



Banchory Christian Fellowship Church

Children & Adults at Risk Safeguarding Handbook

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Approved by: (Trustee with overall responsibility for Safeguarding)	Nigel Bradley	Date:	06/06/2022

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Children and Adults Out of Hours Service	Out of Hours Service	<u>Evenings & Weekends:</u> 03456 08 12 06
Police	Emergency	999
Police	Non-emergency	101

Contents

Introduction to our Safeguarding Handbook	9
Definitions & Terminology.....	10
Safeguarding Policy.....	13
Developing Safeguarding Awareness and Training	15
Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities	16
Role –Trustee for Safeguarding responsibilities:.....	16
Role - Elder & Deacon responsibilities:.....	16
Role - Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) responsibilities:.....	16
Role - Ministry Leader responsibilities:	16
Role - PVG Scheme Officer responsibilities:.....	16
Role - PVG Scheme Member responsibilities:	16
Safer Recruitment	17
Introduction	17
Who is a protected adult?	17
The PVG Scheme	18
PVG Scheme Officer	19
Who Should Join the PVG Scheme?	19
How to determine if a ministry is ‘regulated work’	19
Maintaining the PVG Scheme Record	22
Our safer recruitment checklist	23
Support for the recruitment process.....	24
When someone becomes unsuitable to work with children or protected adults.....	25
Management of workers	26
Complaints against leaders/workers	26
Whistleblowing	27
Working safely	29
General Information and Consent Form.....	29
Safety for organised activities	29
Days out, off-site visits and activities	33
Physical contact with children, young people and adults at risk	34
Working alone with a child/children or adults at risk.....	35
Managing a private conversation with a child, young person or adult at risk	35
Child/Staff ratios	36
Transporting children.....	37

Transporting protected adults	37
Behaviour management – Code of Practice for children's activities	38
Bullying.....	41
Home visits.....	42
General health and safety (first aid & fire).....	42
Photography and Social Media Guidance.....	43
Confidentiality.....	47
Summary of good practice for the prevention of abuse and protection of workers	50
Communicating effectively.....	51
What is Effective Communication?	51
Barriers to effective interpersonal communication	51
Four key skills to improve communication	52
Communicating with Children from birth to adolescence	55
Responding to Safeguarding Concerns	60
Who might be an abuser?.....	60
Categories of abuse	61
Recognising abuse - possible signs and symptoms of abuse	64
Reporting harm.....	67
Make enquiries using open questions.....	67
How to react and listen if abuse or harm is disclosed directly to you.....	68
Recognising and reporting abuse – a one-page summary	70
Sharing relevant information.....	71
Referring the harm on for social services or police led investigation	72
Recording details of the harm.....	73
Pastoral Care.....	74
Managing those who pose a risk	75
Including those who pose a risk.....	75
Recruiting someone with convictions.....	76
Working in Partnership.....	77

Annexes

- 1 Summary of changes arising from Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
 - 2 Safeguarding Pocket Guide
 - 3 Safeguarding Poster
 - 4 Top tips for safeguarding
-
- SG1 Job Description
 - SG2 Application Form
 - SG3 Recruiting with Convictions Policy
 - SG5 Reference Request
 - SG6 Interview Checklist & Record
 - SG7 Interview Questions
 - SG8 Letter of Appointment
 - SG9 Termination of appointment to regulated work
 - SG10 Congregational PVG Register
 - SG11 General Information & consent (also e-SG11)
 - SG12 Activities & Day visits
 - SG13a Photography & recordings consent-CHILD
 - SG13b Photography & recordings consent-ADULT
 - SG14a Photography & recordings notice (for services)
 - SG14b Photography & recordings notice (for events)
 - SG16 Safeguarding Risk Assessment Continuation Sheet
 - SG17 Safeguarding Incident Reporting
 - SG18 Risk Assessment
 - SG19 Your responsibilities when you join the PVG Scheme
 - SG 20 Confidentiality Agreement
 - SG 21 Record of Training

Introduction to our Safeguarding Handbook

Banchory Christian Fellowship Church (BCFC) aspires to be a “*growing community of committed followers of Jesus*”. As such, the Church is committed to providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment.

We recognise that harm or abuse can happen anywhere and that we have a duty to do everything we can to ensure a safe Church for all whether this be within our Church buildings, our ministries or our community out-reach. This includes protecting children and adults at risk. Not only is it everyone’s responsibility to do so, it is the duty of every person working with children and adults at risk to share in the prevention of abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

It is our desire to treat all people who come to our church, including children and adults, with equal compassion, grace and dignity. We will strive to ensure that the needs of children and adults at risk are met and that they are given every opportunity to serve and be involved in the ministries of the Church. We will work with them to find appropriate ministries and if possible, to put assistance in place to journey with them.

To help us meet our aspirations and our responsibilities we have compiled this Safeguarding Handbook. It reflects the ten safeguarding standards developed by *thirtyone:eight*¹ to help churches and faith based organisations “*assist organisations to operate safely and in a manner that complies with relevant UK law and good practice*” (Ten safeguarding standards: A framework for creating safer places, 2019). The standards are:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Developing Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Safer Recruitment Policies
- Management of Workers
- Working Safely
- Communicating Effectively
- Responding to Concerns
- Pastoral Care
- Managing Those Who May Pose a Risk
- Working in Partnership

Our Safeguarding Handbook is based upon these standards to provide paid staff, the Church congregation and volunteers within the Church with knowledge to minimise the likelihood of abuse or harm occurring. It also includes procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised regarding children or adults at risk within the Church or those who participate in our events and activities.

¹ Formerly known as *The Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)*

Definitions & Terminology

Safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from “harm” or “abuse”.

A **Safeguarding Co-ordinator** is a person with day-to-day responsibility for Safeguarding.

Who is a Child? Although a “child” in Scotland can be defined differently in different legal contexts, for the purposes of our safeguarding role a “child” as used here refers to any child or young person who has not attained the age of 18 (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).

What is child abuse and child neglect? Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child including physical, and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Abuse is deemed to have taken place even if a child is seen to be the instigator of the act or has allegedly given consent.

What is child protection? “Child protection” means 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.

Who are parents and carers? A “parent” is defined as someone who is the genetic or adoptive mother or father of the child. A child may also have a parent by virtue of provisions in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008. A “carer” is someone other than a parent who has rights/responsibilities for looking after a child or young person.

Who is an adult at risk? The Adult Support and Protection Act (2007) defines “adult” as a person aged 16 or over, and “adults at risk” as those who:

- are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests; *and*
- are at risk of harm; *and*
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

The presence of a particular condition does not automatically mean an adult is an “adult at risk”. Someone could have a disability but be able to safeguard their well-being etc. It is important to stress that all three elements of this definition must be met. It is the whole of an adult’s particular circumstances which can combine to make them more vulnerable to harm than others.

In practice this means that the following groups of people may *sometimes* be at risk: people with learning difficulties, physical difficulties or mental health difficulties, older people, people affected by addictions or who are homeless, or are using counselling services. It should be noted that an individual’s vulnerabilities, medical conditions and abilities can fluctuate and change and so they may, over time, fall within and out-with the definition of “adult at risk”.

An inability to safeguard oneself is not the same as an adult not having capacity. An adult may be considered unwilling rather than unable to safeguard themselves and so may not be considered an adult at risk.

The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 also says that an "adult" is at risk of "harm" if:

- another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or
- the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.
- In practice, and as a starting point an "adult at risk" can be taken to be a person affected by disability or old age that you suspect or know is being harmed or exploited by another person or is harming themselves and they are unable to protect themselves.

What is harm or abuse for "adults at risk". The term "harm", rather than "abuse" is more often used regarding adult protection. The definition of harm in the Adult Support and Protection Act (2007) sets out four main broad definitions including:

- conduct which causes physical harm,
- conduct which causes psychological harm (e.g. by causing fear, alarm or distress),
- unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests (e.g. theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion),
- conduct which causes self-harm.

This list is not exhaustive and no category of harm is excluded simply because it is not explicitly listed. In general terms, behaviours that constitute "harm" to others can be physical (including neglect), emotional, financial, sexual or a combination of these. Also, what constitutes serious harm will be different for different persons.

Leader The term "leader" refers to those who the church would consider ultimately responsible for the running of an event, group or organisation. They may be paid or unpaid.

Worker The term "worker" refers to all those working with children and adults at risk in any given situation, (they may be called leaders within the group, but who may not have overall responsibility for the event, group or organisation). Workers may be paid or unpaid.

Vulnerable person/people The use of the word 'vulnerable person/people' is used to describe both children and adults at risk.

Protected adult The term "protected adult" is a person over 16 years of age who because they receive a certain type of service become protected. These services are likely to be provided for people affected by physical or mental illness and/or disability who have particular needs over and above those of the general population. A protected adult differs from an 'adult at risk'.

Congregation The term "congregation" refers to anyone who worships at Banchory Christian Fellowship Church, whether on a regular basis or not.

Safeguarding Policy

1. The following safeguarding policy has been agreed by the Trustees of Banchory Christian Fellowship Church with reference to the law and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk, including:

- Disclosure Scotland Act 2020
- Management of Offenders Act 2019
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC): Scotland's national policy since 2010
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) & Code of Practice 2007
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

2. We believe, respect and recognise:

- All children and adults at risk should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our church.
- Safeguarding is a whole church responsibility.
- The personal dignity and rights of children and adults at risk should be respected and will ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- Parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children, but accept our responsibility when and where we have the opportunity to participate in children's and young people's lives.
- It is our responsibility to help prevent grooming and the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children.
- It is our responsibility to help prevent grooming and the physical, sexual, emotional, institutionalised, financial, discriminatory, domestic abuse and modern slavery or neglect of adults at risk.
- Domestic abuse affects both adults and children and we believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable.
- Aberdeenshire Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Aberdeenshire Adult Services have this responsibility for adults at risk.

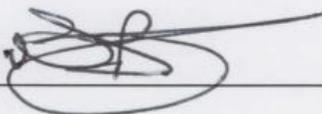
3. We are committed to:

- Establishing a loving environment which is safe and caring, and where there is informed vigilance about the dangers of harm and abuse.
- Complying with relevant legislation, statutory guidelines and recognised best practice in relation to safeguarding children or adults at risk.
- Reporting any abuse of children or adults at risk that we suspect or discover.
- Contacting the police as a matter of urgency where we discover, or receive an allegation that suggests, a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Supporting all those in our church who are affected by abuse.
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that as a church everyone works within our agreed procedures to support safeguarding.
- Supporting the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator" in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk.
- Implementing safer recruitment practices and procedures in the selection and appointment of all those who work with children and adults at risk, be they volunteer or paid staff.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake to work with children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that those with whom we have contact know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering abuse or harm.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to children or adults whilst ensuring that the welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount.
- Assisting and co-operating fully with any police investigation or enquiry into any allegations of abuse involving those staffing events, leaders, workers, children or adults at risk.
- Reviewing our Safeguarding Policy Statement and associated policies, practices and procedures annually.

4. This church, its congregation and leaders are committed to the nurturing and safeguarding of all children and adults at risk with whom we come into contact, and to ensure their wellbeing.

5. Nigel Bradley, Trustee on behalf of the Banchory Christian Fellowship Trustees has overall responsibility for Safeguarding and ensuring that this policy is put into practice.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

6/6/22

Date for next review: _____

20 2025

Developing Safeguarding Awareness and Training

In common with other faith organisations, our Church includes welcoming, trusting, caring and forgiving individuals, and is eager to include new people into the Church, often with little or no knowledge about their character or motives. One of the most difficult challenges around safeguarding is to alert the Church's membership and wider congregation to the risks posed, by its inclusive and welcoming policies, to those who might be vulnerable to harm or the risk of harm. Our Church is attended by and supports some of the most vulnerable people in society; children, the frail elderly, and those in crisis in their lives.

Recognising this, the Church has established Policies and Procedures to safeguard the interests of those who might be vulnerable to harm, or risk of harm. These policies and procedures are a robust yet proportionate toolset covering the recruitment, management and support of workers (both paid and unpaid) who are appointed to work with children and/or adults at risk, and also provide practical guidance for those persons appointed to carry out that work.

However, everyone needs to know how children and adults at risk are being kept safe at our Church and what to do if there is a concern about possible abuse. This includes the leaders, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, paid and un-paid workers, parents/carers and children. To raise safeguarding awareness amongst these groups we will:

- ✓ Display our Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Poster in the Church;
- ✓ Implement safer recruitment practices;
- ✓ Implement safer working practices;
- ✓ Maintain a confidential congregational record of workers authorised to work with children and/or with Protected Adults (**SG10 Congregational PVG Register**);
- ✓ Provide relevant and appropriate safeguarding training for the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, ministry leaders and workers to:
 - Implement safeguarding policies and practices
 - Disseminate new information
 - Teach new skills
 - Establish best practice
 - Improve performance
 - Change attitudes
- ✓ Provide a written Safeguarding Pocket Guide for all Church and ministry leaders and workers and also make these readily available within the Church;
- ✓ Publish our Safeguarding Policy on the Church website along with information on what to do should there be any concerns;
- ✓ Provide parents with relevant safeguarding information when children register for activities or events;
- ✓ Provide adults at risk accessing our services with relevant safeguarding information;
- ✓ Show the '*thirtyone:eight*' short film (or other appropriate alternative) to the Church congregation (morning and evening services) at least once a year.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Role –Trustee for Safeguarding responsibilities:

- Overall responsibility for Safeguarding at BCFC.
- Appoint and support a Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- Ensure the preparation, implementation and appropriate review of the Safeguarding Policy and any associated policies and procedures.

Role - Elder & Deacon responsibilities:

- Ensure observance and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and any associated policies and procedures across all areas of responsibility.
- Support the Lead Safeguarding Trustee, Safeguarding Co-ordinator and PVG Scheme Officer in their roles.
- Manage those who pose a safeguarding risk to the church (Elders only).

Role - Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) responsibilities:

- Maintain an overview of all church activities involving children and adults at risk and monitor the implementation of church policy and procedures.
- Act as an advocate, speaking for and on behalf of children and adults at risk.
- Act independently in reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities.
- Work with the Trustees in the preparation and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and ensure that it is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure the appropriate provision and delivery of safeguarding training.

Role - Ministry Leader responsibilities:

- Implement safeguarding policies and practices.
- Disseminate any new safeguarding information to workers.
- Establish safeguarding best practice within their ministry.
- Undertake a safeguarding risk assessment for any planned event or activity and update as applicable and at least annually.

Role - PVG Scheme Officer responsibilities:

- Administer applications to the PVG Scheme.
- Manage PVG Scheme Record updates as required.
- Maintain SG10 Congregational PVG Register.
- Support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Ministry Leaders to meet legislative responsibilities.

Role - PVG Scheme Member responsibilities:

- Keep PVG certificate safe.
- Notify Disclosure Scotland if you change your name OR your gender. **It is an offence not to do so.**
- Notify Disclosure Scotland of a change of address or if you stop working or volunteering for an organisation which has undertaken a PVG check on you.

Safer Recruitment

Introduction

At Banchory Christian Fellowship Church volunteers are essential to the running, upkeep and life of our Church and its ministries. In the past we would ask for volunteers and by simply putting up your hand you most likely got the job. However, tragic incidents over recent decades involving harm to children and adults have led to changes in legislation requiring all organisations to adopt 'safer recruitment' policies and procedures to comply with the revised legislation.

A key element of 'Safer Recruitment' has been the 2011 Scottish Government's introduction of a membership scheme to improve disclosure arrangements for people who work with vulnerable groups (children and/or protected adults). The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults, through paid and unpaid work, do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.

We have compiled the following information and guidance to inform the recruitment process of both paid and unpaid workers to work with children and/or adults at risk within our Church so that we recruit workers as safely as possible and in accordance with legislation for the benefit of children, young people and adults.

The Disclosure (Scotland) 2020 Act legislative framework will modernise and improve the proportionality of the disclosure system in Scotland. It focuses on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, while balancing the need for people with convictions to move on from past convictions and contribute to society. The changes set out in the Disclosure (Scotland) 2020 Act will come into effect by 2024. We will adopt procedural changes as they are introduced through Volunteer Scotland, which supports voluntary organisations in Scotland process PVG Scheme checks. A handy guide that summarises the changes to be introduced under the new legislation, produced by Volunteer Scotland, is provided at Annex 1.

Who is a protected adult?

A protected adult is a person aged 16 or over who has a particular need (i.e. a specific requirement arising from either physical or mental illness, or physical or mental disability which may disadvantage that person when compared to the rest of society) and is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care service, health service, community care service or welfare service. Protected adult is therefore a service based definition and avoids labelling adults on the basis of their having a specific condition or disability. BCFC is not a care, health or community care service and so our ministries fall within the 'welfare service' category which is defined as:

“A welfare service includes any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to individuals with particular needs, meeting the following conditions. The service must be a service that:

- a) is provided in the course of work to one or more persons aged 16 or over,*
- b) is delivered on behalf of an organisation,*
- c) requires training to be undertaken by the person delivering the service,²*
- d) has a frequency and formality attached to the service, and*
- e) either*
 - (i) requires a contract to be agreed between the service provider and the recipient of the service prior to the service being carried out, or*
 - (ii) is personalised to an individual adult’s needs.”*

(www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/disclosureinformation/guidance, Chapter 2 Regulated Work, para 20)

Please note, it is possible for 16 and 17 year-olds to be both children and protected adults. The assessment as to whether or not they are protected adults is no different to that undertaken in respect of any other adult.

In summary, only those ministries provided by BCFC to ‘adults with particular needs’ would fall within the definition of a ‘welfare service’ and therefore deemed to be ‘regulated work for adults’ requiring membership of the PVG Scheme.

The PVG Scheme

Any individual who is not barred may apply to become a member of the PVG Scheme in Scotland. The PVG Scheme is administered by Disclosure Scotland and allows organisational employers and personal employers to satisfy themselves that an individual to whom they are offering regulated work is not barred from doing that type of regulated work. PVG Scheme members are continuously monitored for new vetting information and any information which comes to light which may indicate that they are unsuitable to do regulated work will lead to a consideration for entry into one, or both, of the ‘lists’ held by Disclosure Scotland. These lists are a record of those who are considered to be unsuitable to do regulated work with adults (the ‘adults list’) or with children (the ‘children’s’ list). People named on these lists are barred from doing regulated work with children or adults. A person can be barred from one type of regulated work or another, or both.

It is an offence for an individual to do, or seek or agree to do, regulated work of the type from which they are barred. It is also an offence for an organisation to knowingly recruit an individual who is barred from doing regulated work from which they are barred. It is therefore crucial that BCFC correctly identifies “regulated work” within our ministries along with who needs to join the PVG Scheme.

‘*Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services*’ is funded by the Scottish Government to support the voluntary sector (which includes BCFC) with processing disclosure checks and delivery of PVG Scheme responsibilities. ‘Volunteer Scotland’ would therefore be notified by Disclosure

² For example, the worker’s duties, client needs, codes of conduct etc.,

Scotland of anyone who is placed “under consideration for listing” and all organisations which have carried out a PVG Disclosure check on the person will be notified of this change of status. This allows BCFC to take appropriate action, which may include interviewing, suspension, increased supervision or no action until the case is decided. In practice, this means that BCFC will be notified if any PVG Scheme member doing regulated work commits a serious offence.

PVG Scheme Officer

BCFC shall appoint at least one PVG Scheme Officer to administer applications to the PVG Scheme and to maintain the SG10 Congregational PVG Register.

All leaders and workers should support the work of our PVG Scheme Officer who has a key role in ensuring we meet legislative responsibilities and to enable us to provide safe ministries.

Only the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and PVG Scheme Officer will have access to completed PVG Scheme Membership forms/certificates.

Who Should Join the PVG Scheme?

Anyone undertaking regulated work with children or regulated work with adults should apply for PVG Scheme membership.

It is the responsibility of Leaders within BCFC to:

- ✓ Determine whether the ministry is regulated work with children or adults.
- ✓ Ensure that only PVG Scheme members work with children and protected adults.
- ✓ Ensure that paid and unpaid workers who need to apply to join the PVG Scheme make the application.

How to determine if a ministry is ‘regulated work’

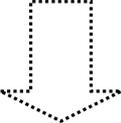
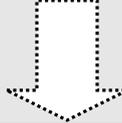
The following tables should be used to determine if a post is regulated work. There is a table for regulated work with children and another for regulated work with adults.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types/>

Table 1: For **regulated work with children**, a person requires to be checked and become a member of the PVG Scheme if the answer is YES to **each** of the following three questions:

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
<p>Is it work of any kind, paid or as a volunteer?</p> <p>YES / NO</p> <p>(If No, stop here because it will not be regulated work.)</p> <p>Work is defined as 'work of any kind' including paid and unpaid that is NOT done as part of a personal relationship or arrangement.</p> <p>For example, <i>personal arrangements</i> that parents make with friends and family to look after their children or transport them to activities or clubs is not work. But, in this example, if the care is provided by members of the Church who are recruited for that purpose, as in a youth group or crèche, the arrangements are formal and delivered on behalf of the organisation and it is therefore 'work'.</p>	<p>Are they working with a child under the age of 18 years?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>	<p>Are any of the following tasks part of the normal duties of the person providing the service and not just incidental (occasional or by chance)?</p> <p>You must be able to tick YES to at least one of the following.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>3.1 Will the person be in sole charge or have unsupervised contact with the person receiving the service e.g. being with the person when no one else is present? YES / NO</p> <p>3.2 Providing teaching or instruction or training? YES / NO</p>

Table 2: For determining **regulated work with adults**, the following three questions need to be answered:

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
<p>Is it work of any kind, paid or as a volunteer?</p> <p>YES / NO</p> <p>If NO, stop here because it will not be regulated work.</p> <p>Work is defined as 'work of any kind' including paid and unpaid that is NOT done as part of a personal relationship or arrangement.</p> <p>An example of an activity that is not work is a person visiting a friend in a residential care home. This is done in a personal capacity. But it would be work if they were a member of a pastoral care group doing this visit on behalf of the Church.</p>	<p>Are they working with a protected adult and providing a welfare service?</p> <p>You need to tick NO to question 2.1 and YES to questions 2.2 to 2.6 for the person to be a protected adult.</p> 	<p>Are any of the following tasks part of the normal duties of the person providing the service?</p> <p>You must be able to tick YES to at least one of the following.</p> 
	<p>2.1 Can anyone in the congregation receive this service, assistance, support or help?</p> <p>YES / NO</p> <p>If Yes stop here: it is not regulated with adults.</p>	<p>3.1 Will the person be in sole charge or have unsupervised contact with the person receiving the service e.g. being with the person when no one else is present?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>
	<p>2.2 Does the person receiving the service have particular needs over and above those of the general population? E.g. need help with personal care or meal preparation, are housebound or depend on others for transport etc.?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>	<p>3.2 Providing teaching or instruction or training?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>
	<p>2.3 Is the person receiving the service 16 years or over?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>	
	<p>2.4 Is the service provided in the name of the Banchory Christian Fellowship Church?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>	
	<p>2.5 Is the service provided regularly and in a planned way?</p> <p>YES / NO</p>	
<p>2.6 Does training need to be undertaken by the person delivering the service? (Training could mean anything from a brief induction to the duties of the post-holder. Training is not defined in the Scottish Government's PVG Scheme guidance)</p> <p>YES / NO</p>		

Notes:

- a) In Table 2 '**welfare service**' means the provision of practical, personal or emotional support or advice, and guidance with spiritual matters. There is an overlap for 16-18 year olds who may be classed as either children or protected adults. But it is usually obvious how this should be classified by the nature of the service provided.
- b) **If the answer to question 2.1 is 'yes'** then the activity or service which is available for anyone in the congregation, regardless of their health, age, disability or circumstances, means that the person receiving it is not a protected adult. The paid member of staff or volunteer providing the service does not need to join the PVG Scheme. Elders are a good example of such a post: the service is provided for all in the congregation. For the answer to be '**no**' the service or activity would need to be targeted only at people with particular needs - see note (c) below.
- c) All Elders provide pastoral care in the general sense but only those who are members of a formally set up pastoral care visiting group for people with particular needs would need to join the PVG Scheme.

Maintaining the PVG Scheme Record

The PVG legislation does not provide any guidance as to how often an organisation should recheck the PVG Scheme Record for an individual. However, once someone becomes a PVG member and is issued with a certificate for undertaking regulated work, BCFC will be notified if they commit a serious offence or are removed from regulated work by another organisation.

This process of proactive notification will mean that there is no requirement for ongoing regular checks. However, some organisations may want to confirm that people who are doing regulated work in their organisation have not committed ANY offences and others again may be interested in specific types of minor offence which would not be of interest to Disclosure Scotland. In summary, it is the responsibility of each organisation to decide if re-checking is necessary, and if so, how often it should be carried out.

We will make use of the PVG Scheme Record Update request:

- ✓ For all Scheme workers every five years from the date of their last check; or
- ✓ If we become aware of information relevant for disclosure under the PVG Scheme;
- ✓ For any new roles/job descriptions that include regulated work with children or adults.

PVG Scheme Record updates will be managed by the PVG Scheme Officer.

PVG Scheme members are responsible for notifying Disclosure Scotland of changes in personal circumstances, including:

- Change of address - notify Disclosure Scotland in writing quoting their PVG Scheme Membership Number.
- Change of name OR gender – scheme member MUST notify Disclosure Scotland. **It is an offence not to do so.**
- When no longer working / volunteering for an organisation which has undertaken a PVG check and for which a certificate was issued.

Disclosure Scotland also requests that organisations inform them, in writing, if a PVG Scheme Member moves post, no longer carries out regulated work (with children, with adults or both) or leaves the organisation. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will ensure that the Congregational PVG Register is reviewed every six months to identify any relevant PVG Scheme Member changes and so inform 'Volunteer Scotland' who will in turn inform Disclosure Scotland accordingly.

Our safer recruitment checklist

The following checklist summarises the recruitment process to be followed for the appointment of any worker to a regulated role working with children or adults at risk within Banchory Christian Fellowship Church.

Before advertising a regulated post:

- ✓ Prospective paid and unpaid workers should all be regarded as job applicants.
- ✓ They should have a defined role with a written job description (**SG1 Job Description**).
- ✓ A person specification is essential for paid worker roles (experience or attributes needed in order to carry out the role).
- ✓ Create an advert for the role.

Before interviewing any candidates for regulated roles:

- ✓ Provide job applicants with information about BCFC, the advertised role, recruitment timetable, safeguarding policy, **SG3 'Recruiting with Convictions Policy'** and an application form.
- ✓ They should fill in **SG2 Job Application Form**.
- ✓ Scrutinise applications, shortlist and invite candidates for interview.

Before making a recruitment decision:

- ✓ Two written references should be sought for any applicants who apply for paid work with children or protected adults.
- ✓ For those under 18 in education one of those references must be from their school or college. Any young person on work experience must have a reference from their school. No young person under 18 should be expected to take on a role with sole responsibility.
- ✓ Verify qualifications, experience, and for paid workers, their right to work in Scotland.

Before making an appointment:

- ✓ Offers of appointment must be provisional subject to receipt of a satisfactory PVG disclosure.
- ✓ A PVG Disclosure should be obtained for all roles classed as "regulated work"; the person should not take up post until the PVG Scheme Membership Certificate is returned.
- ✓ Risk assess any concerning information arising from the PVG Disclosure.
- ✓ Record the recruitment decision. The appointment should be confirmed in writing to the successful applicant.
- ✓ Depending on the role, there should be a 3 to 6-month probationary period before confirming the appointment.
- ✓ Induction to the role (including safeguarding policies and procedures, safeguarding training, sign up to Code of Conduct).
- ✓ There should be clear and consistent supervision arrangements.
- ✓ There should be an annual review and supervision meetings should ideally be no more than 3 months apart.
- ✓ Create and retain adequate records on all those working with vulnerable people, taking care to store them securely.
- ✓ Ensure the 'SG10 Congregational PVG Register' is updated.

Support for the recruitment process

The following standard forms support the recruitment process at BCFC:

Form	Title	Comments
SG1	Job Description	A basic form which may need to be adapted for particular job vacancies. A generic 'Children's Worker' job description is available for all children's ministry use.
SG2(a)	Volunteer Application Form	For completion by anyone wishing to help with ministry.
SG2(b)	Paid Staff Application Form	For completion by anyone applying for employment at BCFC.
SG3	Recruiting People with Convictions Policy	
SG5	Reference Request	Use to obtain references for applicants who are not known to the Church Elders and for anyone applying to undertake regulated work with children and/or protected adults.
SG6	Interview Checklist & Record	For completion at interview.
SG7	Interview Questions	Some ideas for interview questions.
SG8	Letter of Appointment	A simple letter that can be amended as necessary depending upon the appointment.
SG9	Termination of appointment to regulated work	Complete when a worker no longer undertakes regulated work or has their appointment terminated.
SG10	Congregational PVG Register	BCFC's record of PVG Scheme Members working with children and/or protected adults.

When someone becomes unsuitable to work with children or protected adults.

For the PVG legislation to work effectively it is necessary for organisations to pass on to Disclosure Scotland when there are indications an individual may be unsuitable to do regulated work. The PVG Act places a duty upon organisations to make such a referral when certain criteria are met.

Further information regarding PVG and the duty to refer is available from the Disclosure Scotland website at <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/disclosureinformation/documents>

Management of workers

It is important that workers are supported and supervised so that they feel part of the team, show responsibility for, and to, others and know who to talk to if they have any queries or concerns.

Complaints against leaders/workers

Banchory Christian Fellowship Church is committed to adopting a culture of good work practice and management of team leaders and workers. We are further committed to earning the trust of parents and guardians through this good practice.

It is expected that any leader or worker involved in matters outside the church which may have some bearing on their current work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, shall bring the matter to the attention of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

It is important to ensure that the needs of children and vulnerable adults who are alleged to be at risk of harm or abuse or who have been abused or harmed are protected through our child and adult safeguarding systems. It is not, however, appropriate for our Complaints system to be used to explore allegations of abuse or risk.

Less serious complaints (e.g. of physical assault or rough handling)

In all instances, the welfare of the child, young person or adult is our primary concern. If required, first aid or medical attention should be sought.

If there is a minor complaint about a worker, or behaviour is observed which causes concern, the leader should deal with the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. **SG17 Incident Form** should be completed in all cases and, if appropriate, discussion should take place with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

More serious complaints (e.g. of a physical assault or sexual nature)

Assess the child/adult's condition and seek medical care if required. The care of the child/adult must be our priority. The worker must be removed from contact with any children or other people and, if appropriate, leave the event.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator must be contacted as soon as possible. **SG17 Incident Form** must be completed in as much detail as possible. Actual words used must be noted. It is not our job to question or investigate – we must write down what was said and not our interpretation of it.

While the matter is under investigation, the worker should be suspended from work with children/adults. This is in no way a judgement as to the individual's guilt or innocence, but simply a measure to protect all parties from additional undue concern. In all cases, an appropriate person will be allocated to the worker to provide pastoral care.

If there is a complaint about the leader of the group, whether minor or major, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be contacted to discuss the matter.

Whistleblowing

It is the duty of every worker to speak up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law, miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or environment) and the cover up of any of these in the workplace. Any concerns should be raised with the Lead Trustee for Safeguarding in the first instance.

Banchory Christian Fellowship Church is committed to ensuring that any worker's concerns of this nature will be taken seriously and investigated, and as part of this commitment has developed this guidance note on whistleblowing.

All reported incidents will be thoroughly investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only people that need to know, being informed. Whilst we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all concerns in the way that the reporting individual might wish, we will try to handle the matter fairly and properly.

We will:

- ✓ Adopt an objective and balanced approach towards any allegations made under this whistleblowing policy.
- ✓ Take prompt action to investigate any allegations (or make sure another appropriate person instigates an investigation).
- ✓ Encourage an individual who has come forward to disclose some sort of wrongdoing to explain fully the evidence that he or she has of the wrongdoing.
- ✓ Ask the whistle blower to provide specific examples of the conduct that he or she has observed or the evidence obtained to support the allegations of malpractice.
- ✓ Treat each case on its own facts.
- ✓ Distinguish between facts and opinions.
- ✓ Appreciate that it can be very stressful for the person alleging wrongdoing.
- ✓ Take immediate action if a worker destroys or conceals evidence of poor or unacceptable practice or misconduct.
- ✓ Treat victimisation of whistle blowers as a serious matter.

We will not:

- ✗ Attempt to conceal evidence of poor or unacceptable practice.
- ✗ Allow personal views about the whistle blower to influence the assessment of the allegations that they are making.
- ✗ React negatively to a disclosure, or adopt a judgmental attitude.
- ✗ Dismiss a worker's disclosure as an exaggeration, or as trivial, unless there is clear evidence that the allegations are unfounded.
- ✗ Penalise an individual for making a disclosure that proves unfounded if, despite making a mistake, he or she acted in good faith in making the disclosure.
- ✗ Get angry or defensive if an individual raises allegations of malpractice within the organisation.
- ✗ Attempt to suppress evidence of wrongdoing.

Workers who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact: The Scottish Charity Regulator, 2nd Floor, Quadrant House, 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY. Tel: 01382 220446. Email: info@oscr.org.uk Web: www.oscr.org.uk

Working safely

All our workers need to work safely. This means that they need to be aware of safety aspects of any organised activity on or off our premises, including outings, and to do what is necessary to keep children and adults at risk safe. Working safely also applies in areas such as transportation, pastoral visiting, discipline, dealing with bullying and first aid. By developing and implementing our local practices we hope that workers will feel more confident about running activities, develop good relationships and so minimise the risk of unfounded allegations.

In this section of the Safeguarding Handbook, you will find information and guidance on:

- General information and consent forms
- Safety for organised activities
- Days out, off-site visits and activities
- Physical contact with children, young people and adults at risk & toileting children
- Working alone with a child/children or adults at risk
- Managing a private conversation with a child, young person or adult at risk
- Child/staff ratios
- Transporting children and protected adults
- Behaviour management - children's activities
- Bullying
- Home Visits
- General health and safety (first aid & fire)
- Photography and Social Media Guidance
- Summary of good practice for the prevention of abuse and protection of workers

General Information and Consent Form

An **SG11 General Information and Consent Form** must be completed for each child who participates in a Church activity or event and where BCFC becomes responsible for the child. The event or activity Leader is responsible for ensuring that forms are completed and stored safely and securely. Ideally the form shall be completed before the child attends the activity or event i.e. as part of a routine registration. However, there may be circumstances when this is not possible, e.g. when a regular attendee unexpectedly brings a friend along to a group meeting. In this circumstance, it is good practice to provide the child with a blank form for them to take home for completion prior to further attendance. Completed SG11s must be available during the activity or event and appropriate workers informed of any child's health or special needs.

Safety for organised activities

Leaders must maintain a record of everyone who attends a church activity or event (this does not include church services) along with the names of all workers on duty. All records are to be retained and destroyed in accordance with the relevant document retention policy.

It is not possible to eliminate all risks when working with children or adults and we cannot guarantee that a child, young person or adult will be 100% safe when participating in church activities since many activities carry with them an element of risk. However, we have a responsibility to do all we can to make sure people are safe and don't get 'hurt' in or on, our Church premises, when participating in church-led activities/ministries or community out-reach activities. The process of "conducting a risk assessment" helps ensure that we have paid proper attention to reducing any identifiable risks.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is consideration of, and a written record of, the different hazards that people might encounter whilst taking part in Church activities, or when using equipment or accessing a venue that is looked after or used by the Church. A risk assessment should identify ways that harm could occur to children and adults during any planned activities or events and what has been done, or will be done, to minimise identified risks. Each risk assessment should:

- Be known, and adhered to, by everyone helping to provide/run the event/activities.
- Be in writing and kept up to date, with an annual review (as a minimum); and
- Be realistic i.e. the things that are written down are sensible and attainable.

The following paragraphs include some ideas of identified risks and what safeguards should be considered or need to be in place. They are intended as a guide. They are by no means exhaustive, nor compulsory, but are intended to help in the process of thinking through the safety of children and adults. Many of the issues are simple common sense, which you may well have considered, but sometimes taking a step back can provide the opportunity to pick up on things that may previously have been missed.

Possible venue risks

Risk assessing a venue requires inspecting it thoroughly and working out where and how people could get hurt. Think about all the things that could cause problems, including for example:

Risk location	What Safeguards Need To Be In Place?
Entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the doorways secure, so that when activities for vulnerable people are taking place you know who is coming in and out of the building? <input type="checkbox"/> Can vulnerable people run out of the halls straight onto a busy road, and if so what measures have you put in place to prevent this? <input type="checkbox"/> If you have large numbers of young children regularly using your premises, have you considered a guard for the inside of the door so fingers don't get jammed? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the drive and entrance well-lit for people coming to activities in the evening?
Hallways & corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do these areas have suitable lighting? <input type="checkbox"/> Are fire exits clearly indicated? <input type="checkbox"/> Are fire extinguishers clearly marked, and preferably secured to the wall? <input type="checkbox"/> Are passageways clear of obstructions? <input type="checkbox"/> How transparent are your premises? When working with children and adults at risk it is helpful to be able to see them as much of the time as possible. Would glass panels in doors, or open doors help in this process?

Risk location	What Safeguards Need To Be In Place?
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/> Is there adequate lighting? <input type="checkbox"/> If you have lots of young children, have you considered investing in stools so they can reach the sink and toilet, or a changing mat for babies? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the water at a reasonable temperature , so as not to scald? <input type="checkbox"/> Are cleaning materials child proof and safely locked away?
Halls	<input type="checkbox"/> Are chairs and furniture stacked/stored safely? <input type="checkbox"/> Are plug sockets covered, particularly where children meet? <input type="checkbox"/> Are electric cables etc. out of harm's way, i.e. covered so they can't be tripped over and out of easy reach of children? <input type="checkbox"/> Are heaters safe i.e. is there a risk that young children or adults could be burned? <input type="checkbox"/> If games and sports are played in the halls, is any glass protected? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any outstanding repairs that could present a risk to children or adults? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the halls clean and well maintained , as far as possible?
Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the kitchen secured so that children cannot access it unattended? <input type="checkbox"/> Are cleaning materials locked out of reach of children? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it possible to ensure that vulnerable people are not in the area where hot food/drinks are served or brought out from the kitchen?
General	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the First Aid box clearly marked? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an accident book on the premises, preferably with the First Aid box? <input type="checkbox"/> Are all the cords of window blinds cut where they loop? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the floors slippery when wet or are there any trip hazards e.g. loose carpets? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a system for groups to report repairs needed, e.g. a repair book? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the Safeguarding Policy Statement clearly displayed? <input type="checkbox"/> Do the appropriate people know about our Church Safeguarding Complaints Procedure and who to make a complaint to? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a phone on the premises, and do all those working with children, young people and protected adults have access to it in an emergency? This could be a mobile phone. <input type="checkbox"/> Are the premises as accessible as possible for those with disabilities? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the heating adequate? <input type="checkbox"/> Any other physical hazards ?

Possible equipment risks

When risk assessing equipment, you need to think about how it should be used and how people could get hurt using it. For example:

Equipment	What Safeguards Need To Be In Place?
Lifting & handling	<input type="checkbox"/> Have relevant people received appropriate lifting and handling training e.g. for moving tables & chairs? <input type="checkbox"/> Do those who help set up for events know about using the trolley to move stacks of chairs.
General	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the equipment dangerous? <input type="checkbox"/> Is equipment stored safely and securely after each group meets? <input type="checkbox"/> Could someone be hurt carrying equipment around? <input type="checkbox"/> Is sport equipment regularly checked to ensure that it is safe? <input type="checkbox"/> Is electrical equipment checked and safe to use? <input type="checkbox"/> If paint and craft equipment is used, is it checked that it is non-toxic? This is usually only a concern if older materials are donated; most modern equipment is perfectly safe. <input type="checkbox"/> Is there any equipment that requires special training/competency to use or operate? <input type="checkbox"/> Are operating instructions available? <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting system to record damaged/broken equipment. <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate and adequate insurance in place e.g. Employers Liability Insurance?

Possible event/activity risks

A risk assessment for an event or activity needs to include both venue and equipment considerations as well as the **people** who will be attending. For example:

Possible risk factors	What Safeguards Need To Be In Place?
Safe recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/> Have the relevant workers been fully recruited? <input type="checkbox"/> Are they PVG Scheme members for the regulated workforce in which they will be working? <input type="checkbox"/> Have the workers attended safeguarding training ?
Working safely	<input type="checkbox"/> Are parents/carers informed about drop off and collection arrangements ? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you ask them not to leave their children/adult at risk until they are sure the leaders have arrived? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you monitor who enters and leaves the hall? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the workers competent to undertake their allocated roles e.g. relevant skills, knowledge & ability? <input type="checkbox"/> How will authorised workers be identified?
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Who is providing the transport ? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it a private arrangement or Church run? <input type="checkbox"/> Is insurance in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the driver/escort require to be a member of the PVG Scheme?
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Are workers to be reminded about the social media policy (e.g. photography, video, social networking, text and email) or informed of any special arrangements for particular children or adults?
Consent	<input type="checkbox"/> Have the relevant consent forms for the activity/outing been completed by a parent, guardian or appropriate person? <input type="checkbox"/> Has the video/photography consent form been completed by a parent, guardian or appropriate person? <input type="checkbox"/> Have any objections from a parent, guardian or appropriate person about the outing been noted? <input type="checkbox"/> Are emergency telephone numbers available to the Event Leaders? <input type="checkbox"/> Are dietary requirements noted? <input type="checkbox"/> Are any allergies noted? <input type="checkbox"/> Are any special requirements due to disability noted? <input type="checkbox"/> Are any medical requirements noted and the doctor contact number received?
Meeting the needs of children or adults affected by disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to premises addressed? <input type="checkbox"/> Is a carer required? <input type="checkbox"/> Is personal care (feeding, help with toileting, getting around etc.) required from workers? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you planned for the correct staffing ratios ?
Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Has the following insurance been put in place where applicable? Private, Business, Travel, Transport, Premises and Injury. <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to BCFC's insurance policy/company for information.
Risk of harm by: workers; or by one child to another child; or by one adult at risk to another adult at risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Planned for appropriate ratios of workers to children/adults at risk? <input type="checkbox"/> Planned for any special requirements of child/adult at risk to be adhered to? E.g. behaviour management needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers fully recruited and are PVG Scheme members? <input type="checkbox"/> Workers have attended Safeguarding training ? <input type="checkbox"/> Has the relevant Safeguarding Handbook section/Pocket Guide been read by workers staff?

Who should complete a risk assessment?

The Church's Designated Health & Safety Lead is responsible for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are completed for the Church building, grounds, facilities, equipment and associated work environments.

However, event/activity leaders must conduct a risk assessment for any planned event or activity involving children or adults by using the **SG18 Risk Assessment** forms. By undertaking a risk assessment for a planned activity (one-off, or a series over time), the organiser can assure themselves and others that potential risks to workers and participants have been identified along with any actions needed to avoid or reduce the potential for harm. The risk assessment for a regular repeating activity should be updated at least annually or more frequently if there are known changes to, for example, any new or amended regulations that apply to the venue or activity; new equipment in use; changes to the venue or type/age of participants etc. The risk assessment is an *essential* part of planning for, and providing, every church activity irrespective of whether it is held on the church premises or off-site.

As with other tasks we are faced with in everyday life, this can seem daunting at first. It is often difficult to know where to start, how best to go about assessing risk, or deciding when you have done enough. By following some simple steps and using the BCFC Risk Assessment templates you'll be guided through the process.

Copies of all completed Risk Assessment Forms and Safeguarding Risk Checklists should be securely stored for future reference in the Administration Office.

Days out, off-site visits and activities

In addition to undertaking a Safeguarding Risk Assessment, when organising days out or off-site visits and activities for children or protected adults, the organiser/leader must:

- ✓ Inform parents/carers of the arrangements, including details of any accommodation, activities, transport arrangements and cost. Parents/carers should also complete and return **SG12 Activities and Day Visits Consent Form** giving their permission, emergency contact numbers and relevant health information.
- ✓ Ensure provision of adequately trained and supervised staff appropriate for the outing and planned activities. Always check that venues/centres have staff or instructors present who are suitably trained and experienced in supervising children and that these staff will be present during the visit/activities. Consideration should also be given to overnight supervision when appropriate.
- ✓ For overnight stays:
 - Ensure that children or young people sleep in single sex accommodation.
 - Ensure that at least one responsible adult is within hearing distance, and that the children or young people know where they are, should they require assistance.

- We recommend that an adult does not sleep in the same room as the children. When visiting an organised camp or activity centre, you should check what the centre policy is on this issue.
- ✓ Ensure that you have adequate insurance cover for all planned activities. When visiting an outdoor activity centre, there are usually a wide and varied number of activities on offer. The centre will usually have trained instructors and insurance cover. When booking, it is worth checking this out. When the group is not visiting a specific centre, the standard Church insurance may not cover all planned activities, and this issue should be explored in advance.
- ✓ Take account of any medical or dietary needs of the children and young people and make appropriate arrangements. This can be done using the relevant Safeguarding Consent Form. It is best, wherever possible, for a first-aider to be present. Most centres will have registered first-aiders.

Physical contact with children, young people and adults at risk

Always avoid inappropriate physical contact. Inappropriate physical contact is that which is initiated on the part of the worker to meet his or her needs rather than the needs of the child, young person or adult at risk. The following general guidelines should be adopted at all times:

- ✓ Keep everything public. A hug may be initiated by the child, young person or adult at risk, and if appropriately responded to by the worker in the context of the group, is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- ✓ Any physical contact between a worker and a child or young person or adult should be a **considered action**, and for the purpose of instruction, immediate care, reassurance or exceptionally – comfort.
- ✓ Touch should be related to the child/adult's needs, not the workers. For very young children and those with certain types of additional support needs who may require a higher level of physical care, the level of physical contact involved should be limited to that necessary to provide such care.
- ✓ Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child or young person and not the workers. It may be to comfort and reassure and should be agreeable to both parties and should be sensitive and appropriate to the person's gender, age, ethnic and cultural background
- ✓ Refrain from any activity which is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the child or young person, adult **OR** to the worker.
- ✓ Children, young people and adults have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention or restraint for the safety of others or themselves.

- ✓ Team members should feel free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misconstrued as inappropriate touching.
- ✓ Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

Toileting

Workers must respect everyone's right to personal privacy. Everyone, including children and others with special needs, who are able to toilet themselves should be left to do so.

Working alone with a child/children or adults at risk

Unless a situation specifically requires it, workers should avoid being alone with a child or young person, or with a group of children or young people, or with a protected adult or group of protected adults, for any prolonged period of time. Doors to rooms should normally be left open if only one leader is present. If one to one counselling is being carried out, this should be planned and others should have knowledge that this is taking place and, if at all possible, another adult should be in the building and the child, young person or protected adult should know that they are there.

The primary reason for avoiding lone working, has to do with providing a creative learning environment and looking after everyone's health and welfare, rather more than it has to do with the risk of false allegation.

Working alone in a service user's home, for example, as a Pastoral Ministry Worker brings its own risks and these should be identified/addressed by carrying out a Safeguarding Risk Assessment prior to undertaking the visit.

Managing a private conversation with a child, young person or adult at risk

Like everyone, sometimes children, young people and adults at risk need to talk about things that are bothering them. When they do, they need someone to listen to them.

The person may have spent some time thinking about their problem and the person with whom they want to share it. If a child, young person or adult at risk asks to speak with you about something that you sense could be deeply personal, you should be sensitive to their needs. If you feel that they need a quiet place to talk, you should tell a fellow worker where you are going and why. You should ask that person to come and 'check on you' after about 10 minutes.

Remember – if a child, young person or adult at risk reports that he/she is at risk of harm you **MUST** report this immediately to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or activity leader. Always advise them about the limits to confidentiality. Make this clear during the initial stages of any communication with them.

Child/Staff ratios³

When working with groups of children or young people it's important that there are enough adults to provide the appropriate level of supervision and that these adults are suitable to undertake various tasks as needed.

Recommended child to staff ratios for general supervision of activities:

Supervision levels will vary depending on the children's age, gender, behaviour and the abilities within the group and also the:

- nature and duration of activities,
- competence and experience of staff involved,
- requirements of location, accommodation or organisation base,
- any special medical needs,
- specialist equipment needed.

The Scottish Government's "*National Care Standards: early education and childcare up to the age of 16*" includes the required adult to child ratios in non-domestic premises and states there must be at least 2 adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. The table below sets out adult to child ratios:

Age	Adult to Child Ratio*
Under 2 years	1:3
2 to 3 years	1:5
**3 and over	1:8
If all children are 8 or over	1:10

* Only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

** Where children aged 3 and over attend facilities providing day care for a session which is less than a continuous period of four hours in any day the adult:child ratio may be 1:10 providing individual children do not attend more than one session per day.

When thinking about adult to child ratios, consider the factors noted above together with the following questions:

- In the event of a child becoming ill or having an accident, are there enough workers to meet the needs of the child and, at the same time ensure the welfare of the remaining children or young people?
- Are there sufficient workers to meet the behavioural and emotional needs of all the children or young people in the group? For example: what would happen if a child with serious behavioural difficulties became a member of the group? How would the welfare and safety of the children and the workers be ensured?
- Is it reasonable to expect one worker to work creatively for a long period of time without additional support from other workers?

Whilst it may not always be possible to adhere to recommended ratios, every effort should be made to achieve the best level of supervision of children at all times.

³ (information from <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-cares-tandards-early-education-childcare-up-age-16/pages/5/>)

Transporting children

If a Church activity involves transportation, the organiser/leader should make very clear to all prospective participants/parents who is providing the transport, and specifically, whether it is a private arrangement or is being provided by the Church.

The organiser/leader should ensure they manage transport provision as safely as possible by considering the following questions:

- ✓ *Is it necessary / possible to provide transport, or might parents be able to make suitable arrangements instead?*
- ✓ *Are parents fully aware of the arrangements for transporting or collecting their children?*
If travelling in a car, aim for 1 adult driving and 1 adult supervising the children. Larger groups and vehicles will require more adults to ensure adequate supervision, the travelling ratios of adults to children will depend on, size of the group, age/needs of the children and their behaviours plus the size of the vehicle being travelled in. Be sure to inform parents that when an escort is not available for a driver, the child or children will sit in the rear of the car so that the parent can accept this, or make alternative arrangements.
- ✓ *Is there adequate and appropriate insurance in place?*
If paid employees are involved in regularly transporting children, they are required to declare this to their car insurance company. The situation is less clear when this is voluntary. It is usually the case that this activity is viewed by insurance companies as standard personal use of the car. However, there have been cases where insurance companies have advised people otherwise - workers should check this with their company. Obviously, when hiring a vehicle, it is imperative that drivers are adequately insured.
- ✓ *Has the transport been carefully planned?*
Publish the planned routes, pick up and drop off locations and times. Ensure that drivers/escorts are members of the PVG Scheme for children whenever transport is provided by the Church.
- ✓ *What's the contingency plan?*
For example, if a parent fails to collect a child or is not at home when the child is returned home, what will happen? Ensure that parental emergency contact details are available for each driver.

Transporting protected adults

Where appropriate, the above transport questions also apply to transporting protected adults.

Any worker providing transport for protected adults must be a member of the PVG Scheme for adults.

Behaviour management – Code of Practice for children’s activities

Behaviour can have a positive effect on those around the behaviour, which results in children and adults feeling safe, secure and able to learn. However, some behaviours can have the opposite effect on the individual and/or on those around them and result in children and adults feeling unsafe and unhappy. Negative behaviours include:

- Disruption to learning
- Unkindness to others
- Damage to property due to carelessness
- Rudeness to others
- Boisterous behaviour with potential danger to self
- Boisterous behaviour with potential danger to others

Behaviour is a choice of the individual and some children require more support than others in making better, or the best, choices for their behaviour. We shall:

- ✓ Endeavour to treat all children fairly and apply our behaviour standards in a consistent way.
- ✓ Encourage and praise good behaviour, and identify inappropriate *choices* of behaviour during Church led activities.
- ✓ Not shout at, intimidate, hit, push or slap children.
- ✓ Follow our agreed procedures for managing negative behaviour.
- ✓ Use ‘reasonable force’ to stop a child damaging property or from hurting themselves or others.
- ✓ Seek to build a supportive dialogue between parents and the Church which includes informing parents as early as possible if we have concerns about their child’s welfare or behaviour.
- ✓ Encourage parents to speak to the activity leader as soon as they have any concerns relating to their own child’s behaviour or the impact of another’s negative behaviour on their child.
- ✓ Listen to parents and concerns shared with all relevant workers within the Church.
- ✓ Keep the parents informed of our behaviour management practices, of any specific plans in place (without breaching confidentiality) and progress made whenever there have been problems.
- ✓ Report incidents of negative behaviour to the parents, including what happened, how it was managed and, if necessary, how any future situations will be managed.

Procedure for managing negative behaviour

STAGE 1 - LOW LEVEL NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Children who disrupt the activity, waste time, are rude, refuse to comply with simple instruction, etc. should be given a warning along with alternative behaviour choices.

STAGE 2 - LOW LEVEL NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR CONTINUES

Children who continue to demonstrate low level negative behaviour should be told that the behaviour is not acceptable. Alternative choices are to be given. If possible, 'time out' in another class/area is taken as long as there is suitable and appropriate adult supervision.

STAGE 3 - LOW LEVEL NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR CONTINUES – REPORT TO PARENT

Low level disruptive behaviour has continued so a sanction is now appropriate i.e. completion of an Incident Report Form (SG17) and reporting the behaviour/incident to the parent. Immediate action may be necessary to remove the child from the class/activity if the negative behaviour is disrupting other children's engagement or enjoyment. If this is the case, the activity leader/additional adult worker may be called for support.

CHILDREN WHO DELIBERATELY HARM OTHERS OR WILFULLY DAMAGE PROPERTY MOVE DIRECTLY TO STAGE 3

Some pro-active classroom/activity management tools

- ✓ **Plan an age-appropriate lesson/activity:** Target your audience with material that students can comprehend.
- ✓ **Incorporate multiple learning styles:** Teach to the visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic learners with multi-sensory materials.
- ✓ **Keep a routine:** Since children thrive on routine and order, follow one in your class. For example, start with prayer, an ice-breaker, your Bible lesson, a game, an art project, and close in prayer.
- ✓ **Ensure safety:** Some children will act out because they are afraid or otherwise troubled. Do whatever is necessary to create a safe place and communicate security to that child.
- ✓ **Vary the activities:** Consider the attention span of your audience. Keep things moving! If you have a sit down activity, make sure that the next one is an active one.
- ✓ **Make it fun:** Allow for games and laughter and much silliness!
- ✓ **Get their attention:** Practice getting children's attention creatively. Many teachers vary the lighting in the room, ring a bell, sing a song, clap their hands in a pattern (and have students repeat it), strike a silly pose, put on a crazy hat, etc.

- ✓ **Form relationships with the children in your ministry:** This is essential. Children need to know that you are cheering for them and on their team. Learn all that you can about them and encourage them accordingly.
- ✓ **Learn how to transition well:** Since you'll be varying activities, go from one to another seamlessly. Be organized and have your materials in order. Give clear and concise directions in terms of what you expect from your students.
- ✓ **Know your lesson:** Too many teachers lose their students by getting buried in their notes. Study your material thoroughly. Engage students with eye contact.
- ✓ **Don't do all the talking:** Allow the children to answer questions. Put them in pairs or teams to discuss the topic. Consider having others teach lessons: respected peers, parents, and other trusted adults.
- ✓ **Pray:** This goes without saying. Sit students in pews/rows, at their desks, or at tables. Pray for children and their families by name. Ask God to give you wisdom to communicate His truth.
- ✓ **Command authority:** Learn how to "own the classroom." Communicate this with body language, creativity, and tone of voice. Do not be timid or afraid. Allow your confidence to come from God. Your objective is not to invoke fear in children so that they listen and obey. Your intent is to get their attention through compassionate care.

Bullying

Bullying is a mixture of behaviours with subsequent impacts; what someone does and the impact that it has affects their ability to feel safe and in control of themselves. (<http://respectme.org.uk/bullying/>)

Both bullying and racism can take many forms from overt physical assault to subtler name-calling, gesturing and exclusion. It is often the latter that creates a sense of isolation and powerlessness and which frequently goes unreported. Bullying behaviour happens face to face and online and can include:

- Being called names, being teased or made fun of
- Being hit, pushed or kicked
- Having your belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out, or having rumours spread about you
- Being humiliated
- Receiving abusive messages or having nasty comments made about you online
- Being targeted because of who you are or how people see you

Adults can often find the distinction between these behaviours difficult to establish, but it's every adult's responsibility to ensure that children and young people live in, learn in and play in an environment where bullying behaviour does not take place. We need to recognise that children and young people are, by their very nature, open, giving and loving, emotional and difficult, non-compliant - just the same as everyone else - but we need to make sure that they can be all of these things as safely as possible.

Bullying and racism are types of abusive behaviour (verbal, emotional and discriminatory abuse) and must be reported. If you suspect or witness harm or abuse, or it is reported to you, you must immediately report it to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or group/activity leader.

Home visits

If a worker or leader needs to make a home visit they should take with them some formal identification issued by the Church. They should also:

- ✓ Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit.
- ✓ In the case of children, young people or protected adults, never go into a home if a parent or carer is NOT present, unless the person would be at risk of significant harm if you did not do so.
- ✓ Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
 - Purpose
 - Time you arrived and left
 - Who was present
 - What was discussed
- ✓ If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit so that it can be given to them.
- ✓ An invitation to a worker's home should only be extended with the knowledge of the team/leadership and the written permission of the parent/ carer.

General health and safety (first aid & fire)

All workers should be briefed and regularly updated on health and safety issues relevant to the activities/ministries, the location and the client group they are working with. However, as a minimum they should know:

- ✓ The name of the responsible person for ensuring that the physical environment is safe and secure for the relevant activity/ministry.
- ✓ The location of fire alarm points, fire exits, fire appliances and evacuation procedures including muster location, and how are they reached.
- ✓ The location of a telephone that works.
- ✓ Who the on-site trained first-aider is and the location of the first-aid box.
- ✓ How and when an incident should be recorded in the accident book.
- ✓ The name of the person responsible for informing the parent/carer of a child or protected adult who has been injured.
- ✓ If any of the children or protected adults have medical or intimate care needs and what they are.
- ✓ If there are any areas of the church which are out of bounds to children/protected adults or those places which require a higher level of supervision.

Please also refer to the Church's Health and Safety Handbook.

Photography and Social Media Guidance

Introduction

The phrase 'social media' refers to a wide and developing range of web-based and mobile telephone technologies and Internet-based applications that allow for the creation and sharing of user-generated content. The use of social media is open to different interpretations and perceptions of what is appropriate and what is not. It can involve the transmission of words, sounds, moving and still images, all of which have the potential to be harmful in a safeguarding sense, hence the importance of this guidance.

There are many types of Social Media, including:

- Email and messenger services.
- Facebook, Google + and other social networking sites, YouTube.
- Mobile 'phone text messaging.
- Twitter and weblogs (commonly known as 'blogs').
- Digital photography (cameras, video, camera phones).
- Flickr, Snapchat and similar photo sharing sites.
- Video communication – conferencing, chat, webinars etc. (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams)

The following information has been created to help you get the most out of photos or recordings captured at a Church event/activity for use by the Church and on social media. As photographs/recordings of individuals are regarded as personal data, it is important to familiarise yourself with this guidance so that responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations 2018 can be fulfilled and to ensure that people's wishes are respected.

Let people know

It's important to let anyone who is attending a Church event know if there will be any photography or recording taking place on the day. This includes informing event organisers, workers, attendees or participants.

You should also let people know *how* photos/videos/recordings will be used, and *if* they will be shared with others.

Here are some steps to follow to make sure everyone is informed.

1. If the event is being held on someone else's property, make sure you check that photography/recording is allowed on that site and any special requirements there may be.
2. Display a photo/filming/recording notice (printed at A4 size or larger) in a prominent place at the event, e.g. at the entrance or any other central point where people will clearly see it – the more notices you have up, the more visible they will be.
3. Include the photo/recording notice in any registration forms, programmes, or order of services that you give out – this can be printed within it, or included as a separate insert.

4. Ask any presenters or speakers who are convening the event to make an announcement to all participants at the start of your event regarding photos/recording by the Church and/or by others.
5. Ask people for their permission before you take their photo, film or record them and provide coloured stickers for anyone who does not wish to appear in photos or videos so that your photographer(s)/operator(s) know who to avoid. Depending on the type of photo, or recording you are taking, you may need to ask people to complete one of our consent forms. Additional guidance on how you need to gather consent can be found below.

Gathering consent

You will need to gather consent for any images of children, young people or adults where the individual(s) can be clearly recognised and identified. If you are taking photos of large groups of people, the best way to ensure that you have consent from everyone is to follow all of the steps outlined above for letting people know that photography and videos will be taking place and ensuring that only those who are happy for images of themselves to be shared, appear in your photos and videos. Note that, the SG11 'General Information and Consent' forms used to register a child for a church activity or event includes a request for such consent.

Taking photos/videos of children, young people and adults

Photography, and recordings include any recorded on mobile phones and other devices. The following good practice should be adopted, although it may need to be interpreted in slightly different ways depending on the situation.

1. Appoint/nominate someone to officially capture audio-visual media for the event/activity and ensure they are familiar with, and can implement, these guidelines.
2. The 'official' should always ask for permission from individual people before recording or taking any photos. Please take extra care if there are children under 18 or adults who are vulnerable in any way.
3. Ask the parent, guardian or carer of the person if they are happy for the individual to be photographed, or recorded – if they say no, don't take photographs or record even if the subject(s) seems willing to do it.
4. Ask the person if they are willing to have their photo taken, be filmed or recorded – if they say no, please respect their wishes (even if written consent has been given by, for example, a parent or carer).
5. Always explain beforehand how the photo/recordings will be used e.g. noticeboard in Church, or if it will be shared e.g. website or social media.
6. Since mobile phones can be used to take photographs, and recordings without a subject's permission, group leaders should discourage the use of mobile phones during Church activities.

7. During large events, make arrangements to provide, photographic stills or other recordings of the participants in action. This allows the event/performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows the child who is not to be photographed to take part.
8. Hold an open “photo shoot” at the end of the performance (sensitively distracting any children/adults at risk not to be photographed) to allow families to take their own private shots.
9. Special consideration should be given where taking photographs or video footage or other recordings might be misinterpreted, or could be seen as provocative (e.g. beach trip). It is not to say, however, that with the right planning, these events cannot be recorded and enjoyed.
10. The ‘official’ must not post photographs or recordings taken while carrying their Church related role on their personal social media site etc.
11. Responsibility for storage and destruction of photographic and recorded material should be taken by the Church Elders.
12. Check the SG11 ‘General Information & Consent Form’ that may have already been completed for a child, as this includes a request for parental consent for their child to be photographed/electronically recorded. If consent via an SG11 is not available for a child then use the Church’s **SG13a Photography and Recording Consent Form**. For an adult use the **SG13b Photography and Recording Consent Form**. **Ensure that an appropriate SG14 Photo/Recording Notice** is posted at the activity/event as necessary.

Using and storing photos/ electronic recordings

To help protect everyone’s privacy, please follow the guidelines below for how you use the images and recordings you’ve captured.

1. It’s a good idea to only use the photos/recordings you’ve captured in relation to the event itself. If you do wish to use them in any other context, you need to ensure that the original consent provides for this, otherwise you will need to go back to the subject(s) to ask their permission.
2. Use photos/recordings sensitively and try to take into consideration the individual’s dignity and privacy. A good way to check whether the photo/recording is appropriate is to ask yourself, ‘Would I mind that being made public if it was of me?’
3. Don’t post photos/recordings on any social networking site without the subject’s agreement.
4. Don’t share photo/recording files with anyone else without the permission of the subject(s).
5. Make sure the original files are stored in a secure location and not accessible to anyone who isn’t authorised to see them.

6. Don't include names or any other personal details without the subject's permission when publishing photos/recordings.
7. If someone changes their mind about letting you use a photo/recording, please respect their wishes. Make sure they're not used or made public, delete the original file and any social media posts that involve them. If you've already shared the photo/recording with anyone else, please make sure they also do the same.
8. If you do post any photos/recordings on social media, it's a good practice to share the relevant website links or Twitter handles with the subject(s).

Final thought...

Remember that materials posted on social media are in the public domain and have the potential to be seen and shared by many more people beyond those associated with the event or Banchory Christian Fellowship Church.

Confidentiality

Not all information is confidential and much is already in the public domain. Confidential information is usually information that is shared in the understanding that it will not be shared with others. But there are limits on confidentiality. Always be open about what information may be shared and when, with or without the consent of the person receiving the service. Never promise confidentiality i.e. “not to tell anyone else”.

What sort of information is confidential?

- Addresses, dates of birth, details of households.
- Information about previous convictions and court appearances.
- Parent or childhood history, personal and sexual relationships, drug use, etc.
- Sometimes, professional assessment or opinion.
- Information disclosed through the professional/client relationship e.g. counselling or providing support in the course of the normal working relationship.

When can confidential information be shared without the person’s permission?

In some circumstances, confidential information can be shared, for example with police or social work, without the individual’s consent. For example, if it is in the interests of the person concerned or there is risk of serious harm.

Under normal circumstances children, young people and adults all have as much right to confidentiality as anyone else, therefore:

- Normally, private information given in the course of conversation, counsel or written format will not be disclosed to outside agencies or individuals without the permission of the child, young person or adult.
- Normally, private information given in the course of conversation, counsel or written format will not be disclosed to carers or parents without the permission of the child, young person or adult.
- Normally, private information given in the course of conversation or counsel will not be shared with others within the Church.
- Normally, private information provided in writing, e.g. via the Church’s ‘General Information and Consent Form’ or ‘Photography/Video Consent Form’ will be held confidentially by the Church.
- Leaders should be careful never to promise complete confidentiality and will have to balance the vulnerability and safety of the child, young person, adult and or others, over and against the normal practice of keeping information confidential.

When a worker or leader finds themselves out of their depth in terms of the information they are receiving, it is important that they encourage the child, young person or adult to speak to someone with relevant experience offering to accompany them, or to speak to someone on their behalf if that would help them.

Information-sharing to safeguard children⁴

1. The wellbeing of a child is of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them.
2. Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them.
3. The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.
4. In general, information will normally only be shared with the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity). However, where there is a risk to a child's wellbeing, consent should not be sought and relevant information should be shared with other individuals or agencies as appropriate.
5. At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know.
6. When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent. Similarly, any decision *not* to share information and the rationale should also be recorded.
7. It is not necessary to seek consent when there is legislative requirement to share information; for example, when making a referral to the Children's Reporter, or the prevention and detection of crime.
8. There is an important distinction between making the child aware that information will/may be shared and seeking their consent for that sharing.

**If a child's wellbeing is considered to be at risk,
relevant information must always be shared.**

⁴ Source: National Guidance for child protection in Scotland 2014

Best practice guidance for sharing confidential information

1. Always aim to get the person's consent to sharing their information
2. Maintain a written record when information is shared including,
 - When it was shared,
 - With whom,
 - For what purpose,
 - In what form, and
 - Whether it was disclosed with or without consent.
3. Wherever possible inform the person that consideration is being given to breaking confidentiality. Let them know what information is to be shared and why. If the person is not forewarned about the sharing of their confidential information, inform them as soon as possible afterwards.
4. If a decision is made not share information this should also be recorded in writing.
5. Only share the relevant information i.e. not everything you know about the person but just that in relation to, for example, the particular safeguarding concern.
6. Share information immediately when harm is suspected or reported.
7. Restrict the disclosure of confidential information only to those people who need to know.
8. Never refuse a request to share information with another agency solely on the basis that all information held by the Church is confidential.

See also the Church's **Data Management Policy**

Summary of good practice for the prevention of abuse and protection of workers

- All workers should recognise that the responsibility for protecting children, young people and protected adults' rests with adults and not with the children, young people or protected adults and that all children, young people and protected adults should be treated with respect, care and dignity.
- Workers should respect a child's and adult's right to privacy.
- Workers should familiarise themselves, and comply, with all the Church's guidance for working safely with children and adults.
- Workers should familiarise themselves, and comply, with the Church's health and safety policy and relevant procedures.
- Workers who suspect that a child, young person or protected adult is becoming inappropriately attracted to them should share their concern with a group leader or, where appropriate, another colleague and should be particularly sensitive with regards that situation and their behaviour with and towards that child, young person or protected adult.
- Workers who are worried about their own feelings towards a child, young person or protected adult should discuss this with the group leader and/or the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

**Workers should support and encourage one another
in the carrying out of good working practice**

Communicating effectively

Effective communication helps develop positive and trusting relationships, build self-esteem and create an environment of acceptance where those being cared for feel able to share what may be troubling them.

Effective communication not only encourages people to speak out, but it helps to create and embed a positive and safer culture within our Church. The manner in which we communicate and with whom, can either give confidence to those who struggle to find their voice or it can have the opposite effect. Leaders and workers have a joint responsibility to set and maintain safer cultures – this often begins in the manner we communicate, demonstrating commitment, sensitivity, compassion and adopting appropriate boundaries around confidentiality.

What is Effective Communication?⁵

Communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. Effective communication is also a two-way street. It's not only how you convey a message so that it is received and understood by someone in exactly the way you intended, it's also how you listen to gain the full meaning of what's being said and to make the other person feel heard and understood.

More than just the words you use, effective communication combines a set of skills including nonverbal communication, engaged listening, managing stress in the moment, the ability to communicate assertively, and the capacity to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you're communicating with.

Effective communication helps deepen your connections to others and improve teamwork, decision making, and problem solving. It enables you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust.

Barriers to effective interpersonal communication

Stress and out-of-control emotion. **Take a moment** to calm down before continuing a conversation.

Lack of focus. **Don't multi-task communicating but** stay focused on the moment-to-moment experience.

⁵ Effective communication summarised from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/effective-communication.htm>

Authors: Lawrence Robinson, Jeanne Segal, Ph. D., and Melinda Smith, M.A. Last updated: December 2016

Inconsistent body language. Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said, not contradict it.

Negative body language. You don't have to agree, or even like what's being said, just avoid sending negative signals e.g. folding arms, shaking head.

Four key skills to improve communication

Skill 1: Become an engaged listener

Effective communication is less about talking and more about listening. Listening well means not just understanding the words or the information being communicated, but also understanding the emotions the speaker is trying to communicate.

By communicating in this way, you'll also experience a process that lowers stress and supports physical and emotional well-being. If the person you're talking to is calm, for example, listening in an engaged way will help to calm you, too. Similarly, if the person is agitated, you can help calm them by listening in an attentive way and making the person feel understood.

If your goal is to fully understand and connect with the other person, listening in an engaged way will often come naturally. If it doesn't, try the following tips. The more you practice them, the more satisfying and rewarding your interactions with others will become.

How do you become an engaged listener?

- ✓ **Focus fully on the speaker,** his or her body language, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues. Tone of voice conveys emotion, so if you're thinking about other things, checking text messages or doodling, you're almost certain to miss the nonverbal cues and the emotional content behind the words being spoken. And if the person talking is similarly distracted, you'll be able to quickly pick up on it. If you find it hard to concentrate on some speakers, try repeating their words over in your head—it'll reinforce their message and help you stay focused.
- ✓ **Favour your right ear.** The left side of the brain contains the primary processing centres for both speech comprehension and emotions. Since the left side of the brain is connected to the right side of the body, favouring your right ear can help you better detect the emotional nuances of what someone is saying. Try keeping your posture straight, your chin down, and tilting your right ear towards the speaker—this will make it easier to pick up on the higher frequencies of human speech that contain the emotional content of what's being said.
- ✓ **Avoid interrupting or trying to redirect the conversation to your concerns,** by saying something like, "If you think that's bad, let me tell you what happened to me." Listening is not the same as waiting for your turn to talk. You can't concentrate on what someone's saying if you're forming what you're going to say next. Often, the speaker can read your facial expressions and know that your mind's elsewhere.
- ✓ **Show your interest in what's being said.** Nod occasionally, smile at the person, and make sure your posture is open and inviting. Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like "yes" or "uh huh."
- ✓ **Try to set aside judgement.** In order to communicate effectively with someone, you don't have to like them or agree with their ideas, values, or opinions. However, you do need to set aside your judgment and withhold blame and criticism in order to fully understand a person. The most difficult communication, when successfully executed, can lead to the most unlikely and profound connection with someone.

How do you become an engaged listener?

- ✓ **Provide feedback.** If there seems to be a disconnection, reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is," or "sounds like you are saying," are good ways to reflect back. Don't simply repeat what the speaker has said verbatim, though—you'll sound insincere or unintelligent. Instead, express what the speaker's words mean to you. Ask questions to clarify certain points: "What do you mean when you say..." or "Is this what you mean?"

Skill 2: Pay attention to nonverbal signals

When we communicate things that we care about, we do so mainly using nonverbal signals. Nonverbal communication, or body language, includes facial expressions, body movement and gestures, eye contact, posture, the tone of your voice, and even your muscle tension and breathing. The way you look, listen, move, and react to another person tells them more about how you're feeling than words alone ever can.

Developing the ability to understand and use nonverbal communication can help you connect with others, express what you really mean, navigate challenging situations, and build a stronger, deeper connection between you.

Tips for improving how you read nonverbal communication

- ✓ **Be aware of individual differences.** People from different countries and cultures tend to use different nonverbal communication gestures, so it's important to take age, culture, religion, gender, and emotional state into account when reading body language signals. An American teen, a grieving widow, and an Asian businessman, for example, are likely to use nonverbal signals differently.
- ✓ **Look at nonverbal communication signals as a group.** Don't read too much into a single gesture or nonverbal cue. Consider all of the nonverbal signals you receive, from eye contact to tone of voice to body language. Anyone can slip up occasionally and let eye contact slip, for example, or briefly cross their arms without meaning to. Consider the signals as a whole to get a better "read" on a person.

Tips for improving how you deliver nonverbal communication

- ✓ **Use nonverbal signals that match up with your words.** Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said, not contradict it. If you say one thing, but your body language says something else, your listener will likely feel you're being dishonest. For example, you can't say "yes" while shaking your head no.
- ✓ **Adjust your nonverbal signals according to the context.** The tone of your voice, for example, should be different when you're addressing a child than when you're addressing a group of adults. Similarly, take into account the emotional state and cultural background of the person you're interacting with.
- ✓ **Use body language to convey positive feelings** even when you're not actually experiencing them. If you're nervous about a situation—a job interview, important presentation, or first date, for example—you can use positive body language to signal confidence, even though you're not feeling it. Instead of tentatively entering a room with your head down, eyes averted, and sliding into a chair, try standing tall with your shoulders back, smiling and maintaining eye contact, and delivering a firm handshake. It will make you feel more self-confident and help to put the other person at ease.

Skill 3: Keep stress in check

To communicate effectively, you need to be aware of and in control of your emotions. And that means learning how to manage stress. When you're stressed, you're more likely to misread other people, send confusing or off-putting nonverbal signals, and lapse into unhealthy knee-jerk patterns of behavior.

Staying calm under pressure

- ✓ **Use stalling tactics** to give yourself time to think. Have a question repeated, or ask for clarification of a statement before responding.
- ✓ **Pause to collect your thoughts.** Silence isn't necessarily a bad thing—pausing can make you seem more in control than rushing your response.
- ✓ **Make one point** and provide an example or supporting piece of information. If your response is too long or you waffle about a number of points, you risk losing the listener's interest. Follow one point with an example and then gauge the listener's reaction to tell if you should make a second point.
- ✓ **Deliver your words clearly.** In many cases, how you say something can be as important as what you say. Speak clearly, maintain an even tone, and make eye contact. Keep your body language relaxed and open.
- ✓ **Wrap up with a summary** and then stop. Summarize your response and then stop talking, even if it leaves a silence in the room. You don't have to fill the silence by continuing to talk.

When things start to get heated in the middle of a conversation, you need something quick and immediate to bring down the emotional intensity. By learning to quickly reduce stress in the moment, though, you can safely face any strong emotions you're experiencing, regulate your feelings, and behave appropriately. When you know how to maintain a relaxed, energized state of awareness—even when something upsetting happens—you can remain emotionally available and engaged.

Quick stress relief for effective communication

To deal with stress during communication:

- ✓ **Recognise when you're becoming stressed.** Your body will let you know if you're stressed as you communicate. Are your muscles or your stomach tight and/or sore? Are your hands clenched? Is your breath shallow? Are you "forgetting" to breathe?
- ✓ **Take a moment to calm down** before deciding to continue a conversation or postpone it.
- ✓ **Bring your senses to the rescue** and quickly manage stress by taking a few deep breaths, clenching and relaxing muscles, or recalling a soothing, sensory-rich image, for example. The best way to rapidly and reliably relieve stress is through the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. But each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing to you.
- ✓ **Look for humour in the situation.** When used appropriately, humour is a great way to relieve stress when communicating. When you or those around you start taking things too seriously, find a way to lighten the mood by sharing a joke or amusing story.

Quick stress relief for effective communication

- ✓ **Be willing to compromise.** Sometimes, if you can both bend a little, you'll be able to find a happy middle ground that reduces the stress levels for everyone concerned. If you realize that the other person cares much more about something than you do, compromise may be easier for you and a good investment in the future of the relationship.
- ✓ **Agree to disagree,** if necessary, and take time away from the situation so everyone can calm down. Take a quick break and move away from the situation. Go for a stroll outside if possible, or spend a few minutes meditating. Physical movement or finding a quiet place to regain your balance can quickly reduce stress.

Skill 4: Assert yourself

Direct, assertive expression makes for clear communication and can help boost self-esteem and decision-making. Being assertive means expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs in an open and honest way, while standing up for yourself and respecting others. It does NOT mean being hostile, aggressive, or demanding. Effective communication is always about understanding the other person, not about winning an argument or forcing your opinions on others.

To improve assertiveness:

- ✓ **Value yourself and your options.** They are as important as anyone else's.
- ✓ **Know your needs and wants.** Learn to express them without infringing on the rights of others
- ✓ **Express negative thoughts** in a positive way. It's OK to be angry, but you must be respectful as well.
- ✓ **Receive feedback positively.** Accept compliments graciously, learn from your mistakes, and ask for help when needed.
- ✓ **Learn to say "no."** Know your limits and don't let others take advantage of you. Look for alternatives so everyone feels good about the outcome.

Communicating with Children from birth to adolescence

Our communication needs and ability changes over time and especially so for children as they grow and develop. The following tables⁶ summarise a child's main developmental characteristics and the implications for communication across three broad age ranges:

- Birth through to 6 years old.
- 7 through to 10 years old.
- 11 through to 14 years old.

⁶ B Kolucki and D Lemish, "Communicating with Children", November 2011, UNICEF



Main Developmental Characteristics

Early Years (Birth through 6 years)

Cognitive	Behavioural/Physical	Social/Emotional	Communication Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early experience of everything: shapes, colours, people, animals, sounds, rhythms, places • Developing language • Developing awareness and sensitivity to differences in gender, race, disability and early formation of social attitudes • Difficulty in distinguishing fantasy from reality and difficulty in understanding causality (that one thing/action leads to another) • Concentrating on the concrete aspects of reality (what I can see, hear and touch) • Difficulty in understanding codes and conventions of television (like close-up, rerun, flashback, thought bubbles) • Growing awareness of gender and other "differences" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning by doing and playing • Learning through repetition and routine • Developing motor skills – from crawling to walking, running, exploring the environment and becoming accident-prone • Developing fine motor skills in fingers that facilitate independence and learning (e.g., cutting, colouring, tying, washing) • Learning to express and control emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing new and often-times frightening emotions • Developing from total dependency on others to separation and autonomy • Evolving awareness of their own and others' emotions • Growing in understanding that others think and feel differently • Playing with others, learning to resolve very simple conflicts and to cooperate • Showing signs of empathy, pro-social and helping behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know they are loved and safe • To develop positive feelings about themselves and others • To know that the range of emotions and fears they have are normal • To feel good about new learning and experiences • To develop resilience by learning to "bounce back" and to seek help



Main Developmental Characteristics

Early Years (Birth through 6 years)

Implications for Communication

- Use loving tones and simple language
- Model a spirit of inquiry and desire to learn
- Model safe exploration, curiosity and confidence in new-found skills
- Adapt to the child's growing attention span
- Be playful and portray learning through play
- Use lots of repetition, rhythm and song
- Keep a varied, but not too fast, pace
- Use everyday experiences; stories of other children, families, animals and typical daily activities and routines
- Use "pretend", open-ended and imaginative play
- Present and reinforce daily healthy self-care habits
- Present children, similar and different than themselves, playing and working together as equals
- Present loving and caring adults and secure relationships
- Encourage activities: singing, clapping, dancing, movement
- Involve "question and answer" interactions and encourage talk
- Present progressive and non-stereotypical gender language and portrayals of both children and adults
- Show simple examples of children, with the help of loving adults, expressing a wide range of emotions, mastering their fears and dealing with difficult issues in healthy ways
- Include examples of confident and resilient children who are fair and who stand up for themselves and for others
- Present children making simple choices and expressing their creative opinions



Main Developmental Characteristics

Middle Years (7 through 10 years)

Cognitive	Behavioural/Physical	Social/Emotional	Communication Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better distinguishing between fantasy and reality • Understanding inner motivation of characters • Understanding causality (that "one thing leads to another") • Using more sophisticated language • Developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills • Developing the ability to understand television and other media codes and conventions (use of camera shots and editing, sound and music cues, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually becoming more independent in taking care of daily needs such as personal hygiene, feeding, taking care of possessions • Learning to follow rules of play and interactions • More interested in taking part in drama and playing sports • More concerned about body image and appearance • Taking more responsibility for their own actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends gradually taking a more central role in their lives • Continuing to need supportive adults and positive role models • Clearly preferring same-sex friends • Learning about right and wrong and making moral choices • Developing exclusionary and stereotyping behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To nurture positive feelings about themselves, others and the larger world • To explore and test their own ideas, skills and talents • To be guided in using their potential in positive ways • To have their feelings and worries understood and respected

Implications for Communication

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present longer and more dramatic stories • Offer child-centred stories and characters • Portray learning and school achievement as an opportunity to develop new, interesting skills and talents • Use strategies such as visual and auditory humour and cognitive challenges (e.g., brain teasers, riddles, tongue twisters, etc.) • Include interactive problem-solving and critical thinking • Model pro-social actions such as kindness, conflict resolution and caring about others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer strong, positive adult and child role models with high moral standards • Introduce sensitive topics that show other children dealing with social justice or difficult issues like death, anger, abuse, disability, etc., in creative and healthy ways • Show children making a difference in their own and other's lives, even in difficult circumstances (realistic heroines and heroes) • Present stories about friendship, loyalty and "doing the right thing" |
|---|--|



Main Developmental Characteristics

Early Adolescent Years (11 through 14 years)

Cognitive	Behavioural/Physical	Social/Emotional	Communication Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of adult-like abstract and logical thought • Emerging concern for, and exploration of, options regarding future plans • Literacy levels might not be consistent with chronological age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing independence and breaking away from adult authority (depending on culture) • Interested in mastering physical challenges • Experimenting with new behaviours, including risky ones • Experimenting with identity behaviours related to gender, race, religion, class, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often influenced by peer culture • Holding strong beliefs and principles on moral dilemmas • Exhibiting rebellious behaviours against authorities • Developing romantic and sexual relationships (depending on culture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be informed and guided into adult life, including about behaviours that put them at risk and about responsible sexual behaviours • To have strong, positive role models with high moral standards • To have recognition and respect of their opinions and ideas • To be allowed to learn from mistakes and correct self-destructive behaviours

Implications for Communication

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present positive peer-group behaviours and other adolescents who are resilient and positive • Present divergent points of view, opinions and perspectives • While presenting growing independence, continue to portray positive parent-child relationships/nurturing adult-child relationships • Portray characters with high self-esteem, especially for girls, children from disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portray gender-progressive roles in adolescents and adults • Talk about issues of concern to their particular age group (substance abuse, unprotected sex, violence, romantic relationships, bullying and discrimination, friendships) • Talk respectfully and not didactically: Do not “talk down” • Present high-interest, low-literacy alternatives • Present challenging stories with creative ideas, difficulties and solutions • Use a lot of humour and creativity |
|--|--|

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

The congregation, leaders and workers all play a vital role in safeguarding within our Church.

Our Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the key person within Banchory Christian Fellowship Church, and is the person to whom witnessed, suspected or any received account of harm or abuse is reported. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is supported in their role by the Elders.

Safeguarding is about prevention of harm to people. To do this, we need to be able to:

- Be mindful of who might be an abuser;
- Know about the different categories of abuse;
- Recognise possible signs and symptoms of harm;
- Report the harm;
- Record details of the harm; and
- Refer the harm on for social services or police led investigation.

Who might be an abuser?

An abuser could be anyone.

- An abuser can come from any background.
- There is no certain way of identifying a 'would be' abuser.
- For a child, the abuser is most often known to them.
- It could be an adult who holds a position of authority over the child/adult
- It could be family or friends or someone the person works with.
- It could be a stranger or a paid carer.
- Many abusers have been abused themselves.

Sometimes **abuse** could happen because of poor training or because the person does not know how to care for someone properly. This is still abuse.

Abusers are themselves people in desperate need and who often require help. The Church may have a significant pastoral role in the care of an abuser and those close to them. The primary concern, however, must always be for safeguarding the child/adult.

Categories of abuse

Both children and adults can experience a number of different kinds of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Grooming

In addition, adults can also experience abuse that is:

- Financial/material
- Institutional/organised
- Discriminatory
- Domestic
- Self-neglect
- Modern Slavery

Physical abuse – children and adults at risk

Physical abuse is actual or attempted physical harm inflicted non-accidentally. Physical harm may also be caused by feigning the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health; by misuse of medication or drugs (including depriving someone of prescribed or non-prescribed drugs, or giving the person dangerously large amounts of drugs and/or alcohol); by being denied food or water and inappropriate restraint or sanctions.

Emotional abuse – children and adults at risk

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment. It may involve conveying to the child or adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include threatening to hurt or abandon, preventing normal social interactions, isolation, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing. It also includes verbal abuse and cyber bullying, or an unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

For children emotional abuse may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Grooming – children and adults at risk

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child, young person or adult so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Sexual abuse - children

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and sexual acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse - adults at risk

This includes indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, as well as rape. Sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

Neglect - children and adults at risk

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, hygiene and clothing, to protect a child/adult from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment (including during pregnancy). It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, basic emotional needs. In Scotland neglect specifically includes a child's 'non-organic failure to thrive'. This is when the child does not meet the usual weight and growth expectations or developmental milestones.

Financial/Material abuse – adults at risk

This may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Internet scams and doorstep crime are also common forms of financial abuse.

Institutional/Organised Abuse – adults at risk

Instances of poor care or unsatisfactory professional practice which can be one-off events or repeated. Spiritual abuse takes place when religious or spiritual leaders use their positions of authority to manipulate, control or dominate someone.

Discriminatory abuse – adults at risk

This includes some forms of harassment, slurs or similar unfair treatment relating to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

Domestic abuse – adults at risk

This is typically an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member. Whilst domestic abuse is harm between adults it will usually impact upon children within the family. Domestic abuse includes physical, sexual, psychological, financial or emotional abuse.

Self-neglect - adults at risk

Self-neglect describes a vulnerable adult that puts their own health, safety and wellbeing at risk. This could be through not eating well or sufficiently, living in dangerous conditions or not seeking the medical support they need.

Modern slavery – adults at risk

Today slavery refers to someone being exploited and completely controlled by someone else, without being able to leave. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. This can include sexual and criminal exploitation.

Recognising abuse - possible signs and symptoms of abuse

Someone who's being abused may feel guilty, ashamed or confused. He or she may be afraid to tell anyone about the abuse, especially if the abuser is a parent, other relative or family friend. In fact, the person may have an apparent fear of others, including parents, adult caregivers or family friends. That's why it's vital to watch for red flags, such as:

- Becoming quiet and withdrawn from friends or usual activities, perhaps tearful
- Changes in behavior — such as aggression, anger, hostility, obsession or hyperactivity
- Not wanting to be left on their own or with particular people
- Rebellious or defiant behavior
- Attempts at self-harm or suicide
- Physical signs of abuse and neglect
- Depression, anxiety or unusual fears or a sudden loss of self-confidence
- Sleep problems and eating disorders or changes in eating habits
- Frequent absences from school/usual activities
- Reluctance to leave school/other activities, as if he or she doesn't want to go home

The following lists record *some* of the signs and symptoms of abuse which may be experienced by a child or by an adult at risk. The lists are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from person to person. Specific signs and symptoms depend on the type of abuse and can vary. Keep in mind that warning signs are just that — warning signs. The presence of warning signs doesn't necessarily mean that a person is being abused.

Physical abuse - possible indicators

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them or which have not received medical attention
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to thrive, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, unsuitable home environment, no heating, left alone for long periods of time, smelly, dirty, unwashed/inadequate clothing etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in for example, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained aches and pains.
- Cuts, scratches, bruises, bite marks, burns, fractures, scarring which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Substance abuse.

Sexual abuse - possible indicators

- Any allegation concerning sexual abuse.
- A child who is sexually active or has excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.
- A child who engages in sexual activity through words, play or drawing, or who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia or bulimia etc.
- Evidence of inappropriate sexual activity e.g. torn or stained underclothing, pregnancy.

Emotional abuse – possible indicators

- Changes, or regression, in mood or behaviour, becomes withdrawn or clingy.
- Depression/aggression, extreme anxiety, nervousness or frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour, running away, stealing or lying, persistent tiredness.

Neglect – possible indicators

- Poor presentation.
- Hunger, malnourished, dehydrated.
- Weight loss or gain.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Absence of appropriate medical or dental care.

Grooming – possible indicators

- Being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online.
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain or alternatively 'losing' their money.
- Underage drinking or drug taking.
- Spending more or less time online or on their devices than usual and not sharing what sites have been visited or who they're talking to.
- Being upset, withdrawn or distressed or alternatively more volatile.
- Sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age.
- Spending more time away from home, from family or friends or going missing for periods of time.
- Talking about a new "friend", "boyfriend" or "girlfriend", and it's not clear who they are or how they met them.

Financial/Material abuse – possible indicators (adults only)

- Withdrawal of large sums of money which cannot be explained.
- Personal possessions go missing from home.
- Extraordinary interest and involvement by others in an individual's assets.

Institutional/Organised abuse – possible indicators (adults only)

- Hungry or dehydrated.
- Lack personal clothing and belongings.
- Few visitors, social, recreational or educational activities.
- Fearful of those caring for them.

Discriminatory abuse – possible indicators (adults only)

- Withdrawn fearful or anxious.
- Excluded from access to services.
- Loss of self-esteem or self-worth and feeling inadequate.

Reporting harm

It is the duty of every person working with children and adults at risk to share in the prevention of abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. So, when harm or abuse is suspected, witnessed or disclosed to you, it is your role to listen, to gather the basic facts, and to decide what to do next.

If serious harm or sexual abuse has happened, a crime has occurred or the person is in immediate physical danger you must immediately contact the police, social work or ambulance service.

If you are not sure if it is harm or abuse, ask yourself:

1. Does it look right?
2. Does it sound right?
3. Does it feel right?

If the answer to these questions is “**no**” and/or your gut instinct is that “**it is not right**” immediately tell the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

It is not your role to investigate but to ascertain the basic facts. The following is a guide to help you ascertain the basic facts.

Make enquiries using open questions

- Use the ‘Little TED’ questions with TED representing questions such as: **T**ell me about...; **E**xplain to me...; **D**escribe to me ...
- Use the **5WH** questions: **who**; **what**; **when**; **where**; and **which**. For example, in response to disclosure of alleged harm “*Can you tell me what happened?*”, “*Who was there?*”, “*When did that happen?*”, “*Where did that happen?*”
- Do **not** ask ‘why’ questions.
- If the person being ‘interviewed’ uses an unusual word or a slang word, then that word should be recorded i.e. **record the persons own words** – do not paraphrase them.

How to react and listen if abuse or harm is disclosed directly to you

1. **Look at and listen** to the child or adult at risk. Take what they say seriously.
2. **Accept** what you are being told (however unlikely the story may sound).
3. **Reassure** the person – tell them they have done the right thing by telling you.
4. **Remain calm** no matter how difficult it is and listen to what a child or adult at risk is saying. You have been chosen because the person feels they can talk to you.
5. **Be honest.** Tell the child or adult at risk that you cannot keep it secret and that you have to talk to someone else who knows what to do. Don't make false promises.
6. **Only ask open questions** to establish the basic facts.
7. **Do not investigate** – that is the role of social work or the police.
8. **Tell** the person what you are going to do next. Always finish on a positive note.
9. **Write down** everything the child or adult at risk has told you on a **Safeguarding Incident Form (SG17)**, in their own words, as soon as possible *after* you have spoken with them. This is called **recording**. Completed Incident Forms should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked 'confidential' and handed directly to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. This must be done within two working days.
10. **Report** what you have heard or seen to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who will decide upon the appropriate course of action. Excepting, where serious harm or sexual abuse has happened, a crime has occurred or the person is in immediate physical danger then you must immediately contact the police, social work or ambulance service, and report subsequently to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
11. Keep what you have heard or seen **confidential** between yourself, the person and our Safeguarding Co-ordinator to whom the concerns are reported.

Helpful things you may say or show:

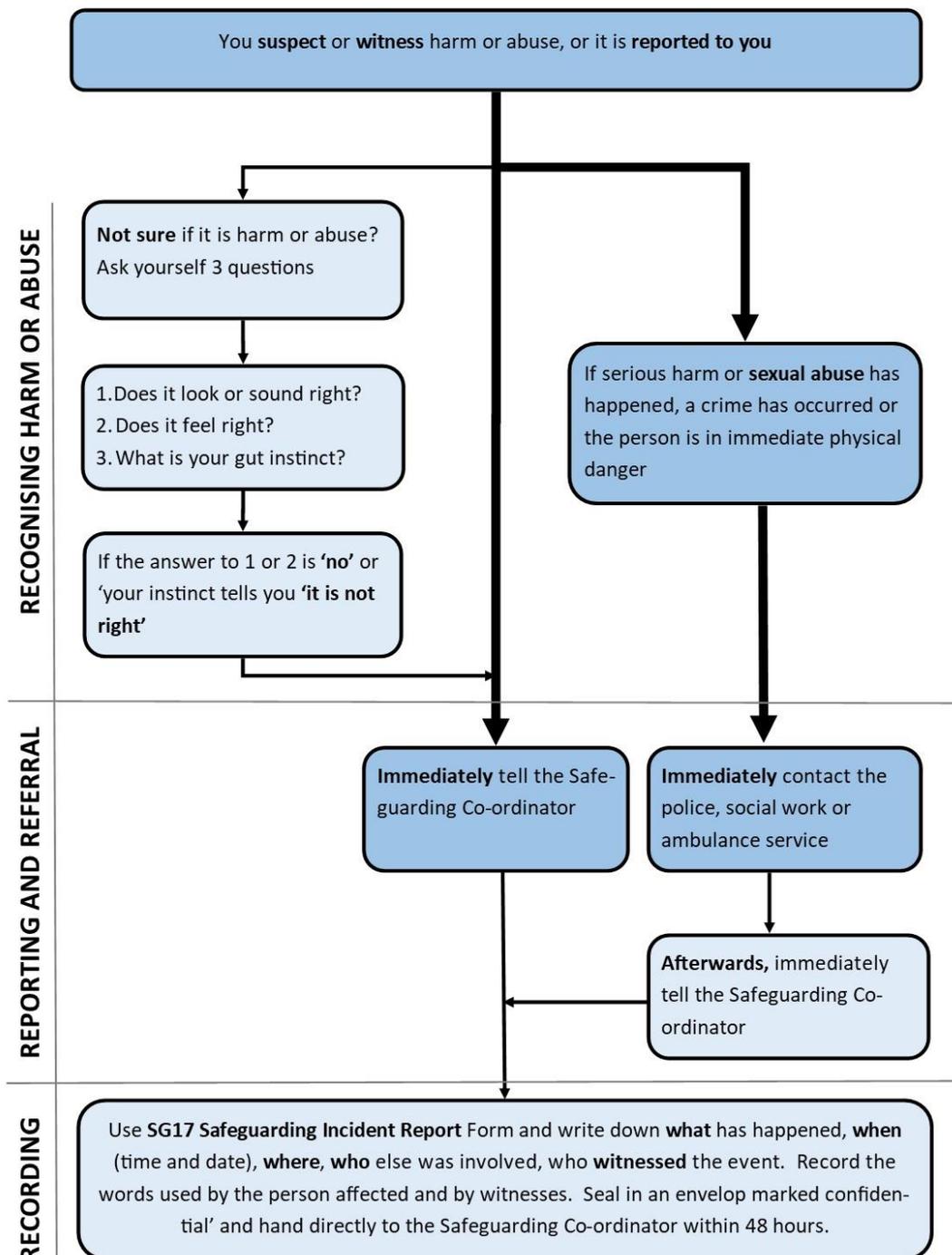
- ✓ I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says).
- ✓ Thank you for telling me.
- ✓ It's not your fault.
- ✓ I will help you.

You should **NOT** say or do:

- ✘ Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- ✘ I can't believe it.
- ✘ Are you sure this is true.
- ✘ Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- ✘ Never press for information.
- ✘ Never make false promises.
- ✘ Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

Recognising and reporting abuse – a one-page summary

What to do immediately if you suspect or witness harm or abuse, or it is reported to you.
For all paid staff and workers in contact with **children** or **'adults at risk'**.



Sharing relevant information

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting adults and children with the overriding concern always being the safety of the child or adult at risk. Concerns about a person's safety will always take precedence over the "public interest" in maintaining confidentiality. It should be borne in mind that a fairly minor wellbeing concern raised by one agency may, when combined with information from other agencies, point to much more serious concerns.

Whilst you will ideally ask for, and receive, consent from the adult who is at risk, or the parent/carers of a child to share their information with other people, you may occasionally need to take action and proceed to share the information without consent. Under present Data Protection law, it is perfectly acceptable and lawful to share information where there is an indication that a person's wellbeing is at risk.

If you are ever in doubt, then share the information with social work or the police. It is better to be criticised for sharing information in good faith (and for good reasons) than for not sharing the information at all.

Note

The decision whether or not to share information with the child's parents or any carers for the adult at risk will be influenced by:

- Whether the parent/carer has been identified as the abuser.
- The child/adult's age, level of understanding and expressed wishes.
- The ability of the child/adult to give or withhold informed consent and to share the information.
- Who else knows about the situation.

Referring the harm on for social services or police led investigation

Once notified of a safeguarding incident, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should:

- Ascertain the basic facts of the incident and how the situation has been handled.
- Assess the situation and consult with independent and experienced people/agencies as required.
- Consult as and where appropriate with Church Leadership and arrange pastoral support as required for those involved.
- Decide on the course of action to be taken, including the decision as to whether or not to formally refer reported incidents to social services and/or the police.
- Undertake such referrals of reported incidents of harm to the social services or police as appropriate. Only in cases where serious harm or sexual abuse has happened, a crime has occurred or the person is in immediate physical danger, shall someone other than the Safeguarding Co-ordinator contact the police, social work or ambulance service.
- Record their actions along with discussions and decisions relevant to the reported safeguarding incident, including the referral of any issues that require further consideration, as a result of the incident, to the Church Leadership.

Independent (i.e. out-with the Church community) evaluation on the incident will always be sought by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Such consultation and advice given should be noted by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who should be prepared to defend the resulting action if ever called upon.

Safeguarding children and adults will be considered paramount in any decision taken.

Recording details of the harm

Use **SG17 Safeguarding Incident Form** to record harm or abuse that is suspected, witnessed or disclosed to you. The following is best practice advice for recording information which is a critical part in detecting and investigating harm.

All records must:

- Be completed the same day, or within 24 hours.
- Be written legibly or typed. If typed, then keep any handwritten notes since these may be used as evidence in serious cases.
- Dated (day, month and year) and signed along with your printed name.
- Include a detailed description of the incident – who, what, where, when, how, names of witnesses, who reported the incident and what was said. Record the exact words the person said.
- Use headings to avoid lengthy essay-style writing.
- Record only facts not opinions.
- Record the views and wishes of the child's or adult at risk.
- Record who you spoke to or consulted with, when and what decisions were made by whom, and the reasons for those decisions.

Blank copies of SG17 Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form should be held by event leaders and are also available from the Administration Office.

Pastoral Care

The effects of abuse can be devastating, irrespective of when it occurred, not only for the person involved but also for their family and friends, their social, community and faith groups.

At Banchory Christian Fellowship Church we provide pastoral care through:

- ✓ listening
- ✓ comforting
- ✓ encouraging
- ✓ practically helping
- ✓ praying

Pastoral care might involve:

- sustaining others through prolonged difficulty or immediate need;
- enabling the journey of healing and wholeness;
- considering the process of reconciliation with God, self and others;
- offering guidance about other resources and enabling different perspectives;
- celebrating life with one another.

If you, or someone you know, would like to talk to someone or find out more about how we can help, please contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, whose details are at the front of this Safeguarding Handbook.

Managing those who pose a risk

Violent and sexual offenders, whether convicted or their crimes or not, pose a real risk to others. They can, and do, live in communities just like ours. They may wish to become actively involved in our Church because they genuinely want to change, or perhaps to gain access to children and adults at risk. It is important to recognise that the majority of those who sexually offend are not detected so it is essential that good safeguarding practices are in place to protect all who attend our Church.

It is our responsibility to do all we can to support such individuals whilst also protecting children and adults at risk. The following guidance sets out how we will fulfil our obligations to ensure that everyone who attends church can do so safely.

Including those who pose a risk

Someone with an offending history, or who is believed to be at risk of causing sexual harm to others may wish to worship at BCFC. Whilst protection of the vulnerable must remain our priority it has to be recognised that the offender is very possibly a much damaged individual also in need of God's care.

It is imperative that the Church does not allow sex offenders free access to the vulnerable. Not only is such a policy necessary for safeguarding others but it may also help to protect an offender from the temptation to abuse again. Offenders can be at risk of malicious allegations and the risk to them may increase if their circumstances become known. Where a person is known to have sexually harmed a child or any other person, the best guidance is that he/she is welcomed into the Church but within an agreed framework which has been discussed and agreed by a small group of people, convened specifically for the purpose. The group should consist of a minimum of three people i.e. the Pastor and/or Assistant Pastor and one or two Elders plus the offender. The group will seek advice and support from the offender's allocated social worker (where applicable) or social services and the Police to inform the framework agreement. The framework will take into account:

- Our priority to safeguard children and adults in our Church.
- Zero tolerance: no type or level of abuse will ever be acceptable or justifiable.
- 'Duty to protect' people including: workers, leaders and our congregation as well as a 'duty to care' for everyone in our Church.
- Communication: enabling all those involved in the life of the Church to tell a responsible person when they have concerns that someone may pose a risk.
- Confidential information sharing: the duty to protect takes precedence over an individual's right to confidentiality whenever a risk is identified.
- Decision making: the responsibility for making decisions is a joint one and not the responsibility of any single person.

It is important that the Church's response to sex offenders is proportionate. Clearly, certain key individuals will need to be aware of the person's offence in order to ensure that children or others deemed to be at risk in the Church remain safe. However, conviction information is highly confidential and so advice should be sought as to what can be divulged and to whom.

Recruiting someone with convictions

Unless barred from working with children or adults, people with past convictions should not automatically be excluded from paid or unpaid work within our Church. The "Safer Recruitment" section of the Safeguarding Handbook sets out how we will conduct recruitment of workers, both paid and unpaid, to support regulated work of the Church and its ministries. All posts that require an enhanced disclosure will be advertised as such.

The rules around what applicants need to disclose are complex making it difficult to know what should and should not be disclosed. For this reason, we do not ask applicants going through the recruitment process to self-disclose. Instead, the final recruitment decision will be based on the information contained in the PVG disclosure i.e. any paid and unpaid job offers must always be made 'subject to a satisfactory disclosure'.

For convicted offenders we will consider different elements of the conviction(s) and what impact this has on our risk assessment of the worker in the vacant role. We will take into account the following factors when making decisions about a worker's criminal history.

- Is the conviction relevant to the position being offered?
- How serious was the offence?
- How long is it since the offence took place?
- Is there a pattern of continuing behaviour?
- Have the personal circumstances changed since the time of the offending behaviour?
- How has the person become rehabilitated?
- Is the person barred from the type of regulated work we need them to do?

If we determine that the disclosed information is relevant to the role, we will withdraw the role offer. For those already in post, this may result in disciplinary action and could ultimately result in dismissal. The reason(s) for our decision will be fully explained.

Once in post, all workers are required to tell us about any new convictions which they gain. Details of any new convictions should be provided to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for risk assessment of the worker's suitability to continue in their role(s).

If someone does have convictions, we will consider what the risk might be and how it can be managed, for example by adapting roles to reduce levels of risk or by providing additional levels of supervision. Other workers may, in some cases, need to be made aware of any health and safety or personal security issues when working with a particular worker or type of offender.

Working in Partnership

When working collaboratively with other organisations or agencies, BCFC will ensure that Safeguarding standards are incorporated into any formal partnership agreement and that these will be no less rigorous than our own.

Safeguarding Handbook

Forms & Annexes

