

Riverside Church Taunton



Safeguarding Policy - Children and Adults at risk

This is the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at risk
of
Riverside Church Taunton.

Adopted by the Elders and Trustees on

To be reviewed every 2 years or sooner in light of new legislation or recommendations

Review date:

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1. Policy Statement – Safeguarding children and adults at risk

1.1 Riverside Church Taunton details:

Riverside Church Taunton (RCT)

The Exchange

Hamilton Road,

Taunton.

Somerset.

office@riversidechurch.co.uk, www.riversidechurch.co.uk

Charity no: 1097758

Company no: 04645456

Public Liability Insurance provided by Congregational Insurance: policy No RC01002908

IMPORTANT NOTE: throughout the rest of this document the name Riverside Church Taunton will be abbreviated to 'RCT'

1.2 Riverside Church Taunton description of purpose and vision

We are a lively, charismatic church, committed to enjoying and sharing God's love. We believe that our main role is to help people encounter God and find out that He is relevant, powerful & engaged in this modern world as much as He has always been.

Our Mission is “to enjoy and share God’s love”

As members of the ‘Partners In Harvest’ network of churches we adopted the F.I.R.E. values.

Father’s Love revealed through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Intimacy with God, enjoyment of his presence and hearing his voice.

Restoration of the heart.

Extending the Kingdom of God through the equipping, anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Over the years God has also led us to value **Unity** and **Teamwork**.

All of these values influence what we do and shape our development.

We outwork these values and goals through our team structure

- Elders,
- Trustee/directors
- Office and facilities management team
- Co-ordination & Communications team
- Welcoming team
- Prayer team
- Worship team
- Pastoral Care team
- Children and youth team
- Discipleship team
- Teaching team
- Outreach team

Abroad:

Something about Zambia and our connection with the Fire Baptised Churches of Zambia where we also partner with a number of churches by supporting pastors and provide relief assistance in the form of monetary or personnel assistance.

1.3 Introduction

Riverside Church Taunton (RCT) is committed to nurturing, safeguarding and protecting all people, especially children and young people and those who may be vulnerable. Safeguarding children and adults at risk within RCT activities will be based on sound pastoral care and good practice.

The Children Act 1989 brought into place duties for Local Authorities, making it their responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children within their area and take reasonable steps to prevent children from suffering ill treatment or neglect. A guiding principle of the Act is that the welfare of the child must remain paramount. Since then further legislation, policy and guidance have added to the foundation laid by the Children Act 1989. The Children Act 2004 sought to improve better outcomes for children and young people, including a clearer focus on safeguarding. Working Together to Safeguard Children: „A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’ was published by the DCSF in March 2015. It sets out clear guidance for faith communities in how address safeguarding issues. RCT is committed to following these guidelines and working in line with current legislation and policy.

In more recent years society has become increasingly aware that adults also need protecting from harm and in response to this Parliament passed the Care Standards Act 2000. The Department of Health published the accompanying guidance No

Secrets, a document developing and implementing inter-agency policies and procedures to protect adults at risk. Voluntary organisations including churches were asked to develop similar procedures for safeguarding children and adults at risk they come into contact with. In 2005 further government guidance was published Safeguarding Adults: a national framework of standards and good practice in adult protection work to expand the guidance in No Secrets. The Care Act of 2014 represents significant reform to the care and support of adults, including bringing terminology changes from Vulnerable Adults to Adults at Risk with emphasis on prevention and early interventions.

RCT takes this responsibility seriously and as a result has adopted the policy contained in this document, ensuring that there are clear procedures to follow if and when incidents occur. This policy sets out the response of RCT to the request for voluntary organisations to develop procedures for safeguarding children and adults at risk that we have had contact with. This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders and Trustees of RCT.

1.4 Our commitment

As Elders and Trustees of RCT we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults at risk. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults at risk 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.”

We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children, young people and adults at risk for HCW. We are committed to promoting a climate in which anyone can feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the wellbeing of others. We are committed to ensuring that all who work with children, youth, and adults at risk and those in whom they put their trust, are aware of the safeguarding procedures and their course of action if they have any concerns that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult may be at risk of suffering abuse or neglect, or when abuse has been disclosed.

We aim to respond without undue delay to any complaint, suspicion or disclosure of abuse made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult for whom we have responsibility. This includes cooperating with wider agencies, including the Local Authority, police, and the Thirty One Eight (Formerly - Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), as and when appropriate to share information and seek guidance.

As Leaders of RCT 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. The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten ‘Safe and Secure’ safeguarding standards published by Thirty One Eight.

The Elders and Trustees of RCT undertake 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 volunteers 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 at risk.
- The Elders and Trustees agree not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Signed:

Dated:

David Parker & Karen Parker (Senior Pastors) and on behalf of the Trustees of Riverside Church Taunton.

1.5 Who this policy is intended to safeguard

This policy intends to safeguard any child, defined as a person who is under the age of 18; or 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 him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Whilst childhood is absolute and recognised in the eyes of the law, vulnerability is not a fixed category. We recognise that all of us can be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures which can impact our ability to safeguard ourselves from abuse and therefore RCT is committed to work in such a way that supports people to 'retain independence, well-being and choice and to access their human right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect.'

1.6 Who the policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone who is connected with RCT as an Elder, Trustee, Member, Employee or Volunteer, all of whom will be required to abide by the policy. All areas of activity, delivered by RCT at which children, young people and adults at risk are in attendance will be safeguarded by this policy.

1.7 Safeguarding Responsibilities

Overall and final responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Elders and Trustees of RCT who delegate operational responsibility to David Usher, Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Coordinator 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 statutory authorities.

The Safeguarding Team

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the RCT Safeguarding team, comprising of:

David Usher R.C.T Safeguarding Lead and Lead Recruiter

Post vacant R.C.T Safeguarding Deputy

David Usher - DBS ID Verifier

Post vacant - Deputy DBS ID Verifier

This team ensure that safeguarding procedures are maintained and followed at all events and across each area of work, and meet to oversee the consistent application of this policy and to ensure best practice is being followed. Safeguarding will be reviewed on a regular basis at Trustees meetings and with the Safeguarding/Elder link:

All staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk have a responsibility to:

- Read and understand the Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Attend Safeguarding Training
- Co-operate with team leaders and managers on Safeguarding matters;
- Follow the instructions of the Safeguarding procedures;
- Take all reasonable care to avoid placing themselves or those in their care at risk of mistreatment

Report all Safeguarding concerns to the designated person (as detailed in this policy statement).

1.8 Communication of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The Safeguarding policy and procedures will be included as part of the induction process for anyone working, either in a paid or voluntary capacity for RCT, or connected with an event, project or activity where children or adults at risk participate in events or services provided by RCT. As part of the recruitment process for volunteers to work within the children's work a briefing will be given before they commence their role regarding the safeguarding policy and procedure. This will raise awareness of Safeguarding and ensure all volunteers know the procedure to follow in the event of a Safeguarding disclosure or concern. These training sessions will include awareness building on the following:

- What is abuse?
- Indicators of abuse
- How to respond to disclosures of abuse
- RCT procedures for reporting disclosures or suspicions of abuse

It is the responsibility of the team leader of any activity to ensure that their team members attend the briefing and are given all relevant information about safeguarding. This includes how to operate in a safe manner to themselves and others and that the procedures are carried out fully.

2 Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

2.1 Understanding and defining abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable 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 vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those within Riverside Church Taunton 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:

- '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'.
- '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 here in our policy.

Defining abuse and neglect:

A basic definition of abuse is that it is the abuse of power by a person who is developmentally older and/or stronger than another resulting in some distress, harm or neglect of necessary attention for the victim. Abuse is a term that describes all the ways in which a person's development and health are damaged by the actions or inactions of others, usually adults. The Children Act 1989 requires that if the local authority has 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must make, or cause to be made, such

enquiries as they consider necessary.....' Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. A child may suffer more than one category of abuse. The following definitions of child abuse recommended for registration are as stated in the joint government departments" document, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" published in 2010.

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. Physical harm includes misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison is classified as physical abuse. Fabricated or Induced Illness also falls under this category and is when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health in the person they are caring for.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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

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 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 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.

Other forms of abuse include financial or legal abuse which is the wilful manipulation or extortion of the child of vulnerable person's civil rights. It may include the misappropriation of monies or goods, misuse of finances, property or possessions. This may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance or financial transactions. Such abuse may involve the use of a position of authority to persuade a person to make gifts, leave legacies or change a will.

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children, young people and adults at risk. The abusers may be

acting in concert to abuse children or adults at risk, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

2.2 Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect

When considering whether there is evidence to suggest a child or young person has been abused there are a number of possible indicators (listed below). However, there may be other explanations, so it is important not to jump to conclusions but rather seek advice from Children's Services, the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit or CCPAS. There may also be no signs or symptoms; this does not mean that a report of abuse is false.

Everyone working with children or adults at risk should be able to recognise and know how to act upon indicators that a person's welfare or safety may be at risk.

Recognising abuse is not easy as there can be various explanations of the possible indicators of abuse. Any concerns should be immediately discussed with the relevant person to assess the situation. Warning signs which may alert you to the possibility of abuse can include visual indicators, behavioural indicators, verbal indicators or a combination of all three.

They can include:

Signs Suggesting Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. that do not have an accidental explanation
Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*
- Changes in routine

Signs Suggesting 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
- 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

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse:
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play
- 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*
- Bed wetting and soiling

*These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning.

Context in which these indicators may be recognized:

There are various settings in which concerns about the safeguarding of children and adults at risk will arise. The following examples illustrate the variety of ways in which a child or vulnerable adult may present:

- During prayer ministry times, a child or person may disclose that they have been or are being abused or a person may disclose that another person is being abused to a RCT volunteer or employee
- A child may present to a member of the first aid team with injuries resulting from physical abuse
- A child or young person attending children's / youth work may display indicators, possibly resulting from abuse
- In a children's work session, a child may display sexually explicit behaviour, inconsistent with their age and understanding.

2.3 Responding to allegations of abuse and neglect

The child / vulnerable person should be listened to carefully, avoiding the use of leading questions, taken seriously and acted upon.

- **DO NOT** agree to keep the information secret. Confidentiality should never be promised, as others will need to be involved if the abuse is to stop.

- **DO NOT** say or suggest that you are shocked.
- **DO NOT** say or suggest that you don't believe the child / vulnerable person. If you are not certain the abuse has occurred you must still listen without judgment and then discuss the concerns with the designated person for your activity area.
- **DO NOT** alert the alleged offender or share the information with anyone other than the designated person, social services and emergency services.
- **DO NOT** make false promises.
- **DO** always report suspicions or allegations of abuse
- **DO** explain to the child / vulnerable person at the outset that you may have to tell someone else if you think it necessary.
- **DO** remain calm and supportive.
- **DO** show acceptance of what the child / vulnerable person says.
- **DO** reassure the child / vulnerable person that they were right to tell you.
- **DO** tell the child what you are going to do next.

Making Notes

If there is a concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse has been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body.
- Write down exactly what has been said, when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed up.
- These notes should be passed on to the Safeguarding Lead to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Adult or Children's Social Services or the police.

2.4 Action to be taken following a disclosure or suspicion of abuse

RCT takes seriously its duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk. In a situation where abuse has been disclosed or is suspected, staff or volunteers are expected to follow the subsequent guidelines.

- Under no circumstances should a volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The procedures as below should be followed:
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to David Usher (hereafter the "Safeguarding Lead") (Tel no: 01823 278037 / 07926567814) who is nominated by the Elders and Trustees 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 Lead, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made *to position vacant (hereafter the "Deputy "*.
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550.
- Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Lead should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection the Safeguarding Lead will contact Adult Social Services or take advice from CCPAS as above.
- The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) 0300 123 2224. The out of hours Emergency Duty Team number is 0300 123 23 27.
- The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 0300 123 2224.
- Avon & Somerset Police number is 101 and ask for Child protection unit. If not local to the RCT office in, the relevant phone numbers will be in the local telephone directory, and if not listed, the police child protection unit can be contacted via the main police number. Children's Services and the police are used to dealing with this type of call and will respond sensitively and appropriately. If unsure ring Thirty One Eight on 0303 003 11 11 (RCT Safeguarding advisors).
- Where required the Safeguarding Lead should then immediately inform the insurance company and other strategic personnel within the organisation.
- 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 contemporaneously and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirty One Eight on 0303 003 11 11 (RCT Safeguarding advisors).
- The Elders and Trustees will support the Safeguarding Lead/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 Thirty One Eight, although the Elders and Members hope that individual employees or volunteers will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead(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 Elders and Trustees demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
- All activity pertaining to safeguarding will be debriefed, protecting the confidentiality of those involved, with the Safeguarding team as above, to ensure accountability and shared learning. The Safeguarding team will make any suggestions regarding further training requirements to the Elders and Trustees for consideration. Where appropriate additional meetings of the Safeguarding Team will be held to debrief and discuss specific incidents.
- The role of the Safeguarding Lead/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies that have a legal duty to investigate.

- All notes or documents received by or made by the Safeguarding Coordinator will be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

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 Lead/Deputy will: Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirty One Eight on 0303 003 11 11) 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 Thirty One Eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Volunteer 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 Thirty One Eight, if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirty One Eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an ADULT is in need of protection:

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Lead/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 vulnerable 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 Adults at risk 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, Thirty One Eight on 0303 003 11 11 can be contacted for advice.
- Contact to be made to the Safeguarding Adults Service Manager, on 0300 123 2224 (office hours).

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

If an accusation is made against a volunteer (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will liaise with Children’s Social Services in regard to the suspension of the volunteer whilst also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Tel: 0300 123 2224

In addition to this, discussion will take place with the SA and/or LADO as to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

3 Prevention

3.1 Safe recruitment

The Elders and Trustees will ensure all volunteers 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 in an unsupervised role
- 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 criminal records (DBS) disclosure 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 RCT's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- If a person is recruited and later found not to be appropriate to work with children and/or vulnerable persons then their ability to work will be terminated. Until such time as the cleared Disclosure is received the person will not be allowed to be in contact with children and/or vulnerable persons capacity.

3.2 Management of Volunteers

As RCT Elders and Trustees we are committed to supporting all volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All volunteers are given training and access to RCT Safeguarding policies. The Leadership 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.

3.3 Young helpers

Thirty One Eight suggests that the minimum age for a volunteer is 16. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as someone under the age of 18. Within HCW the minimum age of a volunteer is age 16 and the recruitment process of appointment is the same as for any other volunteer. However, the volunteer aged 16 or 17 will not be counted as a 'volunteer' when considering staff/child ratios.

Young people under 16 are sometimes used as “helpers” (young volunteers) within RCT such helpers will be responsible to a named volunteer, they will never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children and they will not be counted as a 'volunteer' when considering staff/child ratios. A thorough Risk Assessment will be completed for each area an under 16 may be asked to help within.

3.4 Overseas volunteers

All people (whether paid staff or volunteers) applying to work with children or adults at risk whether from overseas or not, will undertake the same recruitment process of appointment.

Enhanced Disclosures and Overseas Criminal Records Checks

If an overseas candidate or applicant for a position within RCT which is eligible* for a Criminal Records check and it is necessary to check if they have a criminal record abroad, a criminal record disclosure check in the UK is unlikely to provide a complete picture of any past criminal history. This is because, ordinarily, the DBS cannot currently access criminal records held overseas.

In order to check an overseas applicant’s criminal record (together with up-to-date information on the costs involved), it is necessary to contact the Embassy or High Commission of the country in question. In a small number of cases, overseas criminal records are held on the Police National Computer and these would be revealed as part of a DBS check. It is possible to submit a DBS application while the applicant is still overseas, but we will still verify the applicant’s identity.

Contact details for Embassies and High Commissions in the UK may be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/foreign-embassy-in-the-uk/> Or call the FCO Response Centre Helpline on 020 7008 1500.

Certificates of Good Conduct

Where a DBS Disclosure would provide insufficient information for overseas applicants or candidates, RCT Lead Recruiter will endeavour to obtain a “Certificate of Good Conduct” in addition to any other references that may be available. The standard of foreign police checks vary and so to find out just how good they are and where to obtain these certificates, we will contact the relevant Embassy.

If someone with a substantial record of overseas residence applies to work in the regulated activity, RCT will still check the Barred Lists (Children and/or Adults at risk) via a DBS disclosure, even though little if any criminal record information may be revealed. In these cases the DBS and other disclosure checks will only form part of the overall recruitment process.

Right to Work in the UK

The DBS does not check whether an applicant is permitted to work (either paid or voluntary) within the UK and therefore RCT accepts its legal responsibility to stop illegal migrants finding employment here. The entitlement of everyone planned to be employed in the UK will be checked with the utmost thoroughness as failure to do so may result in a civil penalty or criminal conviction.

Candidates will therefore be required to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK by producing original copies of documents specified by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) or be able to prove they are exempted from having to do so.

4 Pastoral Care

4.1 Supporting those affected by abuse

The Elders and Trustees of RCT are 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 RCT. This pastoral care would likely be offered by the appropriate RCT church leaders or pastoral team relating to the individual requiring care. In circumstances where this is not possible, assistance will be given to seek alternative pastoral care or a referral made to an appropriate alternative such as professional counselling or other services.

4.2 Complaints / Allegations made against RCT volunteers

RCT will take seriously any complaints made by staff, volunteers, outside parties against a RCT volunteer (whether paid or voluntary). All such concerns will be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Coordinator who will discuss the complaint with an Elder. As a person engaged in work (whether paid or voluntary) on behalf of RCT, the Elders and Trustees have a responsibility to suspend a member of staff (which should be seen as a neutral act) from working until a complaint/allegation has been investigated by the statutory authorities.

4.3 Working with offenders

When someone attending a meeting or event arranged by RCT is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults at risk the Safeguarding Coordinator, together with an Elder and the offender's designated Pastoral carer will set up a supervisory meeting.

If deemed appropriate, the Safeguarding Coordinator will invite a member of the offender's probation team to be in attendance at the meeting.

At this meeting a supervisory network for the individual concerned will be set, pastoral care for the offender will be reviewed and boundaries defined and agreed for the offender. The offender will be required to adhere to these set requirements and boundaries.

Persons, who are known to have abused children/young people, or confess to a weakness or temptation to do so, are not allowed to be involved in our children's or youth work in any way. They are required to sign an agreement which includes them sitting apart from children/young people, staying away from rooms where children/young people meet, declining hospitality where there are children/young people, never being alone with children/young people, and never working with children/young people. Names of such people will only be made known to the people who need this information.

5 Practice Guidelines

5.1 Code of Conduct

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults at risk we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable volunteers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

It is important that we build a culture of dignity and respect towards those being cared for and this can be achieved by volunteers:

- understanding RCT's safeguarding policy and good working practice
- listening to children, young people and adults at risk.
- respecting boundaries and privacy of those being cared for
- knowing how to deal with issues of discipline in line within RCT's guidelines
- developing an awareness of disability issues and equality and inclusion issues

5.2 Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and adults at risk are in positions of trust. It is therefore vital that all volunteers/paid workers ensure they do not, even unwittingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately.

Volunteers and paid workers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult volunteer and or paid worker and a child (under the age of 18) is never acceptable and if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

The trusting relationship between volunteer and/or paid worker and child, young person or vulnerable adult means the volunteer or paid worker should never:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage
 - use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine
 - use their status and standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual
- 5.3 Additional guidelines – Working with Children and Young People

5.3 Working in Partnership

RCT promotes the standards advocated by Thirty One Eight and the legal framework for safeguarding children and young adults. We would offer support to churches who request it from our leadership and/or Safeguarding Lead, whilst always signposting other churches to specialist advisory services such as Thirty One Eight.

It is also our expectation that any organisation using RCT premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Thirty One Eight safeguarding standards.

RCT promotes safeguarding through good practice and communicates the safeguarding message through training, displaying the CCPAS helpline number, use of promotional material (e.g. DVD), and displaying the Safeguarding Poster.

This policy is a live document and to be used practically to equip those working or volunteering within RCT. It will be regularly reviewed and updated, particularly in the light of changes to legislation or best practice recommendations.

Signed by:

Name of Signatory:

Date: ????

6 Appendices

6.1 RCT Pastors and Trustees Safeguarding Statement

The Pastors and Trustees of Riverside Church Taunton (RCT) recognise 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.

Riverside Church Taunton is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

We recognise that the personal dignity and rights of adults at risk and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.

We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation.

We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults at risk.

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.

We are committed to:

Following statutory and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that all volunteers within RCT will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.

- Implementing the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and all other relevant legislation.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by HCW.
- Supporting all in RCT affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures 2 yearly.

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult then speak to one of the following who have been approved as Safeguarding Leads for Riverside Church Taunton

David Usher - Child Safeguarding Coordinator

Position vacant - Deputy Child Safeguarding Coordinator

David Usher - Adult Safeguarding Coordinator

Position vacant - Deputy Adult Safeguarding Coordinator

A hard copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the RCT office (see details above).

Signed by David Parker & Karen Parker (RCT Senior Pastors) on behalf of RCT

Signed

Date 02-05- 2019

Signed by _____ on behalf of RCT Trustees

Signed

Date ??.05.2019

6.2 Government expectations:

These are extracts from the government publication 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2003). Everyone working with children and families should...

- Be familiar with and follow your organisation's procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and know who to contact in your organisation to express concerns about a child's welfare.
- Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child, leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.
- Refer any concerns about child abuse or neglect to Children's Services or the Police. If you are responsible for making referrals, know who to contact.
- Seek to discuss your concerns with the child, as appropriate to their age and understanding, and with their parents and seek agreement to making a referral to Social Services (Children's Services) unless you consider such a discussion would place the child at risk of significant harm.
- When you make a referral, agree with the recipient of the referral what the child or parents will be told, by whom, and when.
- If you make a referral by telephone, confirm it in writing within 48 hours. Children's Services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it, so if you have not heard back within three working days, contact Children's Services again.

Statutory government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010' states that for churches and other places of worship there should be:

“Appropriate codes of practice for staff, particularly those working with children, such as those issued by the Thirty One Eight, (formerly called CCPAS)

In recognition of the expertise Thirty One Eight has to offer, 'Working Together' recommends that churches and faith organisations can:

“Seek advice on child protection issues from Thirty One Eight and that Thirty One Eight can help with policies and procedures and its manuals „Guidance to Churches“ and „Safeguarding children and young People“ can assist other places of worship and faith-based groups”.

'Working Together' also highlights:

Thirty One Eight national (24 hour) is a helpline for churches and individuals, providing advice and support on safeguarding issues”.

Taken from 'Safe and Secure: Ensuring the well-being of children and young people within the church community' Thirty One Eight.

Equal Opportunities Statement

Riverside Church Taunton is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor.

In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.

As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, posts can only be filled by Christians as the nature of these posts or the contexts in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented under Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the RCT undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows RCT to ask questions about an applicant's entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.