

**Canton Uniting Church Safeguarding Policy**

**Version 5 September 2020**

***Canton Uniting Church  
Safeguarding Policy  
Children & Adults***

***Promoting*** Safeguarding

***Preventing*** Abuse

***Protecting*** All – children, adults and staff

*Canton Uniting Church,  
Cowbridge Road East, Canton,  
Cardiff CF5 1LQ*



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## **What is Safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is the protection of adults and children from harm, abuse or neglect.

We all have the same rights and expectations to independence, respect, choice, fulfilment of our ambitions, to be heard, included, and to have privacy and confidentiality. These expectations are central to the way in which we interact with each other in our life together.

Safeguarding involves a range of activities aimed at promoting the individual's fundamental right to be safe. These include making and maintaining safe environments for all, having processes to follow should something go wrong, and support for everyone involved.

At the time of review (September 2020), the Church was subject to restrictions imposed in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic. We recognise the significant challenge that this poses to the safety and wellbeing of the Church membership and users of the building. However, the specific measures needed to ensure safety in this respect will be set out in Canton Uniting Church's Health and Safety Assessment, as completed by the Deacons. They will complement this policy, but do not affect it.

## **Who we are**

Canton Uniting Church is an ecumenical partnership which belongs to the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

As a congregation we come from a wide range of backgrounds and hold a variety of views on lots of different issues. We value diversity and all the organisations that we work with operate on the same principle.

This policy has been developed in line with the good practice guidance from the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union. However, as the church building is owned by URC Trustees, we will follow the URC policy and the Synod Safeguarding Officer will be the first contact for safeguarding concerns.

## **Aim and purpose of this Policy**

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting vulnerable children, vulnerable adults and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children and vulnerable adults within our Church, or those who attend our activities and events.

Good Practice Guidance has been produced to accompany this policy and to provide more detailed guidelines for implementation.

## **Who this policy applies to**

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Deacons and applies:

- to those who attend our Church/place of worship;
- to our elders/deacons and staff (both paid and voluntary)
- to organisations which hire our building with agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of the most recent URC and BUGB good practice guidance.

## **Definitions**

'Children and young people' means a person under the age of 18 years old.

'Vulnerable Adult' means any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

The definitions of abuse differ between children and vulnerable adults. A copy of the definitions relating to children and vulnerable adults are included in sections 1 and 2 of the Good Practice Guidance accompanying this policy.

## **Our Values and Commitments**

If we believe that all people are precious in the eyes of God, their creator; if we believe that as Christians we should follow the example of Jesus in his compassion and care for others; if we believe that the church should be a sanctuary of safety and peace; and if we believe that we as Christians should speak out against injustice, then safeguarding should be an automatic part of our church communities – as we strive to protect all people from harm, abuse or neglect and to love, care and support all who have been affected by such damaging behaviour.

In the light of this, we make the following statements about our values:

1. Safeguarding is taken seriously by Canton Uniting Church. All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture or disability should have the opportunity to grow up safe from harm, as valued members of the church community. They should be treated with respect, listened to, kept safe and prayed for.
2. We believe that abuse and ill treatment in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and can affect both adults and children.
3. We are committed to encouraging best practice in our dealings with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the life of our church. We want to enable them to develop and grow in the security of a community that has

learned how to offer appropriate care and to ensure their safety and well-being.

4. The members of Canton Uniting Church are committed to this policy to ensure that our children, young people and vulnerable adults experience the love and peace of Christ in a church community that is safe, caring and trusted.

We also make the following commitments

- Children and parents/carers will be informed of this policy, and our procedures.
- We acknowledge both adults' and children's right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice.
- We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- We will implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy and the accompanying Good Practice Guidance, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.
- We will appoint Safeguarding Coordinators, who will have specific responsibilities for safeguarding, although we recognise that safeguarding is a whole church responsibility. The Safeguarding Coordinators are the people to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. Their contact details can be found in Key Contacts, P5.
- We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults.
- We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and recognised that it can affect both adults and children.
- We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.
- We are committed to providing support and supervision, resources and training, to those who work with children and vulnerable adults.
- We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including

implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk, which could include partners of offenders.

- All concerns and allegations of abuse, including domestic abuse, will be responded to appropriately, including referring to Cardiff's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub [MASH].
- We will co-operate with the Police, Children's and Adult Services in any investigation, will follow multi-agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

### **Duty of care and confidentiality**

We have a duty of care to all those attending activities at Canton Uniting Church, particularly vulnerable adults or children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk.

### **The Safeguarding Coordinators**

The church has appointed Safeguarding Coordinators for children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Coordinators are the people to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. They can be contacted as detailed below:

**Name:** Ceri George

**Contact phone number:** 029 2065 8075 / 07758 740524

**Email address:** [cerigeorge58@gmail.com](mailto:cerigeorge58@gmail.com)

OR

**Name:** Alison Walker

**Contact phone number:** 029 2022 1380 / 07870 698095

**Email address:** [a.m.walker47@gmail.com](mailto:a.m.walker47@gmail.com)

A role description is included in section 3 of the Good Practice Guidance.

### **Preventing abuse**

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC and Baptist good practice guidelines so as to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. Risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with children, appropriate records will be kept (in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and Record Keeping policies produced by the URC or BUGB), and adequate insurance will be in place for each

event. Further guidelines on risk assessment are included in section 5a of the Good Practice Guidance.

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

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Completion of self-declaration forms
- Obtaining Disclosure and barring checks wherever legally entitled to do so
- Taking up two references (not family)
- Interviewing candidates

Further guidelines on recruitment are included in section 5f of the Good Practice Guidance.

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

All elders/deacons, paid staff and volunteers work within a code of conduct (code for workers is included in section 4 of the Good Practice Guidance) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering 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 Baptist Union Safeguarding Representative and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and vulnerable 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, the church will encourage them to adopt one before agreeing to the hire (e.g. by referring them to [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk) for guidance on this). In some cases the church may agree to a small organisation following the church safeguarding policy and procedures.

The church also recognises that abuse and harm can arise during the use of electronic and social media. Further guidance on this can be found in section 5b of the Good Practice Guidance.

## **How to recognise abuse**

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Lists of such possible signs and symptoms in relation to children and adults are included in sections 1 and 2 of the Good Practice Guidance. Some signs could be indicators of a number of different categories.

It is essential to note that these are only **indicators** of **possible** abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for any of 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 or vulnerable 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 you.
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else if a child is at risk of harm.
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Contacts the Police if there is an immediate threat of harm.
- Informs the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators as soon as possible (if one of them is implicated in the allegation, inform the other Co-ordinator or the URC Synod Safeguarding Officer / Baptist Union of Great Britain Association Safeguarding Representative).
- Makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record (using the Incident Recording Form included as section 6 of the Good Practice Guidance). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses Domestic Abuse, the safeguarding procedures set out above should be followed. However, there is a different procedure to follow if an adult who is not considered vulnerable discloses that they are experiencing Domestic Abuse, as set out below.

## **Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse**

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police should be contacted.

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 Co-ordinator and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies (see below for the relevant statutory contacts).
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it using the Incident Recording Form included as section 6 of the Good Practice Guidance. This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory agencies 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 would place a child or vulnerable adult at increased risk.

There is a different procedure to follow if an adult who is not considered vulnerable discloses that they are experiencing Domestic Abuse. If there is an immediate threat of harm, the person to whom the disclosure is made should still contact the police immediately. However, if the adult is a competent adult, they will need to give consent for a referral to the local Domestic Abuse service, RISE. Alternatively, they may be given the information to contact the service themselves.

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

We will inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer in the first instance, so that they can offer advice and support, as well as contacting the relevant statutory agency. We will also make the Baptist Union of Great Britain Association Safeguarding Representative aware for information.

### **If the allegation is regarding a Church staff member or Church volunteer**

In addition to informing the Synod Safeguarding Officer, we will contact Cardiff Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for advice and support. The timing and method of any action will be discussed and agreed with the MASH team and denominational safeguarding representative. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation, possible strategy meetings and when to inform the worker.

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not work with children because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfied the harm test or has 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 as a 'serious incident' and require notification.

### **Statutory contact in the case of a Child**

Cardiff MASH Children's Access Point: 029 2053 6490

Out of Hours service: Emergency Duty Team 029 2078 8570

### **Statutory contact in the case of a Vulnerable Adult**

Cardiff MASH: 029 2033 0888

Out of Hours service: Emergency Duty Team 029 2078 8570

**In the case of Domestic Abuse relating to a competent adult:** referral should be made to the local Domestic Abuse service, RISE – 029 2046 0566

### **Sources of advice, guidance, and support**

URC Synod Safeguarding Officer: Judy Harris 07967 951727

**CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)**  
24-hour helpline: 0303 003 1111 (NB: This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Baptist Union of Great Britain Association Safeguarding Representative: Patricia Wiltshire 07831 701161

Baptist Union of Great Britain website: Resources and Guidelines; Safe To Grow.

### **Concerns, Complaints and Compliments**

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact Fiona Harding, Canton Uniting Church Secretary,

**Telephone:** 029 2025 7783;

**Email:** [cucsecretary@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cucsecretary@hotmail.co.uk)

It 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.

**Safeguarding Return**

In line with URC requirements, the Church Safeguarding Officers will complete the Safeguarding section of the URC Churches' annual Return.

**Review**

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

Date of most recent review: .5.9.20.....

Date of next review: .....5.9.22.....

Signed: .....A. Walker..... (on behalf of the church deacons)