# Linton Free Church
# Safeguarding Policy

## Safeguarding is taken seriously by Linton Free Church

## Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

## Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and applies to:

- All those who attend our church
- Our trustees and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- Organisations who hire our building with the agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent URC good practice guidance. Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy and our procedures.

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

## Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether adults or children. We will maintain confidentiality at all times, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm.

## Preventing abuse

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults. A job description is attached as Appendix 2.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used (for children's activities), appropriate records will be kept and adequate insurance will be in place.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers and will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include:

- Asking new* applicants to complete an application form.
- Providing workers with job descriptions and person specifications.
- Completion of self declaration forms.
- Obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks wherever legally entitled to do so.
- Taking up two references for anybody new* (not from family members). This should include the applicant's previous church if they attended one or any children's group they have previously/currently volunteer at.
- Interviewing new candidates.

Compulsory safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers, attached as Appendix 3) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working with us.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

Organisations wishing to hire our building for activities with children or adults must confirm in writing that they will follow the principles of this safeguarding policy as a condition of the letting agreement. If they have their own safeguarding policy, they will be asked to provide a copy. If they do not have their own safeguarding policy, they must either adopt one before agreeing to the hire, or agree that they can follow the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

# What are we protecting people from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults. A copy of the definitions relating to children is attached to this policy at Appendix 4. The definitions of abuse in relation to adults is attached as Appendix 5.

# How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Please see Appendix 6 for those relating to children and Appendix 7 for those relating to adults at risk.

Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories of abuse. It is essential to note that these are **only indicators of possible abuse**. There may be other, innocent, reasons for these signs and/or behaviour. They will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

# What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- Stays calm and listens carefully
- Reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- Informs the church Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, informs the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- Makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (using the template in Appendix 8). This should be given to the church safeguarding Coordinator and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet at church.

# Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay. Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm, the following will occur:

- The concern should be discussed with the church Safeguarding Coordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to the statutory authorities (see Key Contacts, P7 for the relevant statutory contacts)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at Appendix 8. This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory authorities if a referral is made.
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at increased risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted beforehand.
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns.

# If someone in the church is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults

We will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support, and we will contact the relevant statutory authority.

# If the allegation concerns a church staff member or volunteer

For any concerns relating to children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the LADO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this advice. For LADO contact details, see Key Contacts, P7.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. See Key Contacts, P5 for details.

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children / adults at risk OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a different

position because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct, satisfied the harm test, or committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

In such cases, a report will also be made to the Charity Commission, as they deem such a referral to be a ‘serious incident’ and therefore require notification.

# Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact:

Name: Debbie MacBean
Telephone No: 07952 765094
Email: debbiejmacbean@gmail.com

If would be helpful to have complaints in writing, as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing, complaints will be acted upon. Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

# Review

The Elders will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required, and informing the Church Meeting that this has been done.

Date of the most recent review: 16th September 2019
Date of the next review: September 2020

Signed by Debbie MacBean:
(on behalf of the church Elders)



# Linton Free Church
# Safeguarding Key Contacts Sources of Advice and Support

The church **Safeguarding Coordinator (Children)** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed where the concern relates to possible abuse of a child.:

- Name: Philippa Waller
- Telephone No: 07877 232 458
- Email: pipw01@gmail.com

The **Church Safeguarding Coordinator (Adults)** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed where the concern relates to possible abuse of an adult at risk.

- Name: Corinne Roughley
- Telephone No: 01223 830208 / 07968 746 449
- Email: cfa1001@cam.ac.uk

In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinators, Debbie MacBean, Elder can be contacted:

- Name: Debbie MacBean
- Telephone No: 07952 765094
- Email: debbiejmacbean@gmail.com

**URC Synod Safeguarding Officer**
Name: Nicola Grieves
Telephone No: 01223 830 770
Email: cydo@urceastern.org.uk

**Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)** *(This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)*
24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales**
Name: LADO
Telephone No: 0345 045 5203
Email: ReferralCentre.Children@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

**Statutory contact in the case of a child**
Cambridgeshire Children's Service
Tel: 0345 045 5203 (Monday to Friday, 8am - 6pm)
Email: ReferralCentre.Children@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 01733 234 724

**Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk**
Cambridgeshire Adult Social Care
Tel: 0345 045 5202 (8am-6pm Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm Saturday)
Email: referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.org.uk
Out of hours: 01733 234 724