# Making Church Safe: Policies

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## Introduction: What this is and who this is for

This document articulates the structures and processes we have in place to prevent and address safeguarding issues within Grace Church Gateshead (GCG). It is written primarily for those who attend GCG, with the recognition that it may also be read by individuals and organisations external to GCG.

Please note that, in the UK any citizen has the right to approach an agency (e.g., social services) directly if they have concerns about the safety of any child or vulnerable adult. However, it is our hope that the principles and procedures we lay out here will be followed by members of GCG in the event that you ever have a concern about a child or vulnerable adult. Deliberate false allegations will be made a serious church discipline matter and investigated by the spiritual leadership of GCG.

This document also details our processes for preventing and addressing other kinds of issues which we do not define as safeguarding issues. Nevertheless, they are related and for ease of use and reference we have included them within this document. These related sections are:

- The process of formal 'church discipline' (which includes grievances)
- The process for formal discipline of church leaders (which includes whistleblowing)

## How to use this document:

Please read the following summary of sections, refer to the relevant section, and follow the steps detailed there. Supporting information can then be found in the appendices.

If you are concerned that someone is at serious and imminent risk of physical harm, call the emergency services. Please refer to the safeguarding section of this document.

If you have a concern for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult within GCG, please refer to the **safeguarding** section of this document.

If you have a concern that there is a pattern of behaviour by an individual(s) which is going unaddressed and causing harm to others, please refer to the '**church discipline**' section of this document.

If you have a concern that there is a pattern of behaviour by one or more leaders in GCG which is going unaddressed and causing harm to others, please refer to the '**discipline of church leaders**' section of this document.

## Guiding convictions:

Doctrinally, it is crucial that we articulate, uphold, and promote the responsibility which parents have for their children, and the goodness of God's institution of marriage and family. We must also articulate and uphold the legitimate authority of the state to 'punish wrongdoing'. It is a tragic reality that most abuse is perpetrated not by strangers, but by members of a child or vulnerable adult's family; hence the need for a clear safeguarding policy to lay out recommended principles and procedures regarding abuse.

We also uphold and promote the legitimate authority given to leaders within local churches. We maintain that this is an authority clearly given to promote Christian discipleship and church health, and never to be used for selfish gain of any kind.

Foundationally, we maintain that authority is not innately bad, but innately good. The Bible reveals a God who is ultimate reality, and who uses his authority for good. This is shown above all in the self-giving death of Jesus, the Son of God upon the cross. His design in all legitimate authority (whether in the state, the family, or the church) is that it be used for good, never in 'ends justifying the means', but rather in 'good means leading to good ends'. We insist that legitimate authority does and must exist within GCG, and that this authority must be used to serve.

## Church discipline of leaders (including 'whistleblowing')

Please refer to this policy if you have a concern that a leader at GCG is acting wrongly, or acting in a way which enables others to act wrongly. Please note that we do not consider a concern about a spiritual leader necessarily to constitute a safeguarding issue; we have located this policy within the same document suite as our safeguarding policy for ease of navigation to the appropriate procedure for any individual with a concern.

***Guiding principles:***

The Bible warns strongly against a form of leadership which is, in today's language, 'abusive'. Jesus says that Christian leadership is to be antithetical to worldly models of 'lording it' over others (Matthew 20.25-26; Luke 22.25-27); the Apostle Paul warns of leaders who will act selfishly like 'wolves' (Acts 20.29); and the Apostle Peter urges those who lead to do so, 'not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock' (1 Peter 5.2-3). Such a form of leadership is essentially *characterised by the selfish desire for gain* of power, control, influence, money, sex, fame, or other forms of gain. As a church which takes the Bible as the final authority on all things, we take these warnings very seriously and will initiate appropriate steps in response to any such leadership at GCG.

We hold that a crucial distinction is to be made and maintained between a) Biblically-defined spiritual abuse, which is characterised by the desire for selfish gain, and b) the faithful ministry and preaching of the gospel, which is characterised by traditional Christian doctrine and humility of manner. This distinction is crucial to maintain since faithful Christian ministry and preaching *may* sometimes lead to offence and to marked voluntary changes in personal belief behaviour, and yet which in no way constitutes abuse or coercion. We recognise that sometimes even the gentlest presentation of the Christian faith can be deemed to be subjectively offensive, yet we do not recognise this to be spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse, as recognised in the Scriptures, is characterised by the desire for selfish gain – e.g., gain of power, control, influence, wealth, sex, etc.

We include as reference the FIEC's statement on Abuse and Pastoral Malpractice[1] below.

> *FIEC is a Fellowship of churches united in our belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whilst the churches of the Fellowship seek to help one another, FIEC is a voluntary association of independent churches and, in principle and in practice, we respect the autonomy of the local church and exercise no direct central control.*
>
> *As a Fellowship, we recognise that abuse in all its forms is wrong before the Lord and deeply damaging to the victims. We are, therefore, committed to promoting best practices within our churches. Whilst FIEC is not responsible for safeguarding issues*

1 Accessed from https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/ministry-networks/abuse-and-pastoral-malpractice

*arising within its churches, we do expect all the churches of the Fellowship to have a safeguarding policy in place. Where there are allegations of illegal activity, we expect these to be reported to the statutory authorities.*

*If a* **church** *within FIEC has systematically failed to act in accordance with its own safeguarding policy and refuses to subsequently ensure appropriate action is taken internally, the church will, where appropriate, be requested by FIEC to deal with the matter carefully and urgently. Failure to do so is likely to result in the church being removed from FIEC by the Trust Board. Where necessary a report will be made to the statutory regulatory bodies.*

*Recent high-profile cases have also reminded us that* **church leaders**, *or others in the local church involved in leadership and pastoral care, can behave in ways that, whilst not illegal, do fall short of the standards expected of a person with pastoral responsibility. These behaviours range from serious misconduct (including coercion or control) to simply being unwise in relating to others. Again, given the autonomy of the local church, we expect local churches to take the initiative in taking appropriate disciplinary action where it is needed. Where a minister is a member of the Pastors' Network and has been guilty of misconduct their membership will be reassessed and, where appropriate, they will be removed from the Network by the Trust Board. If required FIEC will report to statutory bodies.*

*FIEC encourages churches to make available appropriate pastoral care for all those affected and/or involved in such situations and will, on request, provide guidance for churches and pastors in regard to professional help that may be available.*

'Spiritual abuse' does not necessarily constitute a safeguarding concern. Abuse of a child or vulnerable adult constitutes a safeguarding concern, whether or not an individual is a leader within the church. To repeat, spiritual abuse – as defined in the Bible – is characterised by a desire for selfish gain – whether for power, influence, money, sex, etc. Spiritual abuse thus may involve or lead to safeguarding concerns, but may happen without safeguarding concerns.

Please note also the distinction between a ***grievance*** within church life, and a ***whistleblowing concern***:

> A ***grievance*** does not in itself pose risk to the wider church or general public, but involves a particular interpersonal issue limited to a number of individuals. A grievance may involve an interpersonal issue between an individual(s) in the church, and an elder or the eldership as a whole. However, just because an issue involves an elder(s) does not mean that it necessarily represents spiritual abuse or pastoral malpractice. If an issue is an interpersonal grievance, please see the policy below entitled 'church discipline', which seeks to follow the Scriptures' guidance in Matthew 18.15-17, beginning with a private conversation and progressing from there.

In contrast, a ***whistleblowing concern*** is a concern about wrongdoing which may harmfully affect others in the church or in the public, now or in the future. The individual raising the concern may or may not themselves be personally affected. Whistleblowing will usually relate to wrongdoing by those in authority or influence, either directly through the actions of a leader(s), or indirectly through a leader(s) inaction permitting the wrongdoing of others. Thus, whistleblowing is likely to involve an elder or the eldership as a whole. In such situations we are to refer to the principles given in 1 Timothy 5.17-25, which teaches clearly that sinful patterns among those in leadership must be addressed, without partiality. Whistleblowing situations emerge in part because those in authority have a selfish desire to maintain control and are unwilling to have wrongdoing exposed.

We are deeply committed to a healthy leadership culture and will give a fair hearing to any concerns raised. The following details outline how to raise a concern with a leader within GCG.

We begin by referring to the Bible, which gives clear principles for churches to follow in Matthew 18.15-20 and 1 Timothy 5.17-25. Note that there is a clear progression from 'informal' and 'private' through to 'formal' and 'public', and this is reflected in the steps outlined below.

***Raising a concern about a leader in GCG:***

1. If the concerns involve a child or vulnerable adult, please refer to the safeguarding policy. If however they concern issues of wrongdoing as a leader – including manipulation, domineering, coercion, the pursuit of shameful gain, and other misuses of power, please follow the steps below.
2. As far as possible, try to raise your concern or complaint with the individual in question, as a brother/sister in Christ – as in point 2 of the church discipline policy.
3. If the individual does not acknowledge any wrongdoing, please then share your concern/complaint with another leader – unless they too are implicated.
4. If there is still no acknowledgement of wrongdoing, or if all the leaders are implicated, or if you feel unable to speak directly with the leader(s) for any reason (including that it would be an overwhelmingly daunting prospect), please then communicate your concern/complaint to the **pastoral discipline contact**[2], who will be able to act as a proxy on your behalf (this could include them taking steps 2 and/or 3 above).
5. Whilst the complaint of an individual will be noted and responded to, 'charges' will be formally recorded and responded to on the evidence of two or more people (1 Tim. 5.19). This would include the scenario where an individual has raised a concern about a leader(s), and this concern has not been acknowledged by the leader(s) in question even after another leader (or the pastoral discipline contact) has raised it with them. At such a point there is the evidence of two (or more) witnesses and thus constitutes a formal 'charge'.

[2] Dave Greatorex, 07715 111878, djgreatorex@gmail.com

6. Wrongdoing among the leadership is a most serious issue and will be dealt with as such (v20-21).
7. We recognise the subtle and disastrous danger of partiality and prejudging (v21), and how leadership cultures can emerge which hold a blind eye to wrongdoing. For this reason, if a charge is being brought against a leader or leaders at GCG, we ask:
    a. That the charge(s) be written down in full, with as many details and dates as possible. Please refer to the leaders' covenant promises in the membership covenant, and any other sections of the membership materials, to clarify and substantiate the issue(s).
    b. Pass the charges to the nominated **pastoral discipline contact**[3], if they have not already been involved, stating clearly that you have a concern about wrongdoing among the leadership and are thus activating the 'discipline of leaders' policy.
    c. The pastoral discipline contact will confront the leader(s) in question with the charges brought.
    d. If the other leaders recognise the validity of the charges, they will lead the process of discipline in conjunction with the pastoral discipline contact. This will comprise:
        i. Clear public confession and repentance to the church.
        ii. Taking appropriate steps to pursue restoration with those who have been harmed.
        iii. Any other steps deemed appropriate to promote growth and health.
        iv. It is highly likely that the leader(s) in question will be asked to step down from leadership to at least some degree.
    e. The pastoral discipline contact may activate the FIEC's mediation function[4] if the GCG leadership refuse to engage with the process of discipline.
    f. The FIEC will examine the charges and conclude with 'recommendations' to GCG.
    g. If GCG's leadership ignore the recommendations made to them by the FIEC's mediation service, we would advise that, given such an extreme and severe eventuality, GCG members resign their membership and look to move to another church, being sure to tell the leadership there the reasons for their move.
8. An essential part of this policy lies in the ***prevention*** of such issues, and this prevention lies largely in not being 'hasty' in appointing people to be leaders until they are tested and well-known by the church (v22). Here is a summary of how elders are appointed at GCG:
    a. Roughly every 5 years, we run an 'eldership development process'. This serves as a clear process to i) train and identify new potential elders, and ii) re-examine the qualifications of existing elders.

[3] Dave Greatorex, 07715 111878, djgreatorex@gmail.com
[4] See https://fiec.org.uk/assets/downloadables/FIEC-and-Mediation-in-Churches.pdf and https://fiec.org.uk/assets/downloadables/Addressing-Allegations-of-Spiritual-Abuse-in-FIEC-Churches.pdf

b. Thus, the potential outcomes of each eldership development process are i) for new elder(s) to be appointed alongside existing elders, who are reaffirmed with recommendations for ongoing growth; ii) new elder(s) to be appointed and some existing elder(s) are asked to step down with areas of growth to focus on; iii) no new elder(s) are appointed, and existing elders are reaffirmed with recommendations for ongoing growth.
c. The steps of the eldership development process are follows:
    i. A Sunday sermon about Biblical eldership.
    ii. An open evening shortly afterwards, open to all men at GCG, to discuss further what the Bible teaches about eldership, and how the development process functions at GCG.
    iii. A series of opt-in study evenings (again, open to all GCG men) spread over a year, with reading/listening in between, to discuss elements of being an elder/pastor.
    iv. For those men who would like to consider eldership seriously beyond this initial phase, undertaking confidential character assessment questionnaires – completed by themselves and two or three others who know them well (including, if they are married, their wife). These questionnaires are based on each phrase of the qualifications for elders given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
    v. Thereafter, feedback is given along the lines of areas for growth and areas for celebration and thanksgiving to God.
    vi. Based on all of the above, the existing elders invite men who appear to be qualified to be elders at GCG to consider being 'elder candidates'.
    vii. If the man agrees with this, the church family is informed. Feedback of any kind is invited over the coming six months, which functions as a time for everyone to get used to the idea of this man as an elder. Existing elders proactively pursue feedback from the church family.
    viii. The elder candidate is formally appointed as an elder.

9. Also with regards to ***prevention***, we refer all members of GCG, and all readers of this document, to the three-part sermon series entitled 'Making Church Safe' (available on the church website[5]). This mini-series aims to provide clarity about the early warning signs of unhealthy leadership cultures, and how to respond appropriately.

[5] https://gracechurchgateshead.org/resources/sermons/series/making-church-safe/

## Church discipline (including grievance)

Please read the above section, 'church discipline of leaders' for context for the following. In particular, please read the 'guiding principles' section. We begin by referencing our guiding passage from the Bible, Matthew 18.15-20. This details the progression from 'informal' to 'formal' church discipline, which we outline below. If you have a grievance or concern about wrongdoing involving someone else in GCG, please follow these steps:

1. If your concern involves a child or vulnerable adult, please refer to the safeguarding policy and follow the steps detailed there.
2. As far as possible, church discipline must begin privately and informally, with a personal word one to one (v15). Do your best to explain gently but clearly how you felt sinned against. If the other individual responds with repentance, this is a great outcome.
3. If they refuse to acknowledge any wrongdoing, the Bible says to involve someone else (v16). This may be someone else who knows about the wrongdoing; for instance, who witnessed it or experienced similar behaviour themselves. If there is not someone else already involved to some degree, speak with one of the elders and ask them to join you in speaking with the individual in question.
4. If your concern involves a leader, or leader(s) at GCG, either directly (you are concerned they have done wrong), or indirectly (you are concerned they are covering up or enabling someone else's wrongdoing), please refer to the 'church discipline of leaders' policy.
5. If the individual still refuses to acknowledge wrongdoing, the elders will take the following steps:
    a. A first written warning, detailing the sin issue and the steps taken thus far by individuals to urge repentance which have been ignored. This warning will also detail what repentance should 'look like' and what will happen if this warning is ignored.
    b. A second written warning, repeating the above and urging that this discipline will be made public to the church family if no signs of repentance are shown.
6. If these warnings are ignored, the church membership will be informed of the sin issue (v17), and the warning repeated in writing (third written warning) to the individual.
7. If all of the above is ignored, the individual will be formally asked to leave the church, and the church family informed. Please note that even this extreme step is still intended as one of correction which can lead to restoration – not as punishment.
8. It will remain the posture of the elders that, if and when the individual repents and acknowledges wrongdoing, showing appropriate fruits of repentance, restoration to fellowship can take place – however long has passed.
9. We conclude this policy with the reminder and insistence that the Christian gospel is one of grace and the free gift of forgiveness. All 'church discipline' has this as the goal and the motivation; not to see sinners punished, but to see sinners corrected and restored.

10. The surest **prevention** of formal church discipline issues and grievances within church life lies in wholehearted commitment to healthy Christian ways of relating. Structures within GCG which enable and promote this are:
    a. Sincere, attentive, personal participation in our Sunday gatherings.
    b. Commitment to a community group.
    c. We refer all members of GCG and all readers of this document to the membership literature available on our website[6] which aims to articulate in greater detail the process and enabling structures of healthy Christian growth and relationships.
    d. We refer all members of GCG, and all readers of this document, to the three-part sermon series entitled 'Making Church Safe' (available on the church website[7]). This mini-series aims to provide clarity about the early warning signs of unhealthy leadership cultures, and how to respond appropriately.

[6] https://gracechurchgateshead.org/about/membership/
[7] https://gracechurchgateshead.org/resources/sermons/series/making-church-safe/

**The relationships and distinctions between 'safeguarding', 'abuse', 'church discipline', and 'discipleship':**

**Abuse** is defined in the following sections of this document. **Safeguarding** is the term used to describe the processes, policies, and procedures put in place to promote well-being, and to protect children and vulnerable people from abuse.

**Discipleship** is the process of growing as a follower of Jesus. It is complete in its scope and timescale. Discipleship is a one-word summary of the mission of the church. For further information about discipleship, please see Grace Church Gateshead's document, 'what is a disciple-making church?'[8]

**Church discipline** is the processes and procedures followed by Christians within a church community to encourage healthy discipleship (as defined by the Bible's teaching), in situations of conflict, discord or error. Its aim is always to correct, not to punish. Please see the relevant sections of the GCG membership documents[9], and the other policies in this document, for further details.

One responsibility of any local church in the course of its mission (discipleship), is the safeguarding of all its members from abuse. This happens both positively and preventatively, in the formation of healthy and appropriate relationships, within the course of normal discipleship, and negatively, in the awareness of, and response to, abuse.

Doctrinally, it is crucial that we articulate, uphold, and promote the responsibility which parents have for their children, and the goodness of God's institution of marriage and family. We must also articulate and uphold the legitimate authority of the state to 'punish wrongdoing'. It is a tragic reality that most abuse is perpetrated not by strangers, but by members of a child or vulnerable adult's family; hence the need for a clear safeguarding policy to lay out recommended principles and procedures regarding abuse.

[8] https://gracechurchgateshead.org/about/our-vision-and-values/what-is-a-disciple-making-church/
[9] https://gracechurchgateshead.org/about/membership/

## General guidelines for responding to someone disclosing or alleging abuse

**When a disclosure/allegation is made**

- Listen carefully.
- Do not press for more information than is immediately given.
- Do not ask probing, leading or suggestive questions.
- Reassure the person that you take what they say utterly seriously.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else – do not promise confidentiality.
- Be aware that they may have been threatened and made to promise secrecy about the abuse.

**What to do next**

- As soon as possible (preferably within one hour), write down notes of the conversation, recording what the other person said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before the conversation (i.e., what activity you were involved in). Date and time the record, mentioning anyone else who was present, and sign it. Keep all your original notes, even if they were handwritten and later typed up. Such records should be kept in a secure place by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy (see below under 'Procedure for reporting abuse').
- Do not contact the alleged abuser.
- Do not try to investigate the allegations yourself – the primary responsibility of the person to whom disclosure is made is to report the abuse (see 'Procedure for reporting abuse' below) and to ensure that the person who has made the disclosure/allegation is cared for.

***RESPONDING TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE***

**General points**

- Ensure you are in an open space with other people in the vicinity.
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – *don't promise confidentiality.*
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Do not ask leading questions, instead ask reflective questions.

- As far as possible, even though it may feel awkward at the time, write everything down. If the child is old enough to write, encourage them to write it down with you. Alternatively, write it down there and then and read it back to the child. If they are old enough to sign it as a record, then ask them to do so. Record the date and time.

**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.

**Do not say**

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

**Concluding**

- Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (in exceptional circumstances you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see Appendix 8 for names and contact details).
- Do not discuss the allegations with anyone else.

***PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABUSE***

Under no circumstances should an individual other than those specified in this policy carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see Appendix 8 for names and contact details) who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the

allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the appropriate authorities.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see Appendix 8 for names and contact details). If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to Christian Safeguarding Limited. Alternatively, contact Social Services or the police.
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Adult Social Services or take advice from Christian Safeguarding Limited as above. (See Appendix 8 for telephone numbers of local Children's Social Services, local Adult Social Services, and Police Protection Teams.)
- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator *may* need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, for example: the Pastor and trustees of Grace Church Gateshead to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with; the Insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning safeguarding; a Designated Officer (formerly LADO) if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18s elsewhere; or an officer within one of the church's wider networks, such as the FIEC.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Christian Safeguarding Limited.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Christian Safeguarding Limited, although the Leadership hopes that members of Grace Church Gateshead will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of everyone; including children and adults who may be at risk of harm or abuse. The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy is to collate and

clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and where appropriate pass this information on to statutory agencies that have a legal duty to investigate.

***DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD:***

**Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Christian Safeguarding Limited) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home. In such cases the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Christian Safeguarding Limited if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

**Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 no longer refers to them as LADOs only 'designated officers'. However, the function remains the same which is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults. Where you are liaising with a designated officer discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a designated officer is not involved, you need to contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads you to end the employment of the worker or volunteer or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

**Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will not speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

- Seek and follow the advice given by Christian Safeguarding Limited if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police.

***DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS A CONCERN THAT AN ADULT IS IN NEED OF PROTECTION:***

**Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm** including: physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse. If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, Christian Safeguarding Limited can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

**Domestic abuse:**

- It is recognised that domestic abuse is not limited to marriage and may involve parents and wider family. It is also recognised that the domestic abuse has a considerable impact on children within the family.
- If disclosures are made, a full note of the disclosure should be made and dated by the person to whom the disclosure is made.
- Under no circumstances should complete confidentiality be promised as this may put others at risk of serious harm.
- In circumstances of physical abuse a note of injuries should be made and consideration given as to whether medical assistance is required.
- If there is an imminent threat to life or of serious injury to the person making the disclosure, or another, this should be reported immediately (either to the police or the relevant social services agencies).
- Domestic abuse raises child protection issues: where children are involved in cases of domestic violence, this should be reported.
- Do not confront or seek to discuss the matter with the alleged perpetrator of the domestic abuse as this may place the abused at further risk or endanger them and their family.
- In some instances of abuse it may be appropriate to contact support services such as Independent voluntary agencies (e.g., Refuge) or an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) where in place. It is recognised that there is an increased risk of personal safety for abused victims when leaving an abuser and increased support/professional support needs to be in place if this is likely.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

**Grace Church Gateshead** is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1154440

Church premises and address for communications: 186 Rawling road, Gateshead, NE8 4QU.
Email: info@gracechurchgateshead.org
Website: www.gracechurchgateshead.org

**Memberships:**
Grace Church Gateshead is a member church of:

- The North East Gospel Partnership www.negp.org.uk
- The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches www.fiec.org.uk
- The Acts 29 Network www.acts29.com

**Christian Safeguarding Services:**
Telephone 0116 218 4420
Email: contact@thecss.co.uk
Website: www.thecss.co.uk

**Insurance Company** CaSE FAITH (aQmen underwriting services)

**People mentioned in this document:**

- Leadership – the elders and trustees of Grace Church Gateshead
- Workers – staff employed by the church, and volunteers with a formal role description
- Staff – individuals employed by the church

**Our commitment:** As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and adults who have care and support needs. We acknowledge that children and adults who have care and support needs can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding. In particular, the undergirding of our policy is the Biblical teaching found in the Pastoral Epistles about the moral and doctrinal standards expected of those involved in any Christian ministry. Specifically, with regard to sexual abuse, the Biblical teaching that sexual activity is only right in heterosexual marriage and wrong outside it is foundational. We, therefore, require all church staff and volunteers appointed by them to model this and other Biblical standards in their daily lives.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Provide ongoing safeguarding training for all its workers (by whom we mean employees and volunteer leaders).
- Review regularly the operational guidelines within this policy.
- Support the Safeguarding Co-ordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults who have care and support needs.
- Ensure that Safeguarding awareness forms a routine part of the Grace Church Gateshead members' pack and annual renewal.

## Appendix 2: Recognising abuse

### i) Definitions of abuse

Defining abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the adult. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

**STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (CHILDREN)**
Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'. Note that these statutory definitions exist within law, and are summarised below for ease of reference. Where a term is ambiguous or open to a range of interpretations, we have given our interpretation in a footnote.

**What is abuse and neglect?**
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children[10]. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability[11], as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction[12]. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious

10 We do not consider worshipping as families on a Sunday morning (which includes sitting and listening to a sermon) to be 'developmentally inappropriate', although we recognise it is not the cultural norm within many contemporary church traditions. For more on this, please read our leaflet 'what about families and children at Grace Church Gateshead?' In addition, we accept the noise levels associated with young children in church and we are opposed to the 'deliberate silencing' of children. We draw a distinction between the abusive 'deliberate silencing' on the one hand, and the patient training of children to be able to listen quietly (as is trained and developed in schools).
11 We do not deem listening to a sermon to be 'beyond a child's developmental capability'; please see our leaflet 'what about families and children at Grace Church Gateshead?' for more. However, we make provision for children and families who would prefer not to sit in the Sunday sermon.
12 We recognise that the legislation's phrase 'normal social interaction' is open to widely varying interpretations. As a rule of thumb we take 'normal' to mean 'normal as defined by Christian Scripture and tradition'.

bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware 8 of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (ADULT)**
The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the statutory guidance for the Care Act 2014 (Chapter 14: Safeguarding).[13] The Safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professional and other staff should not be advocating 'safety' measures that do not take account of individual well-being, as defined in Section 1 of the Care Act. This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

[13] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. 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.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender, age, disability, or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

**ii) Signs and symptoms of abuse**

**SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE IN CHILDREN**

The signs below may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered and may indicate that further enquiries should be made by the appropriate safeguarding authority where the child lives. These lists of possible signs and indicators of abuse are not exhaustive.

**Physical abuse**

Possible indicators:

- any bruising or injury to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby.
- injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.

- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc., which do not have a satisfactory explanation.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse. The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse. The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness (particularly in pre-school children).
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
- Running away/stealing/lying.
- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse or other forms of self-harm.

**Sexual abuse**

Children of both genders and of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family. Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural. Some behavioural and physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct.
- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for the child's age.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age.
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation.
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Running away from home.
- Poor concentration and learning problems.
- Loss of self-esteem.
- Involvement in sexual exploitation.
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for – e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties).
- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.

- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Pregnancy.
- Physical symptoms in relation to the genital area.

**Neglect**
The growth and development of a child may suffer when a child receives insufficient food, love, warmth, care and concern, praise, encouragement and stimulation. Apart from the child's neglected appearance, other signs may include:

- Low body weight.
- Injuries slow to heal or red/purple mottled skin on hands/feet due to exposure to cold.
- Failure to grow.
- Constant hunger.
- Stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses.
- Listlessness, apathy and lack of responsiveness.
- Indiscrimination in relationships with adults (may be attention seeking).

**SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE IN ADULTS**

**Physical abuse**

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or overuse of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.

**Domestic violence**

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars.
- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

**Sexual abuse**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse.
- Self harming.

**Psychological abuse**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful.
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer.
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes.
- Unexplained paranoia.

**Financial or material abuse**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents.

- Sudden inability to pay bills.
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf.
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property.

**Modern slavery**

- Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished.
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.
- Few personal possessions or ID documents.
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

**Discriminatory abuse**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect.
- Poor quality or avoidance care.

**Organisational abuse**

- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.

**Neglect and acts of omission**

- Deteriorating despite apparent care.
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention.

**Self-neglect**

- Hoarding inside or outside a property.
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs.

## Appendix 3: Prevention

**a) Safer recruitment:**
The Leadership will ensure that all workers will be appropriately appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description/person specification for the role.
- All prospective workers have completed an application form. This form will include voluntary disclosure of any criminal convictions and the provision of two referees. An update application will be sent out every five years (or more frequently) to every worker.
- All prospective workers have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate.
- A disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary.
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified.
- A criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent an applicant being appointed to a role involving children or vulnerable adults. However, an adult who is a known offender who has committed acts of violence or sexual offences against children or adults will not be appointed.
- Suitable training for their roles is provided for workers.
- Workers will be given opportunities at leaders' meetings to meet together with a leader to discuss areas of concern including issues relating to discipline.
- There is a probationary period of six months after which the worker's involvement in the role is reviewed.
- Workers are made aware of the safeguarding policy and given a summary of it, and know how to report concerns.
- DBS data will be stored in an encrypted and password-protected spreadsheet by Grace Church Gateshead, which is the data controller and processor. It will be stored for 5 years. DBS data will not be shared with third parties unless required by law.

**b) 'Sarah's law':** The Leadership is aware of Northumbria Police's provision under 'Sarah's law', whereby someone acting in an official capacity on behalf of the church can contact the police to enquire whether an individual is known to be on the sex offenders register. Crucially, such enquiries can be made proactively rather than reactively; i.e., enquiries can be made under Sarah's law on the basis of no prior knowledge or references for an individual attending the church, but solely on the basis of concerning behaviour.

**c) Normal ministries of the church:** We emphasise here that the normal ministries of the church serve to prevent abuse. These include: the regular teaching of the Bible, which calls for personal responsibility in the pursuit of the highest ethical standards, in both thought and action, in dependence upon God; the support and promotion of traditional marriage; the support and promotion of family and wise parenting; and the promotion of healthy and appropriate relationships within Christian community for people of all backgrounds.

In addition, we refer all visitors and members of the church to our written materials, available on our website or when visiting the church. This 'membership' literature serves to define our codes of

conduct and articulate the ways in which healthy relationships are to be conducted within a Christian community.

## Appendix 4: Pastoral Care

**a) Supporting those affected by abuse:**
The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and offering support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or who are part of Grace Church Gateshead.

**b) Working with offenders or those who may pose a risk:**
When someone attending Grace Church Gateshead is known to be a risk to children or other adults – especially adults who have care and support needs – the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. This may include the individual concerned not having permission to attend specified church meetings and activities. And it may include attendance conditional on the individual being accompanied by a member of the church staff, or someone appointed by a member of the church staff. In our Sunday services, which are public meetings, all adults (and children) attending are potentially vulnerable if someone displays threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour (e.g., under the influence of alcohol or drugs). At Grace Church Gateshead, responding to such situations is the responsibility of the leadership.

## Appendix 5: Practice Guidelines

As churches working with children and with adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation. As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for activities we are involved in, where relevant.

***GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.***

**Arrangements for supervision of activities**
Whilst Grace Church Gateshead does not currently organise any children's or youth ministry in which children are apart from their parents beyond the Youth Bible Study, we recognise the following recommended ratios of adult to children, should any such groups or events take place:

- Babies and toddlers (0-2.5 years) 1:3
- Preschool (2.5-4 years) 1:4
- Key Stage 1 (4-8 years) 1:8
- Key Stage 2 and above (8+ years) 1:8 for first 8, then 1:12.
- There shall never be fewer than two adults to a group, where the group meets in a separate room.
- If under 18s help out in crèche and children's groups they should not be included as adults in adult to child ratios and should not be left in charge of any group of children of any age.
- Whenever possible an adult should not be on their own with a child, unless meeting in a public place, or with prior parental consent.
- All adults should maintain friendly and open (non-private) interactions with children and young people.
- A register of children and young people attending a group or activity should be kept and a register of adult and under 18 leaders. If any child leaves early this should be recorded. At the end of each academic term the registers should be passed to the relevant co-ordinator as appropriate for storage.

**Guidelines on physical contact with children**
The following general guidelines apply to physical contact with children:

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and (generally) initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood. Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

## Appendix 6: General guidelines on various areas where adults (including workers) have care and support needs

**Physical disability**

- In planning and running all our groups and activities, we need to be aware that adults with physical disability may be present.
- We must ensure the best possible access into our premises (including convenient car-parking) and through our premises (once inside) – for those who are vulnerable walking, or use a wheelchair or other mobility aid.
- Care must be given in offering physical assistance (such as lifting or the use of wheelchairs) – both to avoid any inappropriate physical contact, and to avoid risk of injury to both parties.

**Sensory disability**

- We need to be aware that those attending our groups and activities with impaired vision or hearing are vulnerable to being excluded – or even to being in danger in situations of emergency such as a fire alarm.
- We must work to provide appropriate help for those with impaired vision or hearing.

**The elderly**

- Physical disability (at least, frailty) and sensory disability are often problems facing the elderly. We must also be aware that incidence of abuse of the elderly seems to be increasing in our society: they are particularly vulnerable.
- We should seek to be aware of the accommodation/care arrangements of the elderly with whom we have contact, and act on any concerns we have, or any disclosures of abuse they make.

**Adults with learning difficulties**

- Leaders of any groups attended by adults with learning difficulties must give special consideration to helping their members react to emergencies such as a fire alarm.
- If assistance with toileting is needed, this should be provided by someone of the same sex.

**Fire**

- All adults – whether or not otherwise having care and support needs – are vulnerable in the event of a fire.
- Leaders of all groups and activities must be familiar with fire alarm and evacuation procedures. These may be found on the wall in each room of the church building.

**Medical emergencies and First Aid**

- As with fire, all adults – whether or not otherwise having care and support needs – may become vulnerable in the event of a medical emergency.
- First Aid kits and procedures (e.g., accident books) must be kept up to date.

**Risk assessments**

- Appropriate risk assessments should be completed both for regular activities and also one-off events/trips/weekends away.

**Money**

- We recognise that people – especially the elderly – can be vulnerable to manipulation regarding money. Great care should be given to ensure that this never takes place. Workers should not give financial advice in a personal pastoral setting.

**Workers conducting pastoral meetings – including one-to-one meetings**

- These must be conducted so as to safeguard both the worker and the person they are meeting with.
- The worker needs safeguarding from any possible allegation of misconduct and from any situation that might put them in danger/at risk. So, for example, a one-to-one meeting may be best conducted somewhere public (or at least not totally private and unobserved); or a meeting involving two workers may be wiser (e.g., in the case of a first pastoral visit to a new contact).
- The person being met with/visited also needs safeguarding by the worker having a clear code of conduct.

**Church staff working in vulnerable situations**

- Workers (especially female workers) may be vulnerable when working on their own at our premises if someone calls at the premises – e.g., asking for help of some sort. They should not give access to someone unless and until they are confident that it is safe to do so.
- Workers (whether church staff or volunteer leaders) could be vulnerable if making a pastoral visit on their own. If a worker is any doubt about the safety of such a visit, they should notify another worker beforehand of where they are going, and confirm that with that worker after the event that they are safe.

## Appendix 7: Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership, being the Trustees and Elders of Grace Church Gateshead, recognises the importance of its ministry/work with children and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. The following statement was agreed by the Leadership on:

_____

Grace Church Gateshead is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, and safe. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every appropriate aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.

**We are committed to:**

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with network-wide (i.e,. the FIEC or Acts 29), national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Co-ordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting parents and families.
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.

**We recognise:**

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

**We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.** If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs, then speak to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

**Signed by the leadership – the Trustees of Grace Church Gateshead:**

## Appendix 8: Useful telephone numbers, addresses and reference information

**Grace Church Gateshead Safeguarding Co-ordinator:** Dan Martin, 07733 364606, dantcmartin@gmail.com

**Grace Church Gateshead Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator:** Dave Greatorex, 07715 111878, djgreatorex@gmail.com

**Christian Safeguarding Limited:**
0116 218 4420
Email: contact@thecss.co.uk
Website: www.thecss.co.uk

**SOCIAL SERVICES** The Social Service Office either for the area *where the child lives* or where there is a central first contact number should be contacted.

**Gateshead Council** Duty Social Worker 0191 433 2653 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0191 433 2650/0191 433 2648
**Newcastle City Council** Initial Response Service 0191 277 2500 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0191 232 8520
**Northumberland County Council** Alnwick 0166 562 6830 Ashington 01670 629200 Berwick 0128 933 4000 Blyth 0167 035 4316 Cramlington 0167 071 2925 Hexham 0143 460 3582 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0845 600 5252
**North Tyneside Council** First Call 0191 643 7979 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0191 200 6800
**South Tyneside Council** Central Team 0300 011 4560 East Team 0300 011 3450 West Team 0191 424 4700 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0191 456 2093
**Sunderland City Council** Office hours (Initial response service) 0191 520 5560 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0191 520 5552 33

**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE**
Emergencies 999
Non-Emergency (for all areas below) 0345 604 3043

**Newcastle** (Covering Outer West Newcastle, Gosforth, Great Park, Blakelaw, Kenton, Fawden, Fenham, Scotswood, Benwell, Elswick, Newcastle Central, Jesmond, Heaton, Byker and Walker)
**Northumberland** (Covering Bedlington, Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth, Alnwick, Berwick, East Tynedale and West Tynedale)
**North Tyneside** (Covering North Shields, Whitley Bay, Wallsend and Killingworth)
**South Tyneside** (Covering East and West Shields, Riverside, Cleadon, Whitburn, Jarrow and Hebburn)
**Sunderland** (Covering North, South, East, West and Central Sunderland, Washington and Houghton)
**Gateshead** (Covering Central, East, South, Inner West and Outer West Gateshead)

**CHILD LINE:** 0800 1111 34

**Pastoral discipline contact** (see pages 4-8): Dave Greatorex, 07715 111878, djgreatorex@gmail.com

## Appendix 9: Policy on Online Church Meetings

When it is necessary to hold church meetings virtually, for instance, over Zoom, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- A meeting password must be set and embedded into the link.
- File sharing must be disabled.
- Screen sharing must be set only to 'host'.
- Waiting room must be enabled. If an unknown visitor joins the meeting, the host can communicate with them whilst they are in the waiting room to establish who they are.
- It is best practice to assign a co-host who can oversee the waiting room, and function as a backup in case of technical difficulties.
- The host(s) must be vigilant as to abusive behaviour during the virtual meeting, and remove any participant (either to the waiting room, or altogether) who poses a threat.
- If the meeting is to be recorded, all participants who will appear in the recording must give their consent before recording starts.

## Appendix 10: Leaflet for Church Members

***Grace Church Gateshead and safeguarding.***

At Grace Church Gateshead we want to ensure that we provide a healthy, nurturing and protective environment for everyone who engages in and connects with our church. Part of that means ensuring that children young people and adults at risk of abuse who are part of our community are protected from harm and abuse and that if abuse is identified, it will be handled effectively.

This document sets out a few principles and procedures for all members of the church family to be aware of. Please note that, in the UK any citizen has the right to approach an agency (e.g., social services) directly if they have concerns about the safety of any child or vulnerable adult. However, it is our hope that these principles and procedures will be used by members of GCG in the event that you ever have a concern about a child or vulnerable adult. Deliberate false allegations will be made a serious church discipline matter and investigated by the spiritual leadership of GCG.

Doctrinally, it is crucial that we articulate, uphold, and promote the responsibility which parents have for their children, and the goodness of God's institution of marriage and family. We must also articulate and uphold the legitimate authority of the state to 'punish wrongdoing'. It is a tragic reality that most abuse is perpetrated not by strangers, but by members of a child or vulnerable adult's family; hence the need for a clear safeguarding policy to lay out recommended principles and procedures regarding abuse.

Firstly, **Sundays:**

Our Sunday gatherings are public gatherings. And therefore, anyone from any background and walk of life can come and we hope will feel welcome. This does not mean however, that we give our trust to anyone who starts coming to Grace church. Without being paranoid, we must be vigilant.

Remember that there should never be a context at our Sunday gathering where a child or young person is alone with an adult who is not their parent, without the permission of their parent(s). If you notice a visitor seeming to act or speak in an unusual or inappropriate way to one of the children or young people; seems eager to take photos with their phone, or seems eager to try and have time on their own with one of the children or young people, please notify one of the elders as soon as possible as well as the child's parent.

**Lifts:**

It's common and an important part of the culture of our church life, that people will be offered and given lifts, for instance lifts to or from church to or from someone's home or to or from another church event. If you're inviting someone that you don't feel you know well for a lift, make sure that you invite someone else to be in the car with you. If you feel uncomfortable about giving someone a lift and unsure what to do, please contact one of the church elders.

**Community groups:**

Sharing life within our homes is an important and precious part of our church culture. When it comes to safeguarding, however, it can mean that the lines between church and home are a little harder to define. First of all, remember that if you host a church meal or community group, you are not under any pressure to invite people into your home with whom you do not feel safe, or comfortable to do so. If you have any concerns about inviting someone into your home please speak to one of the elders.

Similarly to giving lifts, if you are alone in your home and someone arrives perhaps early for a meal or Bible study whom you do not feel you know well yet it is wise and reasonable to ask them to wait until someone else arrives before letting them in. If you are hosting a community group evening, please ensure that children, young people, and vulnerable adults are not left with an adult who is not their parent supervising them, unless they are your own children and you are content and happy for this to happen.

What to do if you have a safeguarding concern?

If at any point you are concerned for the safety of a child young person or a vulnerable adult at Grace Church Gateshead please speak to the nominated Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Dan Martin If he is not available, or if your safeguarding concern involves one of the elders or trustees, please contact the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Dave Greatorex. You may also refer to Christian Safeguarding Limited. For more information please read our full safeguarding document, which can be found in a suite of documents entitled ‘Making Church Safe’.

## Appendix 11: Other documents

Please also refer to:

**Grace Church Gateshead Membership Pack** (which includes what we believe, and our vision and values)

Grace Church Gateshead core values leaflets:

- What is a gospel centred church?
- What is a disciple making church?
- What is a simple church?
- What is a community group?
- What about families and children?
- Why give to church?
- Growing as a Christian

***The membership pack and leaflets are all available at https://gracechurchgateshead.org/about/***