



# Bethnal Green Meeting House a United Reformed Church

## Safeguarding policy

### 1. Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised.

#### Whom this policy applies to

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

- All members of our church
- All those who attend and serve our church/place of worship, whether on Zoom on in-person, and its services
- Our Trustees and Elders
- Paid staff (both internal and external eg contractors or consultants)
- Volunteers
- Organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

#### Principles underpinning the policy

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

#### Definitions

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

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

#### Duty of care and confidentiality

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

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

### 2. Creating a safer culture

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

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

- Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles

- Ensure all those working with children and/or adults at risk are given copies of relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in respect of data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Elders' meetings.

### **3. Ensuring safer activities**

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

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

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

### **4. Recognising and responding to concerns**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **6. Supporting victims and survivors**

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

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

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

## **7. Key contacts**

### **Church Safeguarding Coordinator**

Sheila Akao-Okeng  
07831 943920  
safeguarding.bgmh@gmail.com

### **Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator**

Jane Dance  
020 8981 0261  
janedance@rocketmail.com

### **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Natalie Van Camp  
07483994590  
safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

### **URC Safeguarding Office** (If you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Office)

safeguarding@urc.org.uk

### **Local statutory services: Children**

If you have a concern about the welfare or safety of a child during the office hours of 9am-5pm, you should contact the Tower Hamlets MASH:

- 020 7364 5006 option 3 Extensions: 5606/5601/5358/7796
- Email: [Mash@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Mash@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) 020 8217 6484 (or use 999 if not available)

Out of hours contact (after 5pm and at weekends):

- Emergency Duty Team (EDT) 020 7364 4079

Always contact 999 in the case of immediate risk of harm.

### **Local statutory services: Adults**

- Tower Hamlets Adult Social Services 0300 303 6070 (Monday to Friday 9-5pm)
- 020 7364 4079 (after 5pm and on weekends).

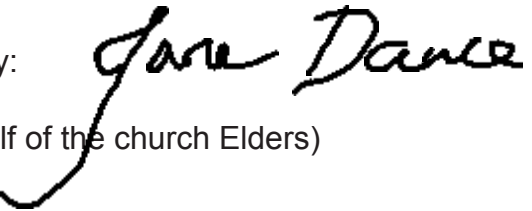
Always contact 999 in the case of immediate risk of harm.

## 8. Review

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

Date of most recent review: August 2024

Date of next review: August 2025

Signed by: 

(On behalf of the church Elders)

## **9. Details of other safeguarding organisations and support services**

### **Action for Children**

Action for Children (formerly NCH – National Children's Homes) is a leading children's charity running over 500 projects and working with children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse.

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

### **AFRUCA: Africans Unite Against Child Abuse**

AFRUCA works in UK BME communities to protect and safeguard children from abuse and harm.

[www.afruca.org](http://www.afruca.org)

### **Age UK**

Support and advice services for the elderly. The website has many useful resources including research studies and fact sheets as well as information on protecting yourself or others from abuse.

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800169 6565

### **Barnardo's**

Protecting, supporting and nurturing the UK's most vulnerable children, including campaigning to end child sexual exploitation. Provides information for parents, children, young people and professionals, showing how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to keep safe.

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

### **Bullying UK**

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

### **Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)**

CEOP is a command of the National Crime Agency, which helps to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It offers guidance, advice and accepts direct reporting.

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

### **Childline**

A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to 19 years of age.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

### **Citizens Advice**

Providing free general advice and guidance around a range of concerns such as benefits, debt, relationships, housing, law, discrimination, tax, money, healthcare and education.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### **Educate Against Hate**

A government-run website giving practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

[www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com)

## **Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)**

Resourcing parents, volunteers and workers providing a range of services including 'Positive Boundaries' which focusses on sexual bullying, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and developing positive gender relationships.

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

## **Hourglass**

Hourglass, formerly Action on Elder Abuse, is a specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards the elderly.

<https://wearehourglass.org/>

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

## **IKWRO**

Provides advice and support to Middle Eastern, North African and Afghan women and girls living in the UK, who have experienced, or are at risk of all forms of "honour" based abuse, including; forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), or domestic abuse.

[www.ikwro.org.uk](http://www.ikwro.org.uk)

Telephone: 0207 920 6460

## **Kiran Support services**

Providing help and support for Asian women and their children overcoming domestic abuse.

[www.kiranproject.org.uk](http://www.kiranproject.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 8558 1986

## **LAWRS**

A human rights, feminist organisation run by and for Latin American migrant women living in the UK

[www.lawrs.org.uk](http://www.lawrs.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 145 4909 (Monday to Friday from 11am to 1pm)

## **Lucy Faithfull Foundation**

Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. Working with families that have been affected by sexual abuse and includes adult male and female sexual abusers, young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours, victims of abuse and other family members.

[www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk)

## **ManKind**

Helping men escape domestic abuse.

[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)

Telephone: 01823 334244

## **Mencap**

Supporting and resourcing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The website has specific advice on safeguarding.

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

## **MOSAC**

Supporting non-abusing parents of sexually abused children.

[www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800 980 1958

## **National Domestic Violence Helpline**

The freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline.

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

Freephone: 0808 2000 247

## **National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

## **NSPCC**

The NSPCC are a children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands, by helping children who have been abused, protecting those at risk, and preventing abuse.

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

## **Parents Protect**

Helping parents and carers to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

[www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk)

Telephone: 0808 1000 900

## **Refuge**

Refuge is a national charity which provides a range of specialist domestic abuse services to women and children.

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7395 7700

24-hour helpline: 0808 2000 247

## **Respect**

Leading the development of safe, effective work with perpetrators, male victims and young people using violence and abuse.

[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

[www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

## **Respect: Men's Advice Line**

Run by Respect, Men's Advice Line is a helpline phone and website service for male victims of domestic abuse.

[www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 801 0327

## **Restored**

Restored is an international Christian alliance, based in the UK, working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

[www.restored-uk.org](http://www.restored-uk.org)

Telephone: 0203 9063 930 (this is not a helpline)

## **Southall Black Sisters**

A not-for-profit, secular and inclusive organisation meeting the needs of Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women by highlighting and challenging all forms gender-related violence against women, empower them to gain more control over their lives.

[www.southallblacksisters.org.uk](http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk)

Telephone: 0208 571 9595

## **Samaritans**

A crisis helpline, providing a listening service for any worries or concerns.

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Telephone: 116 123

## **Stonewall**

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## **Stop It Now!**

Stop It Now! is the Lucy Faithfull child sexual abuse prevention campaign and confidential helpline for any adult concerned about sexual abuse. Providing help, advice and support for people who are displaying or considering sexually harmful behaviour or for those concerned about another's behaviour, either a child or adult.

[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 1000 900

## **The Hideout**

Created by Women's Aid, the Hideout is a dedicated website for children and young people to find information and support about relationship abuse and where to get help.

[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

## **The Mix**

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK.

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

## **Thirtyone:eight**

An independent Christian charity providing help to individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Previously known as CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service).

[www.thirtyoneeight.org](http://www.thirtyoneeight.org)

Telephone: 0303 003 1111

## **Victim Support**

The independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

## **Women's Aid**

A grassroots federation working together to provide life-saving services in England and build a future where domestic abuse is not tolerated.

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

## **Young Minds**

A UK charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 802 5544