

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

October 2021

A. Frequently Asked Questions

1. As an Ecclesia, voluntary organisation or group, do we have to have a Safeguarding Policy?

To answer this - please consider the following questions:

- a. Are children, unsupervised by a parent or guardian, present on more than three days in thirty days? This can include transporting children. (From www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check/y)
- b. Is there any contact with children via social networking – virtual church sessions and Sunday schools, email contact and the internet?
- c. Are vulnerable adults (definition see page 4 below) present at meetings?
- d. What if there is disclosure of abuse by a child (or adult when a child) – or a disclosure to them of abuse?
- e. Do you arrange Youth weekends or Family Events where children stay overnight?

If yes to any of the above, then a Safeguarding policy IS required to ensure their safety.

2. Do you know how you are required to respond if you are faced with any of the following:

- a member or volunteer reports to you that they suspect, or have been made aware of, a child or vulnerable adult that is being abused or neglected?
- a child or parent of a child tells you of abuse? This might be outside any church activities, for example in their home or school environment.
- a volunteer or member is accused of child abuse?
- where you should go to get help and advice?

A policy is necessary to clarify what to do in any of these situations, and to ensure confidentiality that protects both the accused and the accuser.

3. What could happen if we choose not to have a clear Safeguarding policy nor appoint a DSL?

If a complaint is made, and not handled objectively and independently, nor reported where necessary to the appropriate authorities, an Ecclesia may be reported to the police and action taken against the principals.

4. Does scripture teaching affect a Safeguarding Policy?

Concerns have been expressed about how our Lord's teaching in Matthew 18: 15-17 relates to our responsibilities with such concerns.

Here is a link to [Bible Teaching and Important Considerations concerning Compliance](#)

Or

[www.chsn.org.uk/media/files/A%20compliance%20and%20biblical%20Introduction%20to%20Safeguarding\(2\).pdf](http://www.chsn.org.uk/media/files/A%20compliance%20and%20biblical%20Introduction%20to%20Safeguarding(2).pdf)

5. Why is there such emphasis on confidentiality and independence?

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

October 2021

This needs to be considered from both the point of view of the one who claims to be abused and the one accused of abusing. It also needs to be compliant with legal and ethical principles.

If the one claiming abuse thinks their personal and very private circumstances are likely to be discussed by members of the Ecclesia, they may well be reluctant to make contact.

When an individual is accused of abuse, there is a serious risk of damage to their mental state, their faith, their relationship with their ecclesia and their family, and potentially their employment.

It is important that a trained, independent person takes full responsibility for managing the accusation, knowing where to seek guidance and how to decide an appropriate course of action. This independence minimises a possible 'cover-up' and keeps the reputations of both individuals safe when, as may happen after investigation, an accusation is found to be false.

B. Steps to be taken in developing a Safeguarding policy

1. **Assess the risks:** clarify contact with children and young people and vulnerable adults, identifying their needs.
2. **Identify leaders:** decide who is going to be your nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and be clear about their role.
3. **Getting support** Ensure that everyone understands why it's important to develop child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding measures and that you have support from the highest level in your organisation.
4. **Writing a Safeguarding and child protection policy statement**
Ensure you have a written policy statement for child protection and safeguarding including vulnerable adults, and that it includes everything it needs to.
5. **Writing Procedures**
Create your basic safeguarding procedures to help everyone in your organisation respond appropriately to concerns.
6. **Setting a code of behaviour**
Write a code of behaviour for your group so that everyone knows what is expected of them.
7. **Selecting the right staff and volunteers**
Make sure you have the best people working or volunteering for you and that they are safe to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults This will require DBS registration.
8. **Getting informed and staying up to date**
Ensure that everyone in your organisation has the latest knowledge about how to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe.
9. **Making sure your safeguarding arrangements are effective**
Put checks and reviews in place so that you can assess how well your group's safeguarding and child protection arrangements are working.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

October 2021

Acknowledgement and thanks to NSPCC (2019) Introductory guide to safeguarding and child protection for the voluntary and community sector. London: NSPCC.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/introductory-guide-safeguarding-child-protection>

Initially this will appear challenging in terms of understanding clarifying and developing a Safeguarding Policy. It is important to read through and think about these steps.

The CSN can help with this by providing you with templates that are easily modified to suit your ecclesia organisation.

C. What should a Child Safeguarding Policy include?

These are the expectations of the structure of a Policy:

1. A **Safeguarding Policy Statement** including acknowledgement and acceptance of Charity Commission and Government guidance and clarification of the purpose of the Policy
2. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures** including:
 3.
 - Responsibilities of the Trustees/Arranging Committee
 - Independent responsibilities of the appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
 - Definitions of abuse
 - Recognition and responding to abuse
 - Recruitment
 - Managing concerns
 - Risk assessment
 - Storage of records
 - Regular training of DSLs
 - Regular review of adequacy of the policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

October 2021

D. Who are vulnerable adults?

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who is in a vulnerable situation or relationship. They may have difficulty making their wishes or feelings known. They may need or already receive community care services such as a care package or support worker or they may be heavily dependent on one or more family members or friends.

They may be unable or have no means of dealing with intimidation, false accusations, humiliation, coaxing, coercion or may feel that someone is trying to take control over their activities

They may be confused. They may be having problems with personal hygiene.

A vulnerable adult may find it difficult to form healthy and steady boundaries and pushing or challenging their boundaries can become damaging to that individual.

A vulnerable adult may find it difficult to express their concerns or feelings which can lead to misunderstandings of their situation.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health. This would include problems mobility or with eyesight or hearing
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail