

This updated policy was agreed at a Trustees Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019. It will be reviewed at least annually by the Trustees.

### Context

Cirencester Ashcroft Church is a joint Methodist and United Reformed Church and has decided to follow the safeguarding procedures and guidelines of the Methodist Church. Along with the whole Christian community, Cirencester Ashcroft Church believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church fully agrees with the Methodist Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*:

*As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.*

Cirencester Ashcroft Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Methodist Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Cirencester Ashcroft Church affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

### **Explanation of terms and concepts**

In this document, the terms and concepts below are used in the following ways:

Adult/child protection: This is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

Abuse: This may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Children: those under the age of 18;

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service, made up of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. DBS checks are needed for some jobs and voluntary roles to help make safer recruitment decisions and to prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults.

Leader: refers to anyone who has supervisory, organisational or decision-making responsibilities in the context of the work with children, young people or vulnerable adults;

Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment: preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator: refers to the officer appointed by the Trustees to oversee the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice, and to act as a point of reference for safeguarding matters.

Statutory Authority: In Cirencester this is Gloucestershire County Council. A safeguarding concern can be reported (known as raising a concern) by telephoning 01452 426868 for adults or 01452 426565 for children.

Vulnerable adults: Refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

Worker: refers to those who work with children or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary;

All of us, and especially workers, should be aware of various different types of abuse:-

Physical Abuse: where the person's body is hurt or injured.

Emotional Abuse: where persons do not receive appropriate love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibility inappropriate for their years.

Sexual Abuse: where adults (and sometimes other children, young people or vulnerable adults) use children or vulnerable adults to satisfy their sexual desires. This includes acts that a vulnerable adult has not or cannot consent to.

Neglect: where adults persistently fail to care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, or fail to protect them from danger, thus impairing health and development.

Financial Abuse: This can take the form of fraud or theft or taking property without permission. This could involve small or large amounts of money.

### **Particular Policy principles and guidelines**

Cirencester Ashcroft Church appoints **Anne Clark** as Church Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator and as Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports her in her role which is to:

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
- iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers
- iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers and the Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and any revisions.

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Trustees in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Trustees will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.
- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Trustees will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are also to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

c) Appointment and training of workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure. Each worker will be expected to undergo appropriate safeguarding training, within the first year of, or where appropriate before, appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Trustees and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment and code of practice is given them.

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Connexional, District and Circuit information will be provided as appropriate to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems, and reviewed annually.

- f) Ecumenical events  
Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Trustees.
- g) Events with church groups off the premises  
Adequate staffing will be ensured for such events. Notification of the event will be given to Revd James Taylor, and advice can also be obtained from the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- h) Other groups on church premises  
Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement (which will include Safeguarding Form E) will be given a copy of this policy and will abide by the Methodist Safeguarding Guidelines. The lettings secretary in consultation with the Minister will consider the suitability of the various users of the building in making lettings.  
Through its outreach, the church supports some organisations, such as Food Bank and Signpost with accommodation (which may at times be free), who are also responsible for their own safeguarding procedures, but they must also sign Form E and adhere to Methodist policy and guidelines.
- i) Safeguarding concerns and Complaints procedure  
Any safeguarding concern should be raised with **the minister, church safeguarding co-ordinator a church steward and/or the Circuit safeguarding officer**, who will respond according to the national Methodist Church guidelines as stated in the Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and published on its website, including where appropriate by seeking outside intervention from the statutory authorities. In any event, any person may seek the intervention of the statutory authorities.

More general and non-safeguarding complaints can sometimes be dealt with internally by the organisations involved. However, if a complaint is made to any individual, it should be notified to **the minister, one of the church stewards, and/or the church safeguarding co-ordinator**, who will arrange to meet with the complainant and, if appropriate, attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved or should in any event be subject to the Methodist Church's formal complaints system, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church. This will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer, who is the Circuit Superintendent (or, if necessary in his absence, the Deputy Superintendent or the District Chair can be contacted).

- j) Review  
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Dated .....

Signed ..... Chair of Trustees at Cirencester Ashcroft Church

Signed ..... Cirencester Ashcroft Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator