# Safeguarding

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal or other professional advice. The use of or reliance upon any information contained in this pack is solely at your own risk.

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding children is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children'[1] as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the 'Care and support statutory guidance'[2] issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being

## Safeguarding in the Church

This is an aspect of church ministry that it is crucial to get right. Safeguarding allows you to properly care for everyone that comes in through your church doors- be that looking after children in the children's ministry, offering support to someone with a learning disability or going on a home visit to a vulnerable adult. Safeguarding provides a safe environment for everyone- not just for those who are vulnerable but for staff and volunteers at your church too.

The main reason why safeguarding is important is because it allows us to extend the gospel to others genuinely. We cannot tell people of God's love for them and how much He

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance

values them in a space where there is no effort to protect their welfare. Jesus went out of his way to care for the vulnerable and our churches should do the same.

## What should we include in a Safeguarding Policy?

Safeguarding policies should be adapted to fit your church context which means that taking one off the internet and trying to fit it into your situation is not recommended. Below we have listed some aspects that should be covered by every church's Safeguarding Policy:

- Explain how you are going to promote a safe environment for children and other vulnerable groups
- DBS checks Policy
- Confidentiality and Pastoring individuals
- Lone Working
- Whistleblowing Policy (covering Staff and Volunteers)
- Internet Policy- putting up photos and videos online
- Procedure for a missing child/adult
- Recruitment Policies and Procedures (including for ex-offenders)
- Procedure for raising concerns about abuse- sexual, domestic, financial, bullying, harassment from someone outside the congregation, a member of the congregation, staff or volunteer
- Mental Health Policy
- Children's Ministry Toilet Policy
- You could suggest some resources that offer further help and guidance and where relevant, point people in the direction of a full-length policy on a topic. E.g. in cases of bullying please refer to our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Maintaining Safeguarding Policies going forward is just as important as setting up the policies. Therefore, churches also need to set-up regular training to keep staff up-to-date on policy changes and remind them of procedures currently in place. Policies and Procedures should be reviewed at least once a year and after an incident.

## Is there anyone you'd recommend for assistance with safeguarding policies?

One charity we would recommend is thirtyone:eight (https://thirtyoneeight.org/), a Christian charity who speak out for the rights of the vulnerable and help faith groups and organisations (including churches) with their safeguarding policies.

Their free safeguarding resources include:

- A helpline (0303 003 11 11) that you can call for advice on safeguarding policy and practise; responding to and managing allegations of abuse; management of offenders in places of worship and elsewhere and issues such as past abuse or re-offending.

- A range of guides and leaflets covering topics like 10 Safeguarding Standards or advice on organising trips away from home for young people for free on their website (https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/resources/).

They also offer a membership which costs £129 per organisation per year (the equivalent of £10.75 per month). For those for whom finance may be a barrier to accessing their services, thirtyone:eight offer a support fund so that every organisation can access their support.

- With the membership comes an online safeguarding manual, a model safeguarding policy template with assistance in writing your own, registration with their DBS service, training dates and discounts, and they will keep you updated on all the latest safeguarding legislation changes.