

Oxford Presbyterian Church Safeguarding Policy

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Section 1: Details of the Place of Worship/Organisation (Safe and Secure – Standard 1)

Introduction

Name of Place of Worship/Organisation:

Oxford Presbyterian Church (OPEC)

Contact Address:

76 Wharton Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8AJ

Meeting Address:

The North Gate Gall, 18 ST. Michael's Street, Oxford, OX1 2DU

Office Tel No: 01865 238307

Office email address: andy@oxfordpres.co.uk

Denominational affiliation: Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales (EPCEW)

Registered Charity Number: 1191763

Insurance Company: Ecclesiastical (Policy Number 06/CHA/0331840)

The following is a brief description of our place of worship/organisation and the type of work/activities we undertake with children/adults:

OPEC is a Presbyterian church plant established in Oxford in 2018. We meet on Sunday mornings and evenings for worship and it is our pleasure to incorporate several families with children as part of our congregation. Our evening worship venue has extra rooms in addition to the main worship space but our morning venue does not. In the evening, we offer the use of one of these rooms as a creche but older children who attend are expected to stay with their parents/carers in the main hall for the duration of the service. Morning and evening services have a talk designed specifically for children. In the mornings, we provide sermon-specific questions and colouring sheets for younger and older children with pens and pencils. We also provide a play mat and low seating at the back of the main hall for parents and infants who need a break.

The church is open to vulnerable adults, and we are aware of older members of our congregation struggling with dementia, and younger members with various mental health problems.

Our Commitment

As church elders we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people, and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people, and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to 'all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.' We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect, and abuse. They have a right to be protected from 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.' As an eldership 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. Issues of abuse also require pastoral and, potentially, church disciplinary responses. This policy sits alongside our responsibility to pursue those responses.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight (formerly the Church Child Protection Advisory Service) and was prepared in the light of consultations with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB), and the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The eldership undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults.
- File a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with thirtyone:eight and OSCB and any amendments subsequently published.

Section 2: Recognising and Responding Appropriately to an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse (Safe and Secure – Standards 2 and 7)

Understanding Abuse and Neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and 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 child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

- 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse are included as appendices to this policy.

Safeguarding Awareness

The eldership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers, both paid and voluntary, will receive induction training in safeguarding and will undertake the Facing the Unthinkable distance learning course provided by thirtyone:eight in house and under the Supervision of the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator. Paid workers, Elders and the Children's and Youth Ministry Leaders will also undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis through OSCB who will provide Generalist Safeguarding (Level 2) and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will attend the Specialist Safeguarding (Level 3) training.

The eldership will also ensure that children and adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Ruth Martin (hereafter the 'Safeguarding Co-ordinator') tel. no: 01865 238307

who is nominated by the eldership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory 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 Nick Hands (hereafter the 'Deputy') tel. no: 01865 238307. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0303 003 1111. 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 contact Adult Social Services or take advice from thirtyone:eight as above.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 01865 328563. The out of hours emergency number is 0800 833 408

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 0845 050 7666. The out of hours emergency number is 0800 833 408.

The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is 0845 050 7666.

Where appropriate the Safeguarding Co-ordinator has authority to contact the church's insurance company and other strategic personnel within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales.

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 thirtyone:eight.

The eldership 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 thirtyone:eight, although the eldership hope that members of the place of worship/organisation 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 directly. By making this statement that the eldership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Procedures to be Followed where there is a Concern about a Child:

1. 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 thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- 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.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- 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 thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services

2. 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 thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Procedure to be Followed where there is a Concern about an Adult:

1. Suspicions or Allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse

If an adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

2. Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works With Children

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 Safeguarding Adviser (SA)/Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Section 3: Prevention (Safe and Secure – Standards 3 and 4)

Safe Recruitment

The eldership will ensure all workers will be 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 post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a eldership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults. The eldership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Section 4: Pastoral Care (Safe and Secure – Standards 8 and 9)

Supporting those Affected by Abuse

The eldership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with Offenders

When someone attending the place of worship/organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults the eldership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

Section 5: Practice Guidelines (Safe and Secure – Standards 5, 6 and 10)

As an organisation/place of worship working with children, young people, and adults 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 accusation.

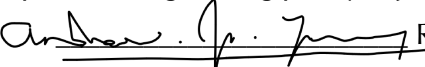
We are developing general good practice guidelines to cover our activities involving children and vulnerable adults and will circulate them to all staff and volunteers.


Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people, and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief, and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Signed by:  Rev. Andrew Young

 Rev. David Pfeiffer

Date: 10/07/2023

Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse: Abuse of a Child

Introduction

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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

England

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'.

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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious 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 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.

Appendix 2: Definitions of Abuse: Abuse of an Adult

The following definition of abuse is laid down in 'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect adults from abuse (Department of Health 2000):

'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors:

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it'.

Physical Abuse: This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

Sexual Abuse: This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse: These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

Financial or Material Abuse: This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions

Neglect or Act of Omission: This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general well being or development is impaired.

Discriminatory Abuse: This is the inappropriate treatment of a adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

Institutional Abuse: This is the mistreatment or abuse of an adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

Appendix 3: Further Definitions of Abuse

Significant Harm

This relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child. It is based on the individual child's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child. e.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important.'

Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome By Proxy)

This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Domestic Violence

The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.' (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence.

The definition of domestic violence in Working Together 2010 states:

Forced marriage and honour-based violence are human rights abuses and fall within the Government's definition of domestic violence. (Section 6.21)

Home Office (2009) What is Domestic Violence? London: Home Office defines domestic violence as 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Nearly a quarter of adults in England are victims of domestic violence. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a

greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic violence, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover. (Section 9.17)

Investigating Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse

This abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. Such abuse is profoundly traumatic for the children who become involved. Its investigation is time-consuming and demanding work, requiring specialist skills from both police and social work staff. Some investigations become extremely complex because of the number of places and people involved, and the timescale over which abuse is alleged to have occurred. The complexity is heightened where, as in historical cases, the alleged victims are no longer living in the setting where the incidents occurred or where the alleged perpetrators are also no longer linked to the setting or employment role. (Working Together 2010 Sections: 6.10 – 6.11)

Child Prostitution

Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006) Section 6.2 stated:

Children involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as the victims of abuse, and their needs require careful assessment.

See also 'Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution (2000)

In Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) it states:

New offences targeted at those who sexually exploit children and young people

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a number of new offences to deal with those who sexually exploit children and young people. The offences protect children up to the age of 18 and can attract tough penalties. They include:

- Paying for the sexual services of a child;
- Causing or inciting child prostitution;
- Arranging or facilitating child prostitution; and
- Controlling a child prostitute.

(Section 12.10)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organization defined FGM as all procedures involving partial or total removal or stitching up of the female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

Working Together (2010) states:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other nontherapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a

direct result of the procedure from blood loss or infection, either following the procedure or subsequently in childbirth.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. Further information about the Act can be found in Home Office Circular 10/2004 [Found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk].

FGM is much more common than most people realise, both worldwide and in the UK. It is reportedly practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East but is increasingly found in Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily amongst immigrant and refugee communities. There are substantial populations from countries where FGM is endemic in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Cardiff but it is likely that communities in which FGM is practised reside throughout the UK. It has been estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK. [Available from Dorkenoo et al, 2007 FORWARD UK]. (Sections 6.14 – 6.16)

Appendix 4: Signs of Possible Abuse (Child)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

Appendix 5: Signs of Possible Abuse (Adult)

Physical

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

Sexual

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

Psychological

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

Financial or Material

- 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

Neglect or Omission

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

Discriminatory

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

Institutional

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans
- Public discussion of private matter
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity

Appendix 6: Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse: Effective Listening

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or adult to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

Helpful Responses:

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

Don't Say:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

Appendix 7: Eldership Safeguarding Statement

The eldership Rev Andrew Young and Rev David Pfeiffer [hereafter referred to as eldership] recognises the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the eldership/organisation on: 10/07/2023

This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults 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, safe and happy. 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 and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every 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.

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 national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s 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.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

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.
- 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 bi-annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or an adult then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation.

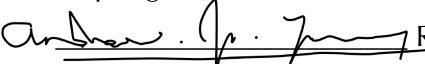
Ruth Martin (Safeguarding Coordinator)

Nick Hands (Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator)

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from Rev. Andrew Young, 76 Wharton Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8AJ

A copy of our safeguarding policy has been lodged with thirtyone:eight and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)

Signed by eldership/organisation

Signed by:  Rev. Andrew Young

 Rev. David Pfeiffer

Date: 10/07/2023

Appendix 8: Oxford Presbyterian Church (OEPC) Statement on Abuse and Pastoral Malpractice

In line with the model of servant leadership set out in scripture, OEPC affirms that abuse in all its forms is wrong before the Lord and deeply damaging to the victims.

Where the elders and/or trustees of OEPC become aware of allegations of illegal activity, we undertake to report them to the statutory authorities.

OEPC also recognises that Church leaders, and others involved in teaching, mentoring and pastoral care, can behave in ways that, whilst not illegal, fall short of the standards expected of a person with pastoral responsibility. These behaviours may range from serious misconduct (including coercion or control) to simply being unwise in relating to others. Under the guidance of our church safeguarding policy and the EPCEW book of order, and congruent with our registration with the independent Christian charity thirtyone:eight, we undertake to launch appropriate disciplinary action where it is needed. Where an elder or trustee minister is found guilty of misconduct their fitness for office will be reassessed and, where appropriate, they will be removed from their role.

OEPC recognises the lasting legacy of abusive behaviours on their victims and commits both to address this issue in its public teaching and to sensitively pastor members of the fellowship traumatised by abusive behaviours in the past, recommending Christian counsellors and other professional services as needed.

This statement is substantially based on the FIEC statement on Abuse and Pastoral Malpractice for which the Trustees of OEPC express their grateful appreciation.

Appendix 9: Safeguarding Poster

Safeguarding is a priority here

We are committed to creating safer places by following statutory guidelines on good working practice.



Your safeguarding team:

Staff safeguarding lead

Ruth Martin

Contact details

01865 238307

Deputy safeguarding officer

Nick Hands

Contact Details

01865 238307

A copy of our safeguarding policy is available upon request.

**In an emergency, or for independent advice call thirtyone:eight
on:**

0303 003 11 11

With safeguarding support from:



Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian safeguarding charity.
Charity No: 1004490. Scottish Charity No: SCO40578. Company No: 2646487