



# Safeguarding Policy

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# Safeguarding Policy:

## Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

### 1. Purpose

This policy with its procedures and appendices outlines how we will seek to:

- 1.1. Ensure that we provide a healthy and spiritually nurturing, environment for everyone who engages with our church community
- 1.2. Ensure that every member of our church community is protected from harm, including harassment, abuse and exploitation
- 1.3. Ensure that that any harm that is identified, regardless of where it occurred is handled effectively, promptly and proportionately
- 1.4. Ensure that when supporting people who have experienced harm that:
  - 1.4.1. We treat with dignity, respect, and compassion
  - 1.4.2. Their views and wishes are given due consideration
  - 1.4.3. We act in their best interest
  - 1.4.4. We ensure they are appropriately involved in, and informed of, decisions that affect them
- 1.5. Ensure that where concerns or support needs that fall below the threshold for reporting to statutory services are identified, responses that are appropriate, proportionate and consent-based are made
- 1.6. Ensure that appropriate, confidential safeguarding records that allow us to fulfil our duty of care to protect and promote the wellbeing of those to whom we minister, are securely kept and disposed of in line with our legal duties and best practice under both safeguarding and data-protection legislation and guidance (details of our data storage and disposal procedures can be found in the document - *Data Storage and Disposal Policy for Eastside Community Church v1*)
- 1.7. Ensure that our trustees, staff and volunteers are clear about their responsibilities and duties and are supported to fulfil them competently and confidently
- 1.8. Support the development of an open and transparent culture that listens to the views and wishes of every member of our church community and encourages and supports the raising of concerns, complaints and allegations
- 1.9. Provide leadership and accountability for every member of our church community, including our most senior leaders in relation to safeguarding
- 1.10. Ensure that all our ministry, is provided in a manner that is consistent with our biblical beliefs, and that where challenge or formal church discipline are required, Christian love, grace, mercy, gentleness and kindness characterise our interactions
- 1.11. Ensure that our leaders model biblical and Christlike leadership, valuing, caring for and nurturing those God brings under their authority with meekness and humility, as those who will give an account in the final judgement
- 1.12. Ensure that all church members have a basic understanding of safeguarding and that they understand their responsibility to raise and challenge any abusive behaviours

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies in particular to staff or volunteers who work on our behalf with vulnerable people (children, young people, their parents/ carers, adults at risk of abuse or adults with care and support needs) and to those who have leadership and oversight of the church's activities. This includes trustees, senior leaders, group/ ministry leaders, paid staff, volunteers or others working on our behalf
- 2.2. The policy also outlines the general responsibilities of every member of our church community to raise concerns about individuals or practice in the church with the appropriate officers.

## 3. Context

Eastside Community Church (ECC) is a faith community comprised of families, singles and couples who profess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Our primary geographical focus is the east side of Sheffield.

We see our responsibilities as being to Love God, Serve Others and Preach Christ.

The organisation is led by Elders and, when need and opportunity require, Deacons.

Decisions are made by the Elders in consultation with those who are regularly involved in the activities of the church and identify with it as their primary faith community

## 4. Definitions

**Additional needs:** is a term most often applied to children who require support beyond what we would usually expect to provide to a child of that age or development stage.

**Adult:** a person who is at least 18 years of age

**Adult at risk of abuse/ in need of protection:** refers to adults who have care and support needs, are at risk of abuse and, due to their support needs, are unable to protect themselves from abuse.

**Adult with care and/ or support needs:** refers to an adult who requires help with day-to-day tasks that most people would be able to perform for themselves.

**Child:** A child is a person who has not yet attained their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday which aligns with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. Unborn children are included within the scope of Child Protection.

**Child in Need:** Similar to targeted safeguarding, this refers to care and support that is offered to a child or family with more complex needs such that if effective support is not provided, the child is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health, development or wellbeing.

**Child Protection:** refers to safeguarding activity that has met the statutory threshold for referral to the Police or Social Care and involves the prevention of, or response to, "*significant harm*".

**Elder(s):** refers to those appointed by the church to that office to provide spiritual leadership and instruction. The Elders have the spiritual authority within the church.

**Deacon(s):** refers to those appointed by the church to that office to support the Elders and serve the church in practical and legal matters.

**Officers:** refers to all those who hold formal office in the church including Elders, Deacons and Trustees.

**Investigating Officer:** An individual appointed by the Elders to take the lead in an investigation into a complaint or concern which does not come under the safeguarding remit of the DSL.

**Regulated activity:** refers to activity that a barred person must not do. In simple terms, it is an activity requiring a DBS check.

**Safeguarding arrangements:** is used in this policy, and our procedures and related documents as a generic term that includes all aspects of the church's approach to safeguarding, including matters related to policy, process, culture and practice

**Single Central Record:** is the master record of all pre-appointment checks and processes that were completed prior to appointment to a role.

**Spectrum of safeguarding:** is the whole range of safeguarding activities that includes universal safeguarding, consent-based care and support (i.e., support that falls below the statutory threshold), along with the statutory responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk of abuse from significant harm.

**Staff:** refers to any paid employee or office holder.

**Statutory threshold:** the point at which the church has a duty to report a concern to report a matter to one of the statutory bodies such as the Police, Social Care or the Charity Commission.

**Sub-threshold (or consent based) safeguarding:** matters or concerns which do not meet the criteria for referral to statutory authorities. These issues may still be serious and require a response from the church, and internal processes will be followed.

**Targeted Safeguarding:** care or support that is offered to a child or their family on the basis of consent to prevent harm and promote wellbeing where there is a risk of poor outcomes for the individual if their support needs are not met.

**Trustee(s)** refers to those who are legally responsible for the governance and oversight of the charity.

**Universal safeguarding:** activity that is required to keep everyone safe. This includes those who have no additional needs and includes the interface with other aspects of safety such as Health and Safety and employer responsibilities.

**Volunteer(s):** refers to anyone who is appointed by the church to a role or who performs identified tasks on behalf of the church for which they receive no payment (other than out-of-pocket expenses that are appropriately authorised).

**Vulnerable people:** is a generic term that can be used to mean different things and so care is needed. In the context of this policy, the term is used in a generic sense to include anyone who has a support or care need or whose ability to protect themselves against abuse is limited. This includes children, young people, adults with support needs and adults at risk of abuse.

## 5. Values and beliefs

### We believe that:

- 5.1. Everyone who engages with our church community, including staff, volunteers and beneficiaries, has the right to be protected from any form of bullying, harassment, exploitation or abuse and we will seek to ensure that we provide a caring and nurturing environment that is open and transparent, and which promotes the raising of concerns with senior leaders
- 5.2. We have a particular responsibility to protect and promote the wellbeing of those who have care and support needs and those at risk of abuse including children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, ensuring they are safe while in our care. We will respond appropriately to disclosures or indicators that they may be experiencing abuse or neglect while in our care or elsewhere
- 5.3. Every member of our church community has a responsibility to act to support the values and commitments outlined in this policy
- 5.4. Everyone who engages with our church community has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- 5.5. Our approach to safeguarding is rooted in, and is a practical outworking and expression of, our biblically based values and supports and confirms our gospel witness

### 5.6. Our approach to safeguarding is shaped by our belief as Christians that:

- 5.6.1. God is holy, loving, merciful and just and he requires his people to live in accordance with his character; acting justly, loving mercy and living humbly before our God who will ultimately judge all people for the deeds performed in this life
- 5.6.2. The church, as the body of Christ on earth, should uphold truth and justice with grace, without fear or favour, prejudice or privilege.
- 5.6.3. Those in authority within the church are accountable to and will be judged by the God who sees all things and judges impartially.
  - 5.6.3.1. Higher standards are expected of leaders, who will be judged more severely than those who do not teach
  - 5.6.3.2. Leaders are to follow the example of Christ, leading with sacrificial, servant-hearted humility
- 5.6.4. Sin in the church, should be identified, confronted and dealt with thorough confession and repentance
  - 5.6.4.1. Where such sin involves criminal activity, it will be reported to the civil authorities who are appointed by God to uphold justice and order in society
- 5.6.5. The church is not a gathering of sinless and perfect people, but rather a community of grace where we seek to encourage one another to grow in faith and obedience to God
  - 5.6.5.1. We are called to encourage and challenge each other lovingly and to spur one another on to greater holiness and obedience to God in an attitude of humility, grace and forgiveness
  - 5.6.5.2. Where necessary, the church may impose formal discipline on its members in accord with its governing documents and Book of Church Order, as prescribed in the Bible.
- 5.6.6. We are to honour those that God has set in authority over us and to live as responsible and good citizens in the time and place that God has set us
- 5.6.7. Every human life, including that of the unborn, is valuable to God and each person bears his image
- 5.6.8. We live in a fallen and sinful world, where there are many risks and dangers and we must seek to protect everyone within our care, but particularly the vulnerable in our midst from those dangers
- 5.6.9. God cares for the widow, the orphan and the stranger; he calls us to protect and care for those who are vulnerable in our society and to oppose exploitation, oppression, abuse and the inflicting of harm due to negligence
- 5.6.10. Jesus' example was one of valuing and caring about those with whom he came into contact, even when delivering difficult and challenging messages
- 5.6.11. We are to love those around us as God loves them and to seek to bring healing, restoration and reconciliation to broken and damaged lives by the declaration of the gospel of Christ and the demonstration of the love of God through us

- 5.6.12. The church is a place of grace, forgiveness, justice, truth, change and holiness
  - 5.6.12.1. The gospel offers forgiveness by grace, through faith, but does not negate justice or remove the temporal consequences of the sin that has been forgiven
- 5.6.13. In this present time, the kingdom of God on earth is a spiritual kingdom that resides in the lives of and among God's people, and is primarily advanced by proclamation and the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting and convincing
  - 5.6.13.1. The kingdom of God cannot be advanced by coercion or force

## **6. Our responsibilities and commitments**

### **6.1. Our responsibilities**

- 6.1.1. To ensure that the protection and the promotion of the welfare of all members of our community, but particularly children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, is of paramount importance to us and that best practice in safeguarding is embedded into the culture of our church
- 6.1.2. To treat each person as equal in the sight of God, showing no favour or partiality
- 6.1.3. To minister to, and to encourage growth in obedience to God and his Word with equity, transparency and sensitivity, in accordance with our fundamental beliefs as laid out in our statement of faith, charitable aims and governing documents
- 6.1.4. To value, respect and listen to the wishes of every member of our community, including those who are vulnerable or find it difficult to make their voice heard
- 6.1.5. To ensure that as a church we are alert to the risks within society, including risks associated with grooming, online abuse, radicalisation, gender-based violence, exploitation, domestic abuse etc and to report appropriately
- 6.1.6. To work in partnership with children, young people, their parents/ carers, adults at risk of abuse and local and national partner agencies and organisations as appropriate, to promote the welfare of and protect, each member of our community, particularly those who are most vulnerable
- 6.1.7. To work to develop and maintain an environment that is protective, caring and nurturing for all who engage with our community, in accordance with our doctrines and beliefs as outlined in our governing documents
- 6.1.8. To ensure that everyone who ministers or serves within the life of the church is suitable and competent to do so and that they understand the responsibilities of their role
- 6.1.9. To ensure that we will support victims of past and present abuse and trauma, recognising our limitations and referring to specialist services where necessary.

### **6.2. How we will seek to fulfil these responsibilities**

- 6.2.1. We aim to visibly demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding throughout the church and our most senior leaders will support the development of best practice and provide accountability to everyone who works (whether paid or voluntarily) on our behalf, including providing accountability and challenge to each other
- 6.2.2. We will ensure that those who are responsible for safeguarding at the various levels of the church are appropriately trained and supported to fulfil their role competently and confidently
- 6.2.3. We will actively seek to create and maintain a culture that is consistent with our biblical beliefs and best practice in safeguarding
- 6.2.4. We will ensure that we have robust and relevant policies, procedures and systems that support the culture of our organisation and the work of all those involved in safeguarding, and that these are reviewed annually for effectiveness
- 6.2.5. We will ensure that we appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead and one deputy who will take responsibility for leading the safeguarding of children and adults across the organisation
  - 6.2.5.1. Safeguarding will be promoted and overseen by our senior leaders

- 6.2.5.2. Delegation of tasks and responsibilities will be clearly outlined in the relevant role descriptions and the organisation's safeguarding structures, complete with contact details, will be included in our procedures, and made available upon request
- 6.2.6. We will adopt proportionate safer recruitment best practice in the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- 6.2.7. We will provide effective leadership, management and support to the staff and volunteers who deliver services on our behalf including:
  - 6.2.7.1. Ongoing training and skills development
  - 6.2.7.2. Supervision and pastoral support
  - 6.2.7.3. Quality and performance management measures
- 6.2.8. We will ensure that we consider safety in all areas of our work and ministry:
  - 6.2.8.1. Developing a positive culture
  - 6.2.8.2. Managing health and safety through effective policies and procedures by using risk assessment processes and proportionate systems
  - 6.2.8.3. Creating a positive and nurturing environment in all aspects of the life of our community, including physical, social, emotional, psychological, spiritual etc
  - 6.2.8.4. Considering online as well as physical environments, including our use of social media and technology
- 6.2.9. We will ensure that we monitor the conduct of our staff and that we have policies, procedures and systems for managing allegations against staff or volunteers, supported by a culture of listening to allegations and responding with rigour, fairness and transparency
- 6.2.10. We will ensure that our expectations in relation to the conduct of members of our community are clear through codes of conduct, policies and procedures including:
  - 6.2.10.1. Anti-bullying and zero-tolerance approach to bullying, including cyber-bullying and the bullying of volunteers, staff and leaders
  - 6.2.10.2. Dealing with peer-abuse (including domestic abuse) and harassment (including sexual harassment)
  - 6.2.10.3. Clear accountability processes and sanctions for infringements of the codes of conduct
  - 6.2.10.4. Equality and diversity and a culture of zero-tolerance of abusive language or behaviours
- 6.2.11. We will seek to clearly identify concerns about the safety or wellbeing of those who are part of our community and to respond appropriately and proportionately:
  - 6.2.11.1. To signpost or refer them to local or national services that can help them
  - 6.2.11.2. To provide information, guidance and support as we are able
  - 6.2.11.3. To share information appropriately with partner agencies where we have concerns about the safety of an individual and statutory thresholds and/ or criteria are met
- 6.2.12. We will record and store information accurately, keeping it securely in line with our legal duties, information sharing policies and national and local guidance and agreements. This will include records such as:
  - 6.2.12.1. Consent forms
  - 6.2.12.2. Attendance data for work with children, young people and Adults at Risk of Abuse
  - 6.2.12.3. Accident and incident reporting
  - 6.2.12.4. Confidential recording of safeguarding concerns
- 6.2.13. We will involve children, young people, their parents/ carers and adults at risk of abuse in our safeguarding processes wherever beneficial and possible, making reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable them to participate in the decisions that affect them
- 6.2.14. We will ensure that we have a culture and policies and procedures for raising concerns or complaints by any member of our community including children, young people, adults at risk of abuse and their parents/ carers and for dealing with those concerns in an efficient, open, honest and fair manner, including clear appeals processes
  - 6.2.14.1. We will also ensure that our leaders are competent and confident in handling complaints, concerns and allegations



- 6.2.15. We will develop a culture that encourages every member of our community to identify and raise concerns and will support this with a clear whistleblowing policy, as outlined in the document *Eastside Community Church Safeguarding Procedures: allegations, concerns and whistleblowing* which is available upon request
- 6.2.16. We will ensure that the policy is publicly available and the procedures and codes of conduct etc are available upon request

***For further information, please contact Lucy (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at [safeguarding@eastsidecc.uk](mailto:safeguarding@eastsidecc.uk) or Jen (Safeguarding Trustee) at [jen@eastsidecc.uk](mailto:jen@eastsidecc.uk). Or leave a voicemail at 07707 337 569 and either Lucy or Jen will get back to you as soon as possible.***