



Promoting Safeguarding
Preventing Abuse
Protecting The Vulnerable

Safeguarding Policy Children & Adults

Haywards Heath United Reformed Church

Southern Synod

March 2025

Introduction

Haywards Heath United Reformed Church agrees that children and adults have a right to live in a way that does not cause them harm or impede their human rights. We therefore acknowledge their 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 believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Haywards Heath United Reformed Church.

We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing, harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership status, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately working with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and other churches.

This means that we will:

- Carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring checks.
- Respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- Seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- Seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- Seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or adult.
- Review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually. Follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

1. Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised. It is produced in alignment with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance (Good Practice 6) and is supported by the following appendices.

<https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-good-practice/>

P1 Safeguarding policy statement

S1 The role of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator

S2 URC training matrix

S4 Signs of possible dementia / memory loss

SS Signs and symptoms of abuse

C1 Code of conduct for working with children or young people

C2 Code of conduct for working with adults at risk

F1 Safeguarding concern form

Who this policy applies to

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

- All members of our church
- All those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- Our Trustees and Elders
- Paid staff (both internal and external eg contractors or consultants)
- Volunteers

Organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

Principles underpinning the policy

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put the welfare of children and adults at risk first
- A willingness to be open and listen
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Definitions

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

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for the time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether children or adults.

We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

2. Creating a safer culture

We are committed to creating a safer culture in our church which will help us to prevent harm from occurring and provide an environment in which all can flourish.

In line with Chapter two of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles
- Ensure all those working with children and/or adults at risk are given copies of relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in respect of data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings.

3. Ensuring safer activities

Whilst it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, we are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible for activities both on and off church premises.

In line with Chapter three of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for buildings and activities
- Consider the implications of data protection and health and safety requirements for specific activities
- Carry out risk assessments for relevant activities or events
- Ensure adequate staffing for activities and that leaders have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and agree to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- Ensure the hirer's agreement is in place for other organisations using church premises
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer for complex or sensitive risks.

4. Recognising and responding to concerns

We acknowledge that, although promoting Safer Culture and Safer Activities will help to protect all those in contact with the church, some concerns will inevitably arise and we are committed to responding well in such circumstances.

In line with Chapter four of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Promote awareness of different kinds of abuse, other vulnerabilities and types of safeguarding concern
- Seek to create a 'listening culture' and help people develop listening skills to respond appropriately in situations where sensitive information is disclosed
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer as a minimum of any situations where involvement from statutory services is/may be required
- Share information with statutory services as appropriate and co-operate with them during any investigations
- Report any serious safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission and notify the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

5. Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others

Where allegations are made against individuals within the Church, we are committed to following all required investigative and regulatory procedures. We will work in collaboration with the Synod, wider Church staff, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations.

In line with Chapter five of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Co-operate fully with any investigative or disciplinary procedures
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer immediately on becoming aware of anyone in the church who may present a risk to others
- Work with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and contribute relevant information for risk assessments
- Alert the Synod Safeguarding Officer or statutory agencies to known breaches of a safeguarding agreement.

6. Supporting victims and survivors

The key principle underpinning our policy and practice in this area is that all those who have experienced abuse, whether recently or in the past 'will be listened to and offered the pastoral care and support they deem appropriate and relevant, irrespective of type of abuse, context, or when this occurred' (General Assembly policy statement 2021).

In line with Chapter six of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Recognise that the Elders' meeting has responsibility for provision of pastoral care
- Be aware of local support services that people can be referred or directed to
- Ensure those in relevant roles attend appropriate training
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer about provision of appropriate support when necessary.

7. Key contacts

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: Mrs Barbra Balicki

Contact phone number: 07900 731754

Email address: barbrajbalicki50@gmail.com

Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator (if applicable)

Name: Mrs Alison Tweddle

Contact phone number: 07720 837425

Email address: tweddle.alison@gmail.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Name: Belinda Herbert (who oversees safeguarding both children, young people and adults)

Contact phone number: 07716 640 596

Email address: safeguarding@urcsouthern.org.uk

URC Safeguarding Office (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Office)

Contact phone number: 020 7520 2729

Email address: safeguarding@urc.org.uk

Local statutory services: Children

Statutory contact in the case of a child

[Request support or raise a concern about a child - West Sussex County Council](#)

Phone: 01403 229900 (Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

If you require the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) outside of office hours (5.00pm- 9.00am weekdays) or at weekends and bank holidays, please call 033 022 26664.

Local statutory services: Adults

Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/raise-a-con/>

Phone: 01243 642121

For emergencies only: To report an urgent concern that requires a same day response, please call the Adult Social Care out of hours manager on 033 022 27007

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, updated as required and adopted by the church meeting.

Date of most recent review: 11 March 2025

Date of next review: 11 March 2026

Signed by:



Rev'd David Cumbers

(On behalf of the church Elders)