and adults.

It is the expectation that all those working with children and with adults have access to the church safeguarding policy and will have read it and agreed to fully adhere to the policy, procedures and practice guidelines, as condition of continuing in their role.

A filed copy of any amendments should be subsequently published in the same manner. The safeguarding policy should also be available to parents, carers and all others within the church. It could be made available upon request for quality assurance purposes, for example with professional advisors.

We shall not allow the document to be copied by other organisations however it will be publicly available via our church website.

## Section 3: PREVENTION

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Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

### 3.1 Definitions

#### UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS ABUSE & NEGLECT

*NB. Detailed definitions of abuse are included in appendix 6, 7, 8 & 9.*

Child abuse or abuse against an adult can be a difficult and complex issue to understand. A person may abuse or neglect by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution, or a community setting. Very often, the abuser is known or is in a trusted relationship with the child or adult. Research shows that abuse can be perpetrated by males and females, by adults and by children, as well as those in positions of trust and authority. People in such positions have also misused their power and authority within churches to abuse.

The four main categories of child abuse are physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. It is important to note that a child may be suffering from more than one form of abuse. Safeguarding professionals must assess if they need to intervene in order to protect a child and this is based on whether it is felt a child is suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. There are other forms of abuse (such as child sexual exploitation) which come under these four main headings when instigating a child protection plan.

In order to safeguard those in our place of worship and organisation we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

*1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

*Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Adults are in need of protection due to physical, sexual, psychological (which includes emotional abuse) and neglect (including self-neglect) as well as financial, institutional, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery, trafficking and domestic violence. Detailed definitions, signs, and symptoms of abuse are included in the appendices. Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution, or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult at risk of harm.



Also, for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Article 5, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## **3.2 Policy Statements**

### **3.2.1 Safer Recruitment**

The Leadership is committed to ensuring that the recruitment process is robust and includes vetting, references, and structured meetings. Thereafter ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities will be provided for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake appropriate safeguarding training regularly according to 'good practice' guidelines, and training should cover signs and indicators of abuse and how to respond as a minimum. This training may be provided either by the Safeguarding Lead (if confident and competent to do so) or by a professional safeguarding organisation via their training programme(s), or another recognised body, organisation, or qualified individual.

### **3.2.2 Safeguarding Awareness**

As a Leadership, we will endeavour to ensure that children and adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter of concern. As a leadership, we recognise that for many victims/survivors of abuse, where the abuse has taken/takes place within the context of the church or by someone professing a Christian faith, it can have an impact on their spiritual development.

The recruitment process for new team members makes clear their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. The recruitment process is outlined in appendix 2. As part of their induction workers are required to attend initial safeguarding training.

All workers are required to attend regular team meetings which will include safeguarding refresher training. Attendance will be tracked to ensure all team members have received regular training.

### **3.2.3 Code of Conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers shall be issued with a code of conduct specific towards their work with children, young people and adults with additional care and support needs.

*See Appendix 4.*

These processes will all be subject to annual review.

## **Section 4: Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

### **4.1 Policy Statement**

The Leadership shall ensure that detailed procedures are implemented which address the following when responding to allegations of abuse:

- Reporting a Concern
- Obtaining appropriate professional advice

Documented processes shall set out detailed procedures for when there is/are:

- Concern about a child's welfare
- Concern about the welfare of a protected adult
- Concern about alleged abuse against a person who works with children/young people
- Allegations of abuse against a person who works with protected adults

*(See appendices 1 & 18)*

These records will be maintained in accordance with the church Data Protection Policy.

*(see appendix 16)*

## **Section 5: PASTORAL CARE**

### **5.1 Policy Statements**

#### **5.1.1 Pastoral Care**

With the various activities we are involved in as a church, we understand the safeguarding considerations and shall undertake risk assessments where appropriate for the various activities, enforcing clear guidelines for all in positions of trust in church. The Leadership is also committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation.

A church should be a safe place for everyone, children, and adults, where all feel welcomed, valued, respected, and cared for. We can promote this by ensuring that our buildings are accessible, recognising the limitations that the design of some buildings create and addressing this, along with the acoustics and lighting. We should also be careful to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary that can often reflect people's attitudes towards others. Church is not simply meeting for collective worship on a Sunday, but can involve many different groups and activities, across the age range, throughout the week, and at different times day and night. We can work with children and young people through children's groups, kid's church, youth meetings, communicating online by text, social media, and app services. Our church activities are not confined solely to a church building, and we can meet in people's homes. Church also might involve other residential or outdoor activities. We also provide pastoral care in people's homes and counselling support. With the various activities we are involved in as a

church, it is important that we understand the safeguarding considerations and undertake risk assessments for the various activities, enforcing clear guidelines for all in positions of trust in church.

### **5.1.2 Counselling**

The Leadership is committed to ensuring that it manages all pastoral matters appropriately, including the signposting of those in need to specific support beyond the capability and qualifications of the pastoral care team.

The Leadership Team understands that, whether in the present, recent, or distant past, the effects of abuse can be devastating and long term, not only for the person who has been abused but also for family members, friends, social groups and the organisation or faith community. Those affected may struggle with a range of issues, including aspects of faith and spirituality - particularly where the abuse occurred within a faith context. So, this needs sensitive handling. Showing care and compassion, being available to listen and offering support are important in responding to the needs of adult survivors. Some people will need professional help and it is important to recognise this and signpost those in need, being aware of our own limitations to offer specific support. We are prepared to seek advice and support, e.g., from an external safeguarding advisory body.

### **5.1.3 Working with Offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to protected adults, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and may offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and protected adults, it will set boundaries for that person which they must keep, outlined in a Safeguarding Agreement (*see appendix 12*). The ongoing working with offenders will be reviewed and agreed by the SAG.

# PROCEDURES

## Section 6: PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in, and these are listed below.

### 6.1 Risk Management

Activities where there is any increased risk of harm should be subject to a careful assessment of the risks involved. *A copy of the risk assessment template can be found in Appendix 11.* This should identify the risks to children and protected adults and those working with them and should set out the steps to be taken to reduce and manage risk levels. This should include the health and safety of the premises, specific activities, any use of transport, overnight accommodation (if used), residential trips etc.

### 6.2 Safer Recruitment

Procedures for safer recruitment of workers include ensuring that:

- 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
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A PVG check has been obtained in accordance with the position that the person has applied for, where necessary, and in accordance with any obligations of external agencies (e.g. AoG)
- As a church we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information
- A suitable induction and training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has access to and has read the church safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns to the Safeguarding Lead
- The applicant has completed a probationary period. 3 months would be the suggested period.
- Suitable ongoing support and supervision is provided
- An annual suitability declaration is completed where necessary

## 6.3 Code of Conduct

We are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. It is important there is a culture of dignity and respect towards those being cared for. We have a code of conduct that outlines the behaviours expected of all workers (staff and volunteers). This includes:

- understanding our safeguarding policy and good working practice
- listening to children, young people and adults
- respecting boundaries and the privacy of those being cared for
- knowing how to deal with issues of discipline in line with our code of conduct
- those providing pastoral care should avoid any behaviour that may give the impression of favouritism
- workers should be aware of the limits of their own ability and competence and seek further help when dealing with situations outside their expertise
- there should be clear guidelines where workers are involved in any aspect of personal finance such as collecting benefits or pension or going shopping for someone to ensure financial integrity

*See Appendix 4 - Code of Conduct*

## **6.4 Training & Team**

All workers (whether paid or voluntary) will be provided with appropriate training and given the opportunity to develop their skills so that they feel supported and valued in the work they undertake. As a Leadership, we commit to ensuring all workers are supported (where possible by a named individual who arranges regular meetings) where concerns or issues can be raised, work related or personal. It is also the role of the supervisor(s) to ensure all training needs are met.

The Leadership recognises the importance of team meetings. These should be convened on a regular basis and also provide an opportunity for ideas and issues to be aired, concerns expressed, and feedback given in a safe environment.

## **6.5 Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not.

- We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding.
- It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

## **6.6 Good Communication**

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved; this needs to be balanced with the need to protect a person who has been or is at risk of abuse. All those working with adults must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential. In order to protect the adult at risk of harm, or others at potential risk means that this will need to be reported to the Safeguarding Lead.



## **6.7 General Safe Practice Guidelines for Working with Children**

### **6.7.1 Physical contact**

- Physical contact shall be appropriate, consensual, in public places and never when an adult and child are on their own.
- The level of personal care (e.g., assistance with toileting) shall be appropriate and related to the age and developmental needs of the child and agreements with parents/carers.

### **6.7.2 Sexuality**

- Workers shall maintain appropriate personal boundaries and avoid behaviour, comments or conversations which may be misconstrued.
- Workers shall do nothing to encourage any child or young person who appears to have developed a 'crush' on them. They will speak to their group leader/SL for advice and guidance.
- Workers shall respect children's privacy and avoid games involving touch of a type that might cause sexual arousal.

### **6.7.3 Rooms and Ratios**

- Workers shall avoid being in a room on their own with any child.
- Whenever possible there will be a minimum of two workers present with a group, and always when it is the only activity taking place on church premises.
- If the group is split into smaller groups with one worker in each, the groups shall be in one large room or adjoining rooms.
- When planning activities workers will consider how many adult helpers are necessary in order to conduct a safe activity.
- Where privacy is needed (e.g., when counselling a young person), workers will ensure that others know what is happening and where. Another adult helper must be in the building, preferably in an adjoining room.

### **6.7.4 Transport**

If workers are providing transport of children and young people, e.g., lifts home, workers shall only take children of their own gender or mixed. They will plan to drop off more than one person at their last stop. If there is no alternative other than to transport a child a short distance on their own, this must be agreed with the parent/carer and the child should sit in the back of the car.

### **6.7.5 Homes**

If workers visit a child or young person's home, they will only enter the home if a parent or carer is present.

Children and young people shall not normally be invited to a worker's own home. If this does happen it will only be as part of a planned activity agreed with the church leadership and Safeguarding Lead. There will be at least two adults present, both of whom should be members of the PVG Scheme. This will only happen with parents' written consent or direct verbal consent to the group leader for the specified activity. Any visit to a worker's home by a child on their own must be agreed, on each occasion, by the SL.

### **6.7.6 Discipline**

- If workers decide to take a child to one side to talk to them, they will do so within sight of other workers and if the matter is serious, with another worker.
- Consequences for inappropriate behaviour will be proportionate and consistent.
- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive and workers are unsure what to do, they will seek advice and guidance from their Group Leader or Safeguarding Lead.
- If it is decided to send a child home, or exclude them, either temporarily or permanently, the group leader will ensure that their parent/carer knows this, and the reasons why, as soon as possible.

### **6.7.7 Incidents and Accidents**

- Leaders and Workers will all know where the group's or the church's first aid kit is kept.
- Workers shall never attempt a first aid procedure they are not trained in.
- In the case of an emergency the ambulance must be called for first.
- Workers shall always fill out an 'Incident/Accident Report Form' on the same day of the event and hand it to their leader.
- Incident/Accident Report Forms must be handed to the Group Leader and then to the SL to be filed at the Church office so that they can be referred to should there be any need for follow up.
- The Group Leader will always inform the child's parent/carer as soon as possible after an accident.

Note: An incident is an unplanned and adverse event with the potential to cause harm; this may include fights between children, threatening behaviour, bullying or other types of event, e.g., arising from a hazard. If unsure, workers should ask their Group Leader.

### **6.7.8 Photographs and video**

Group leaders must always seek written permission/online consent from the parent or carer before taking any photographs or video footage of children, young people or protected adults. This can be included in the registration form when a new member joins a group. Identification stickers will show if children do not have permission to be photographed/filmed.

### **6.7.9 Social Media**

- Workers should carefully consider whether personal social media contact with children or protected adults is necessary or appropriate, or whether it could contribute to misunderstanding and/or increased vulnerability. If in doubt, workers should discuss this with the group leader or Safeguarding Lead.
- The group leader and Safeguarding Lead should be promptly informed if workers receive any social media contact from children or protected adults which they think could be open to misinterpretation.

*See appendix 10 for the full Social Media Policy*

## **6.8 Local Church Events**

### **6.8.1 Policy Statement**

Safeguarding the vulnerable is no less important at one-off events as it is in regular local, regional, or national activity. In many ways there is greater need to ensure that the planning of such events includes awareness of safeguarding and adherence to our safeguarding policy.

This safeguarding policy therefore applies to all our events and any workers who participate in local, regional, or national activity regardless of the venue when the church is the organiser.

### **6.8.2 Single Approach**

It is recognised that events occur in many formats, and that there are responsibilities for both the host/venue, and also the lead/planning organisation. There are no differences in standards and principles within the UK, regardless of the nature of the event.

There are responsibilities for the host/venue, and equally there are responsibilities for the lead organisation, however it is the event organiser that has primary responsibility for ensuring safeguarding at their event.

If we are the event organiser at another venue, we will ensure that the policy and procedures as set out in this document will be followed. If we are the host venue for third parties (for example building or room hire) we will ensure that, where applicable, hirers will have their own safeguarding policies and procedures in place, this will be confirmed as part of their user agreement.

### **6.8.3 Responding & Reporting Mechanisms**

All events and activities should have a designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for overseeing the activity and ensuring that all workers/visitors are fully apprised of the safeguarding activity and requirements.

All incidents, allegations or concerns identified during events must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead for the organising church if a part of locally driven outreach activity, who will then liaise with the appropriate legal authorities and professional support organisations to ensure good practice is facilitated in relation to the reporting of any allegations of abuse.

If an allegation is made against a worker, that person must be removed from their duties or prevented from having any further contact with children and young people or adults with additional care and support needs immediately whilst necessary action is taken.

## **6.9 Global Mission Trips**

### **6.9.1 Policy Statement**

This safeguarding policy applies to all members of our local churches that participate in locally-driven missions' activity, whether planting/establishing churches within indigenous communities, visiting on short-term mission or placed as a longer-term missionary in locations around the world.

### **6.9.2 Prevention of abuse**

It is recognised that the cultures within which international missions are often working may adopt different standards to the care and treatment of children and young people. Nevertheless, the standards and principles adopted within the UK are expected to apply in international mission situations. The maltreatment of children and young people is contrary to Biblical values and practices and therefore cannot be tolerated.

Due regard will need to be given to the cultures within which activities are taking place, however under the expectation of applying UK standards to the practice of mission workers, some guidance may be useful.

### **6.9.3 Procedures**

Our Workers/Missionaries should:

- be able to recognise situations which may present risks
- plan and organise the work and workplace so as to minimise risks as far as possible and be visible to other adults when working and talking with children
- take particular care for the needs of disabled children and other vulnerable children as research has shown that abuse can often go unrecognised and unreported due to people's attitudes and assumptions about disability
- ensure that others know where interviews of children are taking place and that someone else is around in the building

Our Workers/Missionaries should not:

- spend excessive time alone with children
- take children to their personal home, or to stay overnight, especially where they will be alone with you
- leave any person under 16 in charge of any children of any age. However, some local/national legislation may require this to be 18 years of age. Nor should children or young people attending any group be left alone at any time.
- hit or otherwise physically assault children
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- use language, make suggestions, or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

### **6.9.4 Responding & Reporting Mechanisms**

All overseas mission activities should have a designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for safer recruitment of workers (including PVG disclosures where these are necessary) and for ensuring that applicants are fully apprised of the safeguarding policy. All incidents, allegations or concerns identified during overseas mission activities must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead for the sending church if a part of locally driven mission activity, who will then liaise with the appropriate authorities to ensure good practice is facilitated in relation to the reporting of any allegations of abuse within the relevant country.

If an allegation is made against a worker/missionary, that person must be removed from their duties or prevented from having any further contact with children and young people or adults with additional care and support needs immediately whilst necessary action is taken. Due account must always be taken of the laws and frameworks in place within any country in which the missions operate. In many cases, practice, values and beliefs in relation to safeguarding the vulnerable will be different to the UK. However, care must always be taken to ensure that the

rights of the individuals concerned are upheld (see the *UN Convention on Human Rights and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*).

## 6.10 Management of Workers

### 6.10.1 Codes of Conduct

Workers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted in what is essentially a relationship of trust. No kind of romantic or sexual relationship between an adult and a child/young person is ever acceptable and, if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Lead immediately.

The trusting relationship between a worker and child, young person, or protected adult means the worker should never:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine
- use their status and/or standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual

Due to the nature of some church activities, e.g. after church coffee time, children and their parents/carers may well feel safe enough to allow their children more freedom to interact with un-checked adults than they would in other situations. The level of assumed trust, especially in the eyes of a child, is unusual in an environment where un-checked adults have unsupervised access to children. This places a special responsibility on all those adults who have a formal role to be vigilant, whether or not they are considered to be "on duty".

The best way to safeguard the children we come into contact with is by following good practices that promote and protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. These include:

- Not spending time alone with a child
- Not putting yourself in a situation that could be interpreted as being inappropriate
- Not maintaining contact with a child outside of agreed activities without the knowledge of the child's parents/legal guardians - if such contact is agreed with the parents/carers, it needs to be made clear that you are no longer acting on behalf of the church.
- Being vigilant - if you witness any behaviour by someone else at an event, whether a team member or a guest that causes you to be concerned about the welfare of a child, please speak to a Group Leader immediately.

It is important that there is a culture of dignity and respect towards those being cared for. This can be achieved by workers:

- understanding the organisation's safeguarding policy and good working practice
- listening to children, young people and protected adults
- respecting boundaries and privacy of those being cared for
- knowing how to deal with issues of discipline in line within the organisation's code of conduct
- developing an awareness of disability issues as well as issues of equality and inclusion

Churches and organisations are legally required to have a Referral Policy for 'referring' to Disclosure Scotland any person whose conduct has given serious cause for concern. In order to make such a referral, the subject of the referral will have done one or more of the following:

- caused harm (including physical assault, emotional abuse, neglecting a person's needs)
  - placed someone at risk of harm (including failing to attend to whatever health and safety requirements may be in force)
  - engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography
  - engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct (including sexual abuse, using inappropriate language)
  - given inappropriate medical treatment (including supplying illegal or unauthorised drugs)
- (See Appendix 13 – Referrals Policy)*

### **6.10.2 Use of Social Media**

We shall implement social media procedures in line with the following:

Any social media contact with children or protected adults in relation to church activities and groups should normally be limited to pages/groups in the name of the church, or specific activity or group chats (with appropriate parental consent). Use should be confined to communication by designated adults solely about such activities and groups.

Workers should carefully consider whether personal social media contact with children or protected adults is necessary or appropriate, or whether it could contribute to misunderstanding and/or increased vulnerability. If in doubt, workers should discuss this with the SL and/or group leader. They should also be promptly informed if workers receive any social media contact from children or protected adults which they think could be open to misinterpretation.

Content of church and church activity social media pages should be monitored by a designated person. Privacy settings should be locked so the page(s) are used only for relevant matters and not for private or general social conversations, or to share personal details. Written permission/online consent from the young person's parent/carer should be received before young people under 18 are included in group chats.

*(A copy of the church's social media policy can be found in Appendix 10.)*

### **6.10.3 Training and Supervision**

We shall provide all workers, paid or voluntary, with appropriate training and give the opportunity to develop their skills, as well as feel supported and valued in the work they undertake. Training will include child and adult protection as appropriate. Training will be designed to support workers to develop professional and well-informed standards of care and support for those we work with. This will also help workers to recognise indicators of concerns which may need to be acted upon.

We are committed to ensuring all workers are supported (where possible by a named supervisor). Supervisors will arrange regular meetings where any concerns or issues can be raised, work related or personal. It is also the role of the supervisor to ensure all training needs are met. Where supervision with a named individual is not possible, or impractical, group supervision may be used as an alternative as this can maximise resources and allows for the sharing of issues and concerns.

#### **6.10.4 Team Meetings**

We recognise the importance of team meetings. These should be convened on a regular basis and should provide an opportunity for ideas and issues to be aired, concerns expressed, and feedback given.

# Section 7: RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

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## 7.1 Reporting Concerns

***Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.*** Follow procedures as below and see the flow chart in *Appendix 1*:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

<b>Name of Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Avril Sutherland 07765181582
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk">safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk</a>

This person is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to:

<b>Name of Deputy Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Joyce Allan
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:pvg@aogcentral.co.uk">pvg@aogcentral.co.uk</a>

- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

<p>Thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.          Telephone: 0303 003 1111.          A helpline is available for advice, but where the situation is an emergency, the police should be contacted.</p>
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- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Lead should contact Children’s Social Services or take advice from the professional support organisation listed above.

<b>The local Children and Families Social Work office telephone number (office hours) is</b>	01467 537111
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<b>The out of hours emergency number is</b>	03456 081206
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- Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, contact Adult Social Work or take advice from the professional support organisation listed above.

<b>The local Adult Social Work office telephone number (office hours) is</b>	01346 510445 or 01346 415885
<b>The out of hours emergency number is</b>	03456 081206

<b>Police Scotland</b>	101
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- Where required, the Safeguarding Lead should then immediately inform senior personnel within the organisation as follows:

<b>Name:</b>	Ben Ritchie
<b>Position:</b>	Senior Pastor

<b>Name:</b>	Lisa Watt
<b>Position:</b>	Chair of SAG

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
- Always have 2 adults present to speak with anyone (child or adult) regarding any allegations.
- A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- The Leadership will support the SL/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- The Leadership must consider any duty regarding informing the church's insurers and the charity commission (if a registered charity) of offences committed by workers.
- If the person against whom an allegation is being made is in a position of trust, external authorities may need to be informed. The SL should seek professional advice.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from a professional safeguarding organisation, although the Leadership expect that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly. This would also apply if the Safeguarding

Lead/Deputy were not available. We believe by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. It is not necessarily the role of the Safeguarding Lead to investigate allegations and concerns.

## **7.2 Concern about the Welfare of a Child**

*See the flow chart in Appendix 1*

### **ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

If a child has a physical injury, an indicator of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse:

- Seek medical help if needed urgently via phoning 999.
- Contact the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Contact Children and Families Social Work or a professional safeguarding organisation for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home. If the issue is urgent, the Police and/or the Out of Hours Social Work must be contacted without delay.
- Do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Work or Police.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g., poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Work direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by an external professional supporting organisation (who should confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Work.

### **ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse:

- Make sure the child is safe.
- Contact the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Contact the Children's Social Work for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. The person reporting must NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly the reason for your suspicion including (if applicable) what the child said. Include the child's name, age, address, relevant family information and details of the situation and the activity that preceded disclosure. Do not worry about any apparent inconsistencies in the child's account. Just note it down as they describe it as accurately as you can.
- The role of the SL is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation and provide the information to Children and Families Social Work, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

- If the allegation involves your group leader, then speak directly to the SL. If the allegation involves the SL, the DSL or another leader must urgently be contacted instead.
- Seek and follow the advice given by your professional safeguarding support organisation if, for any reason, they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. The professional safeguarding support organisation should confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

## 7.3 Concern About the Welfare of a Protected Adult

*See the flowcharts in Appendices 1 & 18*

### **Definition of “protected adult” Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020**

An individual aged 18 or over who, by reason of physical or mental disability, illness, infirmity or ageing has an impaired ability to protect themselves from physical or psychological harm, or requires assistance with the activities of daily living.

An individual aged 18 or over who is homeless, or has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic abuse.

Most adults with mental illness, physical or learning disabilities or other special needs manage to live their lives comfortably and securely and do so, either independently or with assistance from carers, relatives, friends, professionals, or volunteers. However, a small number of adults are particularly vulnerable to harm (See also the Appendices).

Everyone has a shared responsibility for protecting such adults from harm and the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 enables this.

An important consideration in protecting adults, as compared with children, is their right to choice. A Scottish Government guidance document, 'Adult Support and Protection: Ensuring Support and Preventing Harm' explains, "The Act is about achieving a balance between respecting people's rights and taking action where necessary to support and to protect them. It should help individuals to live their lives as they wish by ensuring that support is provided when they need it and provide the means to protect adults at risk of harm".

The guidance stresses: "If you are worried that you or someone you know is being harmed, is suffering from neglect, or is being abused, it is important to tell someone. Everyone has a right to be safe. Remember, the person who did this may be doing it to others too. Or it could be that the person who is being harmed or neglected may not be able to report it themselves. Even if it happened many years ago, it is still important to report it".

### **Suspensions or Allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse**

The Care Act 2014 places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not the church.

If an adult with additional care and support needs has a physical injury or indicator of sexual

abuse the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- If the adult with additional care and support needs is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy, and rights to lead an independent life. Advice needs to be sought from the statutory agencies if it is felt that their choice might contradict their welfare needs.

For advice contact the appropriate Adult Social Work Team who have responsibility under Section 4 of the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007 to make inquiries about a person's well-being, property, or financial affairs if it knows or believes

- a) that the person is an adult at risk, and
- b) that it might need to intervene in order to protect the person's well-being, property or financial affairs.

The Police Scotland Family Protection Unit will also provide advice and will need to be contacted where the concerns are of a serious nature. Alternatively, seek and follow advice from your external safeguarding advisory body (who should confirm their advice in writing).

## 7.4 Concern About Alleged Abuse by Those Who Work with Children

See the flow chart in Appendix 1

If an accusation is made against a worker whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, will need to inform the following without delay of any allegations against staff members:

- Children: the local authority Children and Families Social Work Department in regard to the suspension of the worker.

<b>Name:</b>	Social Work – Children and Families Team
<b>Contact Details:</b>	01467 537111 03456 081206 (out of hours) Social Work Office, 14 Saltoun Square, Fraserburgh <a href="mailto:aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a> .

## 7.5 Allegations of Abuse against a person who works with Adults at Risk of Harm

<b>Name:</b>	Adult Social Work Duty Team
<b>Contact Details:</b>	01346 510445 or 01346 415885 03456 081206 (out of hours) Social Work Office, 14 Saltoun Square, Fraserburgh <a href="mailto:aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>

Depending on the severity of the situation after consultation with the Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy safeguarding lead if police are to be contacted call 999 or 101.

## **AOG STATUS MINISTER OR AOG MINISTER IN TRAINING**

Should an allegation of abuse be made against an Assemblies of God Minister or Minister in Training once the above process has been carried out the Assemblies of God should be notified.

<b>Name:</b>	Assemblies of God – Office of the General Manager
<b>Detail:</b>	To be contacted only if the allegations concern an AoG Status Minister or AoG Minister in Training
<b>Contact Details:</b>	01777817663 gmoffice@aog.org.uk Assemblies Of God Great Britain, Gf/FI2 No.1-2 The Cottages, Deva Centre, Manchester, England, M3 7BE

## **7.6 Other Notifications**

- Section 46 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires charities to notify the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) of certain types of event including ‘incidents of abuse or mistreatment of vulnerable beneficiaries.’ See [www.oscr.org.uk/charities/managing-your-charity/notifiable-events](http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/managing-your-charity/notifiable-events)
- The church’s insurers should also be contacted to establish whether or not they need to know about the matter.
- If the person against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made, including allegations of harming a child or protected adult, is in a position of trust, and engaged in ‘regulated activity’, Disclosure Scotland should be notified.  
The PVG scheme requires organisations to make referrals to the Protection Unit at Disclosure Scotland in certain circumstances.  
(See *Appendix 13 for full Referrals Policy*)

PVG Scheme – Employer referral form – [mygov.scot](http://mygov.scot)  
The Protection Unit can be contacted on 03000 2000 40

[pvgreferrals@assured.systems.gov.scot](mailto:pvgreferrals@assured.systems.gov.scot)

(will provide advice if unsure)

Making a referral is not optional. It is a legal requirement.

## **7.7 Confidentiality**

It is vital to the success of any investigation which the Agencies may decide to pursue that any

information divulged to a worker within the church can only be recorded in writing for the purposes of accuracy. This information must be passed to the group leader who in turn will pass it on immediately to the SL. Similarly, if the allegation is reported directly to the group leader the leader will inform the SL. The worker and group leader along with the SL are bound by these rules of confidentiality that is, not to discuss with anyone any details of the case including the name of the person who made the allegation, or any of the details of the alleged abuse. If the SL consults the SAG they are also bound by the same rules of confidentiality.

All information will be treated in compliance with the church's data protection policy.

## **Section 8: PASTORAL CARE**

### **8.1 Supporting Those Affected by Abuse**

The Leadership Team understands that, whether in the present, recent or distant past, the effects of abuse can be devastating and long term, not only for the person who has been abused but also for family members, friends, social groups and the organisation or faith community. Those affected may struggle with a range of issues, including aspects of faith and spirituality - particularly where the abuse occurred within a faith context. So, this needs sensitive handling. Showing care and compassion, being available to listen and offering support are important in responding to the needs of adult survivors. Some people will need professional help and it is important to recognise this and signpost those in need, being aware of our own limitations to offer specific support. We are prepared to seek advice and support, e.g., from an external safeguarding advisory body.

### **8.2 Safeguarding Advisory Group**

In order to support and advise the SL, church, group leaders and helpers to achieve and maintain a culture and environment which keeps everyone safe, the Church Council will appoint a Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG). This does not absolve The Leadership of responsibility. As well as including a member of The Leadership, this group should include at least two trusted people not in this role. Where possible this should include somebody with a professional understanding of safeguarding matters (e.g., social work, health, education, or police).

The role of the SAG includes providing advice on general matters concerning the church's duties to protect children and protected adults and appropriate follow-up to any incidents of concern, e.g., disciplinary procedures, review of procedures, etc.

SAG members do not deal with safeguarding incidents as this may confuse roles and responsibilities and cause unacceptable delay. In the event that the Safeguarding Lead feels the need for advice before alerting appropriate authorities of any concerns, they should contact Thirtyone:Eight (who should confirm their advice in writing).

It is imperative that all members of this advisory group are conversant with the content of the church's policy and safeguarding guidance documents, guidance and their local inter-agency guidelines for child and adult protection, and external professional advice & guidance. All further references to the SAG are subject to this description.

**SAG comprises of:**

**Chair**

Name: L Watt

**Member**

Name: M Roger

**Member**

Name: K Dalton

**Member**

Name: G Donn

## 8.3 Counselling

Pastoral care and support are offered to all members of the church. Requests are managed appropriately, including the signposting of those in need to specific support beyond the capability and qualifications of the pastoral care team.

## 8.4 Supporting A Child

The following guidelines may help you to support a child through the above procedures:

**General points:**

- Accept what the child says
- Keep calm; do not appear to be shocked
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else – i.e., don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for the alleged abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child said, including the child's name, age, address, relevant family information and details of the situation and the activity that preceded disclosure
- Never push for information or use leading questions. If it appears that you have put words in their mouths at the time of disclosure, this could jeopardise any necessary legal action

### **Helpful things to say:**

- I am taking what you say seriously
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will try to help you

### **Avoid saying:**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?

**Never** make promises that you won't be able to keep

**Never** make statements such as "I'm shocked, don't tell anyone else".

### **Concluding**

- Reassure the child again that they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to your SL.

Even if you believe there is no risk of further harm, the matter **must** still be referred to appropriate agencies so that they can make a professional assessment of necessary actions.

## **8.5 Working with Offenders**

We undertake to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction information revealed. Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar an individual from working/volunteering in positions within the church.

We implement a fair recruitment policy that ensures individuals have the opportunity to disclose any convictions or conviction information in a way that allows the church to carry out a clear risk assessment in order to determine whether or not the conviction information is relevant to the position applied for. This will take account of;

- whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered
- the seriousness of the offence revealed
- the length of time since the offence took place
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence took place.

As part of our recruitment policy, the church requests the appropriate level of disclosure record at the final part of the recruitment stage, when a position has been offered where this is a requirement of the position. Should the organisation decide that the information disclosed is relevant to the post applied for, the applicant will be deemed to be unsuccessful, and this information will be fed back to the applicant by letter.

It is an offence for an **individual** who is barred to undertake the type of regulated role from which they are barred. It is also an offence to make an application to be considered for such a role.

It is an offence for an **organisation** to offer a regulated role to someone who is barred or to fail to



remove a person from a regulated role if they have been notified that they are barred.

When someone attending the place of worship/organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to protected adults, we will ensure the individual has appropriate supervision and is offered pastoral care but, in our safeguarding commitment for the protection of children and protected adults, we will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. This will involve a Safeguarding Agreement. If this situation arises, we will seek advice from either local Children and Families Social Work or Criminal Justice Social Work. We may additionally seek advice from an external safeguarding advisory body. The ongoing working with offenders will be reviewed and agreed by the SAG. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

### **Church Members who may present a risk to others:**

It is the nature of Christian outreach and ministry that some people who come to church and seek to participate in our activities will be sex offenders. Whatever our pastoral concerns for such people, our priority must always be the safety of children and protected adults. Where it is known or suspected that a person of concern is attending our services or other activities the church has a duty to discuss this with the Local Authority Criminal Justice services. This will help us to do everything possible to keep children and protected adults safe.

Pastoral care will be offered without prejudice to all those who require it. This may also include a known offender. Where pastoral care is offered to both the person affected by abuse and the known offender, this should be offered by different people who are able to support those concerned impartially and effectively.

When it is known or suspected that a sex offender is attending any of our activities the following steps must be taken:

- If the offender self-discloses or the Leadership is notified of them by other agencies suspected or the known offender has not self-disclosed, the Safeguarding Lead should meet with them together with one or two members of the SAG.
- If it is confirmed that the person is a sex offender, the SL should make clear to the offender that, in everyone's interests, they will contact the police, social work department of criminal justice to ensure appropriate joint working practices.
- Where appropriate, responsible agencies will share relevant details of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) risk assessment for the offender.
- The SL and SAG members should meet with other agencies, including local Criminal Justice services, to form a suitable risk assessment addressing how the offender can be supported to be part of the church. A Safeguarding Agreement should be drafted outlining proposed arrangements for the management and support of the offender.
- Members of the above meeting should then meet with the offender and seek their agreement to the proposed agreement. This should be signed by all parties.
- Following this, identified personnel within the church should monitor the offender's compliance and any breaches reported under the terms of MAPPA. This should include regular review of the contract at intervals agreed as part of the above meeting.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-mappa-national-guidance-2014>

## 8.6 Prayer Ministry Guidelines

During our meetings we regularly give opportunity for prayer ministry. The priority of these times is to facilitate an opportunity for people to encounter God by his Spirit. We should be mindful of our Safeguarding practices and procedures. Leadership, safeguarding and prayer team members should make themselves aware of this policy and ensure they receive regular guidance and training.

### **Guidance:**

Please only pray for someone who shares your gender. Prayer ministry can bring up all sorts of personal issues, so it is best practice to keep to this rule. Even if you are married, or you are praying for someone you know, please adhere to this guideline to avoid confusion and to set an example to others.

As much as possible, please bring someone alongside you to pray and do not leave yourself vulnerable.

Ask people how they would like you to pray for them. However, be aware of not turning this into a lengthy conversation, as this is a time for the Holy Spirit to offer counselling. Be sensitive when speaking into the situation or offering a word or image. Ensure that you are visible to others when praying with people.

### **Guidance on Touch during prayer ministry:**

The laying on of hands to pray is Biblical however, not everyone is comfortable with this, so please be sensitive to the situation. Be careful where you place your hands to keep in line with safeguarding requirements and so that it doesn't become a distraction for the person you are praying for. Only touch in a restrained and appropriate manner where prior permission has been requested and granted. Ensure you are visible to others when praying with people.

You should only lay your hands on shoulders, upper back, forehead or hold the person's hands. Never place your hands in a personal area of the body and never under items of clothing. If the person requesting healing has an issue in a part of their body that is inappropriate for you to touch, then encourage them to place their hands on that spot whilst you lay hands appropriately.

The person you are praying for may tell you about things that have happened in their life. Try not to appear shocked by any disclosures and do not request further information. Confidentiality is important but DO NOT promise to keep anything a secret, especially in regard to claims of abuse (these must be reported to your Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and you should discreetly bring in a member of Leadership to support you during the prayer time) If at any time you feel uncomfortable or out of your depth, please ask for assistance from a member of the prayer team or church leadership. Report any concerns of mental illness, victims of abuse or any incident where a person has been physically hurt to the Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure it is dealt with appropriately.

## **Section 9: APPROVALS**

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**Signed by:**

**Print Name:**

**Position (On behalf of the Leadership):**

**Date:**

**Signed by:**

**Print Name:**

**Position (On behalf of the Leadership):**

**Date:**

**Signed by:**

**Print Name:**

**Safeguarding Lead**

**Date:**

**Signed by:**

**Print Name:**

**Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

**Date:**

**Signed by:**

**Print Name:**

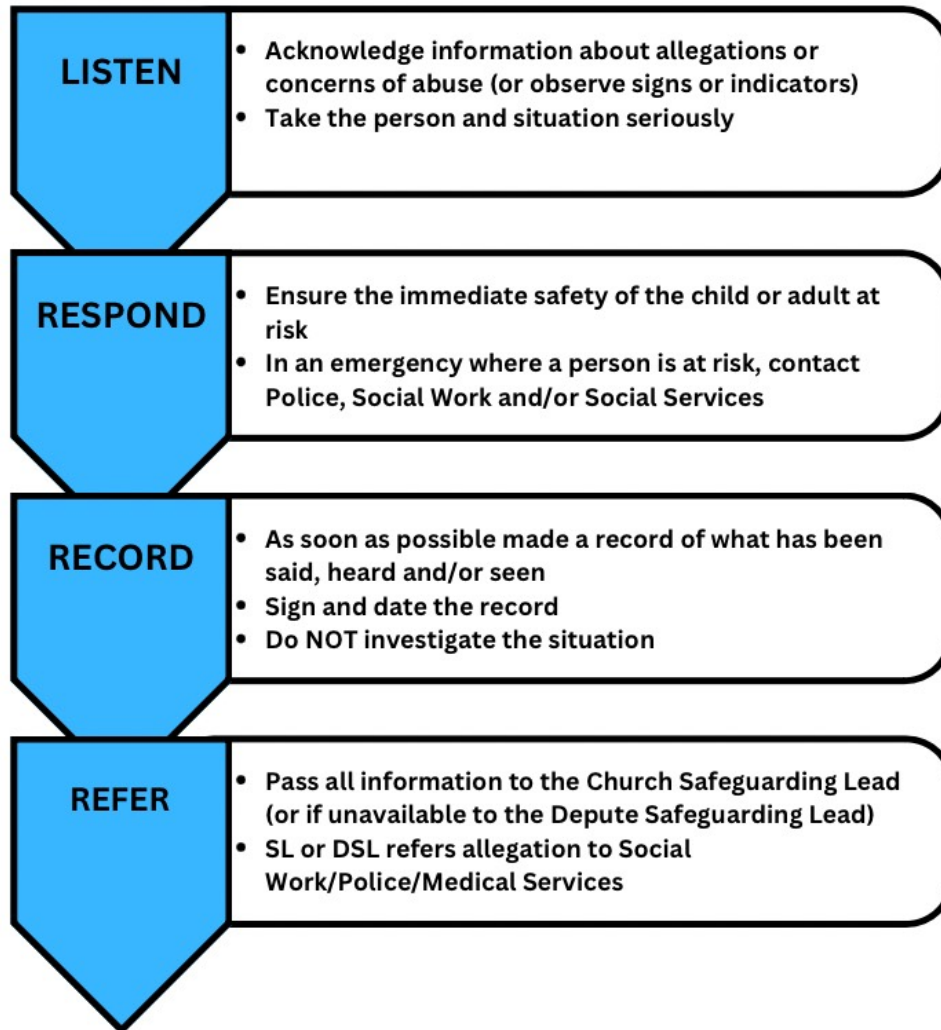
**Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

**Date:**

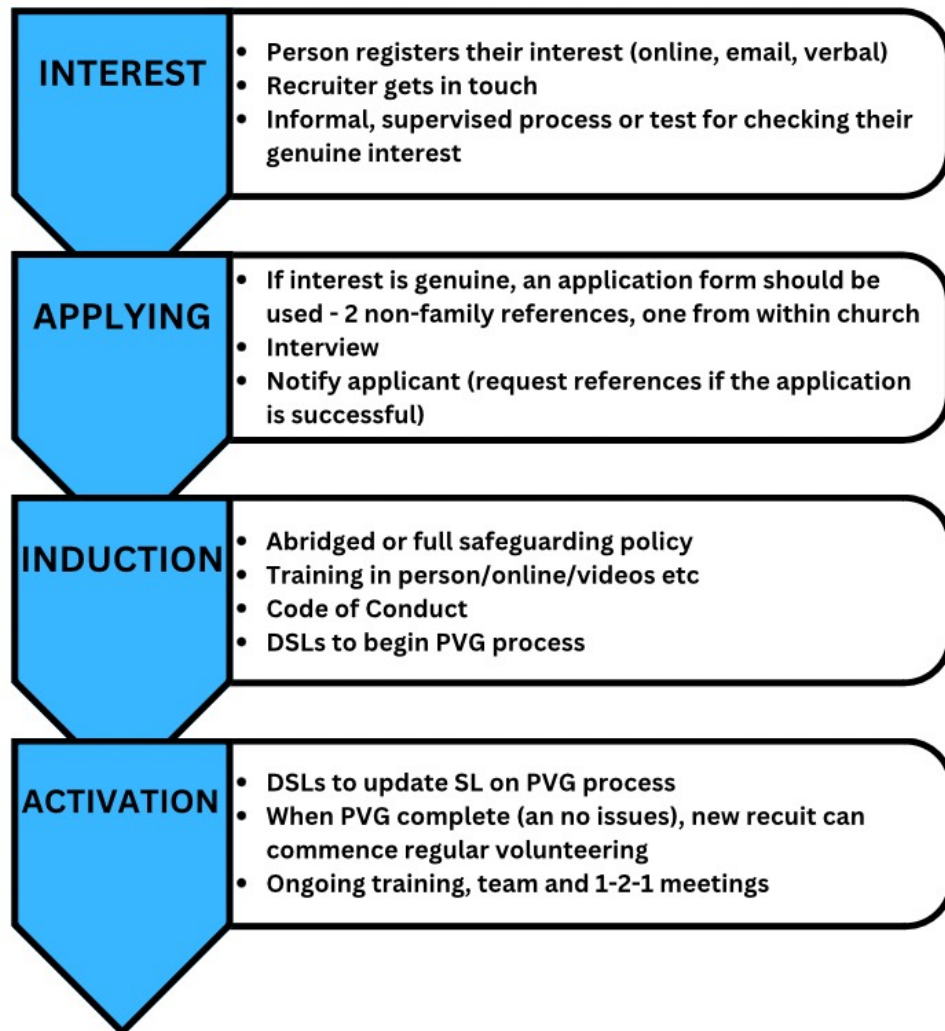
This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed annually, and amendments made as necessary

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Safeguarding Procedure Flowchart



## Appendix 2: Safe Recruitment Flowchart



## Appendix 3: Application & Reference Forms for working with Children or Protected Adults

### Reference request



Re: \_\_\_\_\_

Re (applicant's name)

The above-named person has applied to do voluntary work with children/young people/protected adults with AOG Central and has given your name as a referee.  
(Delete as appropriate)

It is our vision as a church to love God and love people. In doing so it is our desire to provide a safe and secure environment for those who participate in our various programmes and use our facilities.

I would be grateful therefore if you could provide a reference on the enclosed form and return it to me.

Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any further information.

Signature

Safeguarding Lea

## Character Reference



**Name of Applicant:**

**Name of Referee:**

**Email address:**

**How long have you known the applicant?**

**In what capacity do you know them?**

**Do you consider the applicant suitable to work with children/young people/protected adults?  
(Delete as appropriate) Yes/No**

**Do you know of any reason why the applicant should not work with children/young people/protected adults?**

**Any additional comments:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time. Please return this completed reference to: [pvg@aogcentral.co.uk](mailto:pvg@aogcentral.co.uk)



## **Application Form**



This application is to be completed by anyone wanting to do voluntary work with children/young people/protected adults at AOG Central. It is our vision as a church to love God and love people. In doing so it is our desire to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our programmes and use our facilities.

**Full name:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Gender:**

**Contact (Telephone & Email):**

**Address:**

**How long have you attended AOG Central?**

**Which ministry team are you applying to be a volunteer worker with?**

**Why would you like to serve in this team?**

**Have you had any previous experience in a similar role?**

Please provide us with details of **two people** (not related to you) who would be willing to act as referees in support of your application. These two people need to have known you for at least three years and only one may be connected to the church.

**Name 1:**

**Email address:**

**Name 2:**

**Email address:**

**\*Complete and sign: Self Declaration Form for a Disclosure (PVG) [Appendix 5](#)**

# Appendix 4: Code of Conduct Template

## Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers). The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

## The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or protected adults, you are acting in a position of trust for AOG Central Church. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

## Good practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the Safeguarding Lead
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

## Unacceptable behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches AOG Central's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Working whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication that results in diminished capacity
- Smoking on the church grounds
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

## Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave the group that you are working in. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or PVG Scotland. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the Safeguarding Lead.

## Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

PRINT NAME:

Signature:

Date:

## Appendix 5: Self Declaration Form for a Disclosure (PVG)

To work with children, young people or protected adults at AOG Central, we require you to complete and sign the following declaration. This forms a part of the application process.

The disclosure of all criminal convictions is essential, including those regarded as spent under the rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Having previous convictions does not by itself prevent you from being approved, however, the failure to disclose criminal convictions may lead to refusal to appoint you as a volunteer.

The Safeguarding Team will not disclose the information on this declaration to the ministry leader/s or church members.

### Conviction History

If you have never been convicted of a criminal offence or never received a caution, reprimand or warning then please select 'No' below. If you have been convicted of a criminal offence, or received a caution, reprimand or warning that is now spent according to PVG filtering rules, then please select 'No' below.

If you have an unspent criminal offence, caution, reprimand or warning (according to PVG filtering rules), please select 'Yes' below. You should also have given details of this on the self-declaration form.

For exceptions to this legislation or for more information please refer to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (link below)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/148542/rehabilitation-offenders.pdf.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/148542/rehabilitation-offenders.pdf.pdf)

Have you ever been charged with, cautioned or convicted in relation to any criminal offence; or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation/pending prosecution?

Yes                      No

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences and the dates. Please give details of the court(s) where your conviction(s) were heard, the type of offence and sentence(s) received. Could you also give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to the offence(s).

### Police Investigations

This should include relevant police non-conviction information not subject to PVG filtering rules.

Have you ever been the subject of a police investigation that didn't lead to a criminal conviction?

Yes                      No

If yes, please give details below, including the date of the investigation, the Police Force involved, details of the investigation and the reason for this, and disposal(s) if known.

To your knowledge have you ever had any allegation made against you, which has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services/Social Work Department (Children's or Adult Social Care)?

Yes                      No

If yes, please provide details, we will need to discuss this with you.

Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young people, or adults at risk of harm? Please include any disciplinary action taken by an employer in relation to your conduct.

Yes                      No (if yes, please give details).

### Declaration

To help us ensure that you are complying with all relevant safeguarding legislation, please complete the following declaration.

<b>Full Name</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Contact Number</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	

I consent to criminal records check if required and requested.

I am aware that details of pending prosecutions, previous convictions, cautions, or warnings against me will be disclosed along with any other relevant information which may be known to the police.

I agree to inform any organisation(s) I work with if I am convicted of an offence after I take up any post with them. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or adults at risk of harm.

I agree to inform any organisation(s) I work with if I become the subject of a police and/or a social services investigation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or adults at risk of harm.

I confirm that I am not barred from working with children or adults at risk of harm.

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

## Appendix 6: Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Scottish law defines a 'child' differently in different legal contexts. Under the terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, a child is generally defined as someone under the age of 18 but, under sections dealing with Children's Hearings and Child Protection Orders, a child means somebody who has not attained the age of 16 years. There are also special provisions, in regard to supervision orders, for young people aged between 16 and 18. **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 uses the term 'child' or 'children' to refer to persons who have not yet attained the age of 18 years as stated in section 97(1) of the 2014 Act.**

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) describes child protection as protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a *likelihood* or *risk* of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Equally, in instances where a child may have been abused or neglected but the risk of future abuse has not been identified, the child and their family may require support and recovery services but not a Child Protection Plan.

**General definition of abuse** - children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their stage of development, and they will be at risk from avoidable acts or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e., the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of a child).

To define an act or omission as abusive and/or presenting future risk for the purpose of registration a number of elements must be taken into account. These include demonstrable or predictable harm to the child as a result of action or inaction by the parent or other carer.

### Categories of abuse:

#### Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

#### Sexual Abuse

Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour.

#### Non-Organic Failure to Thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (i.e., physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development) where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

#### Emotional Abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

## **Physical Neglect**

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met, and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter, and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.

## **Recognition of Abuse**

Children's leaders, because of their regular contact with individual children, are particularly well placed to observe outward indicators of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such indicators may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol, or solvent misuse in the family home. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

For example, the following may be noticeable:

- bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the marks of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns;
- possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger, poor hygiene;
- possible indicators of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence; attention seeking; self-harming;
- possible indicators of sexual abuse – physical signs such as bruises, scratches or bite marks to thighs or genital areas; or behavioural such as precocity, withdrawal, or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Any of the above may be accompanied by marked changes in attendance or participation in activities which can, in themselves be indicators of abuse.

No list of indicators can be exhaustive. Also, alternative medical, psychological, or social explanations may exist for the signs and indicators described. It is important therefore not to jump to conclusions but nevertheless to share concerns as outlined in this procedure.

# Appendix 7: Child Protection - Possible indicators of risk

## SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF RISK

There is no single agreed definition of what child abuse and neglect is and definitions have changed over time.

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland provides the following definitions:

Harm - 'the ill treatment or the impairment of health or development of the child, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Risk - 'the likelihood or probability of a particular outcome given the presence of adverse factors in a child's life'.

In this context, 'development' can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development and 'health' can mean physical or mental health'. The following are some of the signs that workers should be alert to:

### Physical Harm

- Injuries not consistent with child's age or parent's explanation
- Medical attention delayed or avoided
- Burns/scalds
- Black eyes
- Imprint outlines
- Bruises on soft tissue areas – upper legs, buttocks, cheeks, neck, mouth, genitals etc.
- Fractures
- Repeated A&E visits
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Running away
- Secretive/defensive
- Unexplained absences
- Aggressive behaviour
- Flinching/frozen

### Neglect

- Underweight/obese
- Hungry/ stealing food
- Shabbily or inappropriately dressed
- Dirty/smelly
- Tooth decay/caries
- Repeated head lice infection
- Attention-seeking
- Poor concentration
- Developmental delay
- Age-inappropriate self-care skills
- Poor attendance for pre-natal care/health care
- Untreated illness or injury
- Low or no parental presence
- Victim of bullying
- Social isolation Emotional Harm



- Attachment issues
- Attention-seeking
- Withdrawn
- Aggressive behaviours towards others
- Emotionally unresponsive
- Poor self confidence
- Low self esteem
- Nervousness/anxiety
- Socially isolated
- Developmental delay
- Unusual fears/panic attacks
- Obsessive/compulsive behaviours
- Self-harming
- Nightmares
- Unhappy/distressed
- Parents negative attitude high criticism/ low warmth
- Overly high expectations of the child
- Unresponsiveness of child's emotional needs

### **Sexual Harm**

- Illness, injury, infection, bleeding
- Pregnancy
- Knowledge beyond age
- Sexually explicit behaviour and language
- Itchy or painful genital area
- Self-harming
- Eating disorders
- Withdrawn
- Depressed
- Overly affectionate
- Aggressive or regressive behaviour
- Internet grooming

***Some of the above might also indicate emotional abuse and/or neglect***

## Appendix 8: Statutory Definitions of Harm (Adults)

Scottish legislation of the protection of adults refers to the risk of harm rather than abuse. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 provides ways to offer support and protection to certain adults who may at risk of harm or neglect.

The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, replaces the previous term 'adult at risk of harm' with the new term 'protected adult'.

A 'protected adult' is defined as an individual aged 18 or over who, by reason of physical or mental disability, illness, infirmity or ageing has an impaired ability to protect themselves from physical or psychological harm, or requires assistance with daily living.

An individual aged 18 or over who is homeless.

An individual aged 18 or over who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic abuse.

Scottish Government guidance states that, if you are worried that you or someone you know is being harmed, is suffering from neglect, or is being abused, it is important to tell someone. Everyone has a right to be safe. Remember, the person who did this may be doing it to others too. Or it could be that the person who is being harmed or neglected may not be able to report it themselves. Even if it happened many years ago, it is still important to report it.

The guidance describes harm as "all harmful conduct". Some examples include:

**Physical:** hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, locking them in a room, tying them to a chair, restricting their freedom.

**Psychological or emotional:** threats of harm, being left alone, humiliation, intimidation, causing distress, verbal abuse, bullying, blaming, constant criticism, controlling, depriving contact with others.

**Neglect or acts of omission:** failure to provide medical or physical care, access to a doctor or other services, or denying someone medication, food or heating, privacy or dignity, self-neglect.

**Financial or material:** stealing, fraud, pressure to hand over or sign over property or money, misuse of property or welfare benefits, or stopping someone getting their money or possessions.

**Sexual:** any sexual activity that a person doesn't understand or want, photographing, sexual harassment, voyeurism.

**Information:** withholding information or advice about rights or entitlements.

**Discrimination:** because of age, colour, disability, gender, race, religion, background or sexual orientation.

The guidance explains that harm can happen anywhere. This includes in the family home, hospital ward, care home, day services, social clubs, day centres, at work, and in public places.

**Possible signs of harm include:**

- unexplained or unusual injuries;

- a delay in seeking treatment for injuries or illness;
- sudden increase in confusion;
- unexplained deterioration of health or appearance;
- people being anxious or afraid;
- misuse of medication, e.g., not giving medicines properly;
- unexplained changes of behaviour, e.g., becoming anxious and withdrawn, fear of another person;
- pressure by family or professionals(s) to have someone moved into or taken out of care • hostile or unkind behaviour by a person;
- unexplained debt, not paying bills for services;
- not having their basic needs met, such as adequate food or heating;
- not being provided with adequate information about their rights or entitlements, or being misinformed;
- prejudicial actions or remarks to the adult at risk about age, gender, disability, race, colour, sexual or religious orientation;
- another person using the adult's possessions, bank account or property without his or her informed consent; and
- the adult at risk not receiving appropriate care, which would protect them from harm.

The guidance reminds us that anyone can cause harm. For example, it could be a:

- member of staff in a health/care setting
- carer
- relative
- spouse or partner
- friend or neighbour
- volunteer
- stranger

## Appendix 9: Some Other Definitions of Harm (including harmful practices)

### PHYSICAL CHASTISEMENT (resulting in physical harm)

All forms of physical punishment of children are against the law in Scotland. **Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019** gives children the same legal protection from assault as adults.

Physical punishment or physical discipline can take many forms. It includes but is not limited to:

- smacking
- skelping
- spanking
- slapping

An adult using physical punishment or physical discipline on a child, can be charged with assault.

A change in the law has removed the use of 'reasonable chastisement' as a defence against an assault charge.

### SPIRITUAL ABUSE

In recent years the concept of Spiritual Abuse has become one that has gained greater understanding amongst those in the faith community. Spiritual abuse has many similarities to the other categories of abuse and indeed may include the identification of those categories as abuse is often multi-faceted.

Although not recognised as a category of abuse in its own right by the statutory authorities, Spiritual abuse will often co-exist with those accepted forms of abuse (described above). A number of definitions have been given to this type of abuse in an attempt to adequately describe what often amounts to an abuse of trust and power to the detriment of others. Johnson and Van Vonderen ('The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse', Bethany House Publishers, 1991) have described it as follows:

*"Spiritual abuse is the mistreatment of a person who is in need of help, support or greater spiritual empowerment, with the result of weakening, undermining or decreasing that person's spiritual empowerment"*

This view is shared with a similar definition offered by Ken Blue ('Healing Spiritual Abuse', IVP, 1993) as follows:

*"Spiritual abuse happens when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower, thus causing spiritual wounds"*

Thirtyone:Eight have defined Spiritual Abuse as follows:

*Spiritual abuse is linked with other forms of abuse, and could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of*

*God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.*

If any employee, volunteer or church member suspects that any leader within their church is exceeding their reasonable authority as a church leader and that this is abusive they should report their concerns, preferably in writing giving examples, to AoG Office of General Manager or phone Thirtyone:Eight external safeguarding advisory body for advice.

## **ABUSE LINKED TO FAITH OR BELIEF:**

(Including belief in witchcraft branding, spirit possession and other forms of the supernatural).

The types of child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes: belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs), the 'evil eye' or 'djinn's' (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and 'dakini' (in the Hindu context); ritual or 'muti murders' where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

Fear of the supernatural is also known to be used to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. Child abuse is never acceptable wherever it occurs and whatever form it takes.

Abuse linked to faith and belief is a horrific crime which is condemned by people of all cultures, communities and faiths. This type of abuse is never acceptable and should be responded to in line with local safeguarding procedures as with any other form of abuse.

## **BREAST IRONING**

Breast Ironing also known as "Breast Flattening" is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are 'ironed', massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education. Much like female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing is a harmful practice and is child abuse. Those working with children and young people must be able to identify the signs and indicators of girls who are at risk of or have undergone breast ironing. Similarly, to FGM, breast ironing is classified as physical abuse therefore professionals must follow their local children and families social work procedures.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The cross-government (not legal) definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

There are obviously degrees of conflict and disagreement in every intimate relationship, but domestic violence refers to the most serious situations where there is a real risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm.

Christian homes are not immune to domestic violence. There will be both victims and perpetrators within places of worship. The responsibility to offer help and be a voice for the prevention of domestic violence is fundamental to core Christian values – those of justice, equality, respect, and care for one another. To ensure the physical safety and spiritual well-being of those coming through their doors, Christian leaders must be prepared to respond appropriately with knowledge and compassion in an effective and safe way.

If you suspect that someone in your congregation may be a victim of domestic violence, you need to be open, to listen to their entire story and believe what they are saying.

In situations where the victim decides to return to the abuser and children could be placed at risk, it may be necessary to involve Children and Families' Social Work or the police. You should explain your intention to contact the statutory authorities to the victim and make every attempt to involve them in the decision-making process.

Advice can be requested from an external safeguarding advisory body or Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 027 1234

## **INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE**

This is the mistreatment or abuse of an adult at risk of harm by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g., hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

## **ORGANISATIONAL ABUSE**

Organisational abuse is the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice that affects the whole care setting. It occurs when the individual's wishes and needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service, or organisation.

## **SELF-NEGLECT**

There is no single operational definition of self-neglect. The Department of Health (2016) defines it as, '... a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding'.

Skills for Care provided a framework for research into self-neglect identifying three distinct areas that are characteristic of self-neglect:

- Lack of self-care - this includes neglect of one's personal hygiene, nutrition and hydration, or health, to an extent that may endanger safety or wellbeing
- Lack of care of one's environment - this includes situations that may lead to domestic squalor or elevated levels of risk in the domestic environment (e.g., health or fire risks caused by hoarding)
- Refusal of assistance that might alleviate these issues. This might include, for example, refusal of care services in either their home or a care environment or of health assessments or interventions, even if previously agreed, which could potentially improve self-care or care of one's environment.

## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)**

Employees and volunteers working with children and adults at risk of harm should be aware of the possibility in some cultures of female genital mutilation. This is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.

FGM has been unlawful in Scotland since 1985 and the Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 re-enacted the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 and extended protection by making it a criminal offence to have FGM carried out either in Scotland or abroad by giving those offences extra-territorial powers.

If you are worried that a young person is at risk of FGM or has had FGM, you must report your concerns to the relevant statutory authority such as police and or social work.

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation is as much a reality in Scotland as elsewhere in the UK – a reality that we, as a nation, must tackle collectively. All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm, and to grow up in a safe environment where their rights and needs are respected.

Many of the young people who become victims have been vulnerable and at risk from an early age and remain vulnerable to other forms of abuse and neglect. The Scottish Government's approach to this is underpinned by the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child and multiagency partnership working. As such, if those working with children and young people in a church context have any suspicions that a child or young person is being subjected to CSE they should alert the appropriate authorities using the safeguarding procedures outlined in this document.

## **FORCED MARRIAGE (FM)**

Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouse"

If workers, volunteers or other church members become aware of someone in a forced marriage, or living in fear of being forced to marry, then the law is there to protect them.

The Scottish Government operates a Forced Marriage Helpline with trained advisors who can talk to victims about their options. Workers, volunteers or other members may also call the Helpline if they believe somebody is facing the threat of a forced marriage or is already in a forced marriage.

They can call the Forced Marriage Helpline on **0800 027 1234**. It is free and confidential and trained advisors are on hand 24 hours a day. Callers do not need to give their name.

There is also a free Men's Advice Line on **0808 801 0327**. This is a confidential helpline run by a team of skilled professionals from Respect, offering practical advice, information and emotional support to men worried about forced marriage, as well as to concerned friends and family and frontline workers.

## **TRAFFICKING OF ADULTS OR CHILDREN AND MODERN SLAVERY**

Human trafficking, and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour are offences under the terms of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015.

There are many forms of human trafficking in which people are recruited by force or by deception for:

- enforced prostitution
- domestic servitude (modern day slavery)
- forced labour
- criminal activities
- surrogacy
- organ removal for transplantation

While this lucrative global crime generates billions of dollars in profits for the traffickers, those who have been trafficked are robbed of their humanity and are violated both spiritually and physically.

As indicated above, this is closely linked with Modern Slavery, which encompasses slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Modern slavery victims can often face more than one type of abuse and slavery, for example if they are sold to another trafficker and then forced into another form of exploitation.

Government Guidance on modern slavery (2016) states that a person is trafficked if they are brought to (or moved around) a country by others who threaten, frighten, hurt, and force them to do work or other things they don't want to do.

If anyone knows or suspects that they are aware of somebody who is a victim of trafficking they should speak to the Safeguarding Lead who may ring Hope for Justice for advice ([0300 008 8000](tel:03000088000)) or notify the police direct.



# Appendix 10: Social Media Policy

## Introduction

This social media policy outlines the rules for using social media for church purposes. Platforms include Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and others.

This policy sets out how workers (paid or voluntary) should behave when posting from the AOG Central (and various ministry department) social media accounts. It also outlines guidance for using personal social media accounts at the church, or with church-related content, and describes what workers should and should not say about the church on social media.

This policy defines “workers” as either those in paid or voluntary roles managing or posting content on social media accounts under AOG Central. This includes the main church platforms as well as ministry and team specific accounts.

## Purpose

Social media can be an extremely useful tool when promoting the church as well as helping ministry departments to build relationships with church members and other organisations.

However, it is important that workers who use social media within the church do so in a positive way to enhance our message and promote our mission.

A poorly worded status or comment can generate complaints, damage the church’s image, and possibly impact on the church’s overall reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to be aware of when engaging in this form of communication.

This policy will apply to all workers (employed and voluntary) who use social media, for either church purposes or personal reasons. It also applies to off-site personal use that refers to, or relates to, the church and its activities.

It applies regardless of whether social media is being used on or off church premises.

## General Social Media Guidelines

Following these basic rules can help to avoid the most common social media errors, regardless of what platform workers use.

- **Understand the platform** – workers should spend time familiarising themselves with whichever social media platform they intend to use. It’s important to read FAQs and understand what is and what is not acceptable on a social network site before posting. Teams using social media to engage with children and young people should be aware of age restrictions and seek parental permission where necessary.
- **If in doubt, don’t post** – workers should remain cautious whilst on social media. It is important to remain professional, positive and friendly at all times.
- **Remember where you’re posting from** – You are representing AOG Central so keep that in mind when sharing content. The church’s reputation could be at stake if you post anything that is off topic or is personal. You should avoid expressing your personal opinions when writing on behalf of the church.
- **Don’t let personal use interfere** – Although having workers active on social media can be a useful tool for engaging with the congregation and those we’re seeking to reach, employed workers should exercise restraint in how often they use their personal social media accounts during church opening hours.
- **Handling complex enquiries**– Social media platforms are generally not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and sensitive issues. Once an individual has made contact, workers should handle further communications through either in person meetings, telephone, or email.
- **Keep calm** – workers should always take the time to think before responding, as it’s easy to post a quick response to a confrontation status and then regret it later. Sometimes no answer is the best answer!

## **Purpose of social media accounts**

AOG Central social media accounts can be used for many different purposes.

In general, workers should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when it aligns with the church or ministry department's overall objectives.

For example, workers may use social media accounts to:

- Respond to enquiries and requests for help
- Provide followers with insights into what takes place at church or ministry activities
- Promote upcoming events and programmes
- Share scripture and stories to inspire followers

Workers should check with the ministry leader or Pastoral Team before using social media in a new way or prior to writing a post, particularly if the person hasn't used this platform for the church before.

Social media platforms should be checked regularly to ensure any correspondence can be replied to in a timely manner.

## **Safeguarding**

The leadership of AOG Central have committed to create a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. They recognise that abuse can take place online through social media platforms. The use of social media is a key element in our safeguarding policy and procedures and can be found in the Safeguarding Policy adopted by AOG Central.

## **Inappropriate Content and Uses**

AOG Central social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate, unrelated or personal content or to take part in any activities that could bring the church into controversy for example becoming involved in debates or responding to posts which seem deliberately antagonistic.

When sharing an interesting blog post or article, workers should always read the piece thoroughly first and only post it if it's deemed to be relevant.

## **Personal Social Media Guidelines**

### **Acceptable use:**

- Employed workers may use their personal accounts for work-related purposes during regular hours but should ensure that it does not interfere with their regular duties.
- Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes should be contained to break times.

Consideration should always be given to whether personal social media activity could be used by others to damage the church's mission and reputation.

## Responsible Social Media Use

### Users should not:

- Create or transmit material that might be insulting or cause damage to the church.
- Post messages, status updates or links to material that is inappropriate.

**Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, profanity, sexist, bullying or harassing comments, information encouraging criminality or terrorism, material relating to gambling or illegal substances.**

**This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, sex, age, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by the law.**

- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send offensive or harassing material to others.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-church related issues.
- Post in a way that may polarise church members and cause offense or risk damaging church unity.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the image and risk the reputation of AOG Central.
- Interact with critics in any ways which could be interpreted as offensive, disrespectful or rude.
- Discuss colleagues or church members without their approval and consent.
- Post pictures of church member's children without written consent.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- Use social media to discuss or complain about personal or private issues.

### Copyright

All social media accounts within AOG Central must respect and operate within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games, or other software.

If workers wish to share content published on another website, they are free to do so only if that website enables sharing.

## Security and Data Protection

Workers should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media.

### Confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information that could be considered confidential or sensitive.
- Reveal a church member's name or other information that could identify them without prior consent.
- Share content or information owned by another organisation or person that could be considered confidential or sensitive.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach data protection policy.

### Protect social media accounts

Social media accounts should be protected by a strong password and shared only with authorised workers. Further to this, workers should not use a new piece of software or app with any social media accounts without the approval of the

ministry or team leader. Should personnel change within a department, passwords should be updated.

### **Avoid social scams**

Workers should be vigilant to 'phishing'. This is an attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, or client information. Phishing can involve sending malicious attachments or website links in an effort to infect computers or mobile devices. These links can often appear to be authentic and sent from legitimate organisations. Identities of individuals enquiring through social media should be verified first before any information is shared or discussed.

**Workers should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels.** Church members information must remain confidential and protected.

## **Policy Enforcement**

AOG Central IT and internet resources, including computers, smart phones and internet connections, are intended for legitimate church use.

Social media accounts should be monitored by users on a daily basis with responses to enquiries made within twenty-four to forty eight hours if possible. Ministry and Team Leaders should aim to review social media accounts each week to ensure best practice is being adhered to by all users.

Workers should be mindful that all data relating to social media which is sent or received through the church's computer system is part of the church's official records.

Knowingly breaching social media policy is a serious matter and workers can be held personally liable for violating data protection and security laws. Paid workers who breach confidentiality and data protection can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Volunteers who breach the policy may not be permitted to offer their time and services to the church in this capacity.

# Appendix 11: Risk Assessment Template

Location :		Department :		People Involved :						
Activity :										
Hazard Identified Identify the potential hazards	Hazard Effect Type of injury, equipment damage, environmental impact or	Existing Control Measures		Risk Evaluation Refer to risk matrix		Additional Control Measures	Residual risk. Additional control measures in place)			
		Sev	Like	Risk	Sev		Like	Risk		

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

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

## Appendix 12: Example of a Safeguarding Agreement

### Draft Contract between X Church and a registered sex offender

- I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people.
- I will attend meetings/cell groups as directed by the church leadership.
- I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people.
- I will not go to the crèche and I will not enter any area where children's activities are in progress.
- I will not come in or linger near the church building at any time during the week when children or youth activities are taking place.
- I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
- I accept that X and Y will sit with me during church activities, accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a Schedule 1 Offender/registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act.
- My circumstances will be kept confidential from the church congregation, but I accept there are certain people in the church who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care.
- I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary.
- I accept that Z will provide me with pastoral care. I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (eg police, probation and Children's Social Services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation.
- I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.
- I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every 6 months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signed (on behalf of the church) \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (by the offender) \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 13: Referrals Policy of AOG Central

This policy is relevant to all those involved in making recruitment/disciplinary decisions in our organisation.

When a volunteer or member of staff is permanently removed from a regulated work position, there are certain circumstances where our organisation must notify the Protection Unit at Disclosure Scotland that this has happened. This is called "Making a Referral". If we would have permanently removed the individual, the actions detailed in this policy will continue to apply (even if a member of staff or volunteer leaves their regulated work position prior to any action being taken, irrespective of the reason that they leave).

2 conditions must be met before we let Disclosure Scotland know that something has happened.

**Condition 1** – A person has been permanently removed/removed themselves from regulated work

**Condition 2** – At least 1 of the following 5 grounds apply:

- Caused harm to a child or protected adult
- Placed someone at risk of harm
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography
- Engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct
- Given inappropriate medical treatment

When both of these conditions have been met, it is a legal requirement that we must let Disclosure Scotland know by making a referral within 3 months of the permanent removal of the individual.

When there is an historical allegation of harm or inappropriate behaviour about someone who is no longer in regulated work with us but which we believe would, in all probability, have led to the 2 conditions being met, we will consider whether we want to make a referral but the legal responsibility applies only after 2011 when PVG was first introduced.

Where it is necessary to make a referral, this process will be carried out by the Safeguarding Lead. In their absence, the referral process will be carried out by the Depute Safeguarding Lead. Those who are in a position which may involve carrying out disciplinary action which may result in the removal from regulated work or dismissal of someone in regulated work must ensure they notify the Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Depute Safeguarding Lead of the legal requirement to make a referral where the conditions above have been met.

Failure to make a referral where required, may result in our organisation being prosecuted. It is therefore essential that those involved in carrying out disciplinary action notify the Safeguarding Lead or Depute Safeguarding Lead when both conditions for making a referral have been met.

## **Appendix 14: Barred/Under Consideration for Listing Policy of AOG Central**

AOG Central aims to ensure that all children and protected adults are kept safe from harm while they are with our staff and volunteers.

Those who will undertake a regulated role with children and protected adults within our organization will be asked to complete a PVG disclosure application.

Disclosure Scotland will continually monitor scheme members suitability to carry out regulated roles and will notify our organisation if someone is barred as they have become unsuitable to do that type of regulated role or if someone is moved to consideration for listing. This can happen either at the time that someone applies to join the PVG Scheme or throughout the period that they are doing the regulated role.

If we are notified that an individual is barred from a regulated role that they do or have applied to do within our organisation, the individual will not be recruited or will be removed from that type of regulated role. Our organisation will be committing an offence if we engage or fail to remove someone who is barred from the relevant regulated role.

Disclosure Scotland may place a scheme member 'under consideration for listing' if they have information that they need to take time to review. During this time, the member is not barred from the regulated role. If we are notified by Disclosure Scotland that an individual is under consideration for listing, our organisation will take the following action:

### **At Recruitment stage**

- Continue with the recruitment but ensure the individual is supervised at all times until the final determination is made.
- Place the individual in a non-regulated role until the final determination is made.

\*Which of these two options to select will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

### **As a result of on-going monitoring**

- The individual will continue in their role but will be supervised at all times until the final determination is made.
- Place the individual in a non-regulated role until the final determination is made.

\*Which of these two options to select will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

This policy will be made available to all of our staff/volunteers.



## **Appendix 15: Secure Handling of Disclosure Information Policy of AOG Central**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and instruction on how to appropriately handle disclosures for those who will have access to them and to provide assurance to Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services and our staff and volunteers that their disclosure information will be handled, used, stored and destroyed appropriately and in accordance with the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice.

For the purpose of this policy, PVG Scheme Records, PVG Scheme Record Updates, Standard and Enhanced disclosures will be referred to as disclosures.

This policy is for organisations enrolled with Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services to access disclosures for the purpose of assessing individual's suitability for paid and/or voluntary work.

In accordance with the Scottish Government Code of Practice, for registered persons and other recipients of disclosure information, we will ensure the following practice:

### **Requesting Disclosures**

Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular post and the information provided on a disclosure will only be used for recruitment purposes.

Our organisation will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure. Before using disclosure information for any other purpose, we will seek their consent and will take advice from VSDS to ensure it is appropriate to use the disclosure for a purpose other than recruitment. Furthermore, we will ensure that all sensitive personal information that is collated for the purposes of obtaining a disclosure will be always managed confidentially by those involved in the disclosure process.

### **Sharing Information**

Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.

### **Storage**

Disclosure information will be stored in secure conditions as follows: -

#### **Digital Certificates**

Care will be taken in relation to electronic disclosure information, and we will endeavour to prevent unauthorised viewing, transmission, storage, printing or fraudulent manipulation.

Access to digital certificates will be restricted to those who are entitled to see it in the course of their duties, namely the Safeguarding Team.

Digital disclosure records will be stored on One Drive Assemblies of God Fraserburgh and only Safeguarding Team have secure password protected access to this.

## Paper Disclosures

Paper documents will be scanned, and one digital copy retained if required. Access to disclosure information will be restricted to those that are entitled to see it in the course of their duties.

No photocopy or other image of the disclosure information will be retained.

## Telephone Results

When receiving disclosure information by telephone, VSDS staff will only convey information detailed in disclosures accessed by our organisation to our enrolled signatories once they have correctly answered the relevant security questions.

Failing to provide the correct answers to the required security questions will result in VSDS withholding the required information and may lead to an investigation being carried out to establish why our enrolled signatory was unable to provide the required security information. Once the disclosure information has been shared with us, VSDS will shred the disclosure.

VSDS does not keep a record of any information contained on the disclosure. When receiving a telephone result, it is essential that we record the information required for our Disclosure Tracking Record.

Further advice about secure handling can be found in the code of practice.

## Record Keeping

It is our organisation's responsibility to keep accurate information about disclosures we have accessed. The following information will be recorded on our Disclosure Tracking Record:

- Date of issue of disclosure
- Name of subject
- Disclosure type/level
- Unique reference number of disclosure
- Position for which the disclosure was requested (please note this will no longer be detailed on the digital disclosure)
- Whether we received a digital or paper disclosure or if we received the information by telephone
- Where the disclosure is stored
- Recruitment decision taken

We will not record whether there was any vetting information as the code of practice prohibits this.

## Retention

We will not retain disclosures for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which the disclosure record was obtained. PVG disclosures will be destroyed securely on receipt of an updated PVG disclosure, and they will not be retained beyond the last day that a scheme member is carrying out regulated work for our organisation.

## **Destruction/Deletion**

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that disclosure information is destroyed by suitable and secure means, for example, shredding. Electronic images from digital certificates will also be deleted permanently from both the email address where it was received and from where it is stored.

We will ensure that all staff with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received training and support to help them to comply with both this policy and the code of practice. A copy of this policy will be made available to any applicant, member of staff or volunteer who requests it.

## Appendix 16



### Data Protection Policy

Central Church uses personal data about living individuals for the purpose of general church administration and communication.

Central Church recognises the importance of the correct and lawful treatment of personal data. All personal data, whether it is held on paper, on computer or other media, will be subject to the appropriate legal safeguards as specified in the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Central Church fully endorses and adheres to the eight principles of the GDPR. These principles specify the legal conditions that must be satisfied in relation to obtaining, handling, processing, transportation, and storage of personal data. Employees and any others who obtain, handle, process, transport, and store personal data for AOG Central must adhere to these principles.

#### The Principles

The principles require that personal data shall:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met.
2. Be obtained for a specified and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.
3. Be adequate, relevant, and not excessive for those purposes.
4. Be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose.
6. Be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
7. Be kept secure from unauthorised or unlawful processing and protected against accidental loss, destruction or damage by using the appropriate technical and organisational measures.
8. Not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

*Please see the below Database selection point 4.*

## **1. Maintaining Confidentiality**

Central Church will treat all your personal information as private and confidential and not disclose any data about you to anyone other than the leadership and ministry overseers/coordinators of the church in order to facilitate the administration and day-to-day ministry of the church. All Central staff and volunteers who have access to Personal Data will be required to agree to sign a Confidentiality Policy and a Data Protection Policy.

There are four exceptional circumstances to the above permitted by law:

1. Where we are legally compelled to do so.
2. Where there is a duty to the public to disclose.
3. Where disclosure is required to protect your interest.
4. Where disclosure is made at your request or with your consent.

## **2. Use of Personal Information**

Central Church will use your data for three main purposes:

1. The day-to-day administration of the church, e.g. pastoral care and oversight including calls and visits, preparation of ministry rotas, maintaining financial records of giving for audit and tax purposes.
2. Contacting you to keep you informed of church activities and events.
3. Statistical analysis; gaining a better understanding of church demographics.

*N.B. although collated church data may be passed to a third party, such as number of small groups or small group's attendance, no personal data will be disclosed.*

### **The Database**

Information contained on the database will not be used for any other purposes than set out in this section. The database is accessed through the cloud and therefore, can be accessed through any computer or smart device with internet access. The server for the database is in the UK and is hosted by Church Suite.

1. Access to the database is strictly controlled through the use of name specific passwords, which are selected by the individual.
2. Those authorised to use the database only have access to their specific area of use within the database. This is controlled by the Data Controller and other specified administrators. These are the only people who can access and set these security parameters.
3. People who will have secure and authorised access to the database include the Central Church Pastoral Team, department heads, ministry team leaders, Life Group leaders and Central Church Trustees.
4. The database will NOT be accessed by any authorised users outside of the EU, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, unless prior consent has been obtained from the individual whose data is to be viewed.
5. All access and activity on the database is logged and can be viewed by the Database Controller.
6. Subject Access - all individuals who are the subject of personal data held by Central Church are entitled to: - Ask what information the church holds about them and why - Ask how to gain access to it. - Be informed how to keep it up to date. - Be informed what Central Church is doing to comply with its obligations under the 1988 Data Protection Act.
7. Personal information will not be passed onto any third parties outside of the church

environment.

8. Subject Consent - The need to process data for normal purposes has been communicated to all data subjects. In some cases, if the data is sensitive (e.g. information about health, race or gender), express consent to process the data must be obtained.

### **Rights to Access Information**

Employees and other subjects of personal data held by Central Church have the right to access any personal data that is being held in certain manual filing systems. This right is subject to certain exemptions: Personal Information may be withheld if the information relates to another individual.

Any person who wishes to exercise this right should make the request in writing to the Central Church Data Officer, using the standard letter which is available online from [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

If personal details are inaccurate, they can be amended upon request.

Central Church aims to comply with requests for access to personal information as quickly as possible, but will ensure that it is provided within 30 days of receipt of a completed form unless there is good reason for delay. In such cases, the reason for delay will be explained in writing to the individual making the request.

**I have read the above Data Protection Policy and agree to comply with the terms and conditions with regard to processing and viewing Data contained within Church Suite relating to Central Church.**

**PRINTED NAME:**

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

## Appendix 17 – Privacy Notice



AOG Central Safeguarding Lead and Depute Safeguarding Lead recognise the importance of the correct and lawful treatment of personal data.

All personal data, whether it is held on paper, on computer or other media, will be subject to the appropriate legal safeguards as specified in the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

AOG Central fully endorses and adheres to the eight principles of the GDPR. These principles specify the legal conditions that must be satisfied in relation to obtaining, handling, processing, transportation, and storage of personal data. The Safeguarding Lead and Depute Safeguarding Lead must adhere to these principles.

### **The Principles:**

The principles require that personal data shall:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met.
2. Be obtained for a specified and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.
3. Be adequate, relevant, and not excessive for those purposes.
4. Be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose.
6. Be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
7. Be kept secure from unauthorised or unlawful processing and protected against accidental loss, destruction or damage by using the appropriate technical and organisational measures.
8. Not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

**AOG Central Data Protection Officer: Alison West**

Contact details: [alison@aogcentral.co.uk](mailto:alison@aogcentral.co.uk)

## Appendix 18 – Protected Adult at Risk Flowchart

### LISTEN

- Acknowledge information shared about allegations/concerns.
- Take the person and situation seriously.

### RESPOND

- Offer support in a quiet space (room with glass viewing panel).
- 2 volunteers to accompany the adult at risk, ensuring same or mixed gender.
- In an emergency, where a person is at risk, phone 999 or contact appropriate social services.
- If adult at risk refuses to stay, STILL PHONE 999 OR CONTACT APPROPRIATE SOCIAL SERVICES.**

### RECORD

- As soon as possible, send email to [safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk)
- Email should clearly state what was said, heard and/or seen. What response was taken and by who.
- Church Safeguarding Lead will follow up with offer of debriefing session for team volunteers.

### REFER

- Where necessary, Church Safeguarding Lead will inform Senior Pastor, Ben Ritchie and Chair of SAG, Lisa Watt.



# **Appendix 19 - SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY TEAM**

## COMMUNICATION

- Team leader to ensure sufficient number of volunteers on rota/back up for absences.
- Team leader to have clear rules in place regarding the number of people who have access to a community ministry at a given time and how this will be implemented.
- All volunteers should remain calm, show empathy and respect for every person accessing a Central Church community ministry. Take time to listen carefully.
- Avoid one-to-one situations, have 2 volunteers if someone shares a concern/allegation.

## DE-ESCALATION

- Be aware that sometimes there is no reasoning with someone who is emotionally heightened. If required, Team leader to calmly and firmly request the person to exit the building.
- If the person refuses to leave, Team leader will impose red card sanction and one month ban.
- If the situation escalates further and community team feel threatened - phone 999 for Police.

## DE-BRIEF/SUPPORT

- Contact Safeguarding Lead - 07765181582 or email - [safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@aogcentral.co.uk)
- Safeguarding Lead will arrange debriefing session for Team leader and relevant volunteers.
- SAG (Safeguarding Advisory Group) will be included as/when required.