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GUIDELINES FOR SAFE PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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This document is based on a Model Child Protection Policy supplied by the Churches Child Protection Advisory service - a project of PCCA Child Care. A copy of the policy and all amendments will be filed with CCPAS. This policy must not be copied by other Churches/organisations without the written agreement of CCPAS.

CHURCH STATEMENT

This policy is effective from January 2010.

All workers who are currently in place have been DBS cleared.

The New Life Church has a growing children's and young people's ministry. The Trustees, Elders, Children & Youth leaders and church pastoral team (hereafter "the leadership") take seriously the church's responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care. The leadership are therefore committed to creating a positive environment for:

- Listening to, relating effectively to, and valuing children and young people while ensuring their protection within church activities.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Ensuring that children's/youth workers are given support and training. Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory care authorities.

Date	Author	Description
June 2012	G Cosnahan	Original based on CCPAS guidelines
Sept 2015	G Cosnahan	Amended Social media policies Changed CRB to DBS
Nov 2017	G Cosnahan	Reviewed, removed section 3.22 (no longer applicable)
March 2019	G Cosnahan	Changed 'Elders' to Trustees and Elders, Amended Section 3.1

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

AREAS OF GUIDELINES

The Leadership recognises that some children and young people today are victims of neglect or physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, the Leadership has adopted the Guidelines contained in this document. These set out Guidelines in the following areas:

1. Appointing workers in the young people's and children's activities.
2. Supervision of activities and practice issues.
3. Responding to allegations of abuse.

This document also contains additional information relevant to matters referred to in the Guidelines and to be found in the appendix section of this document:

Appendix 1	Definitions of abuse
Appendix 2	Signs and symptoms of possible abuse
Appendix 3	How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse
Appendix 4	Helping victims of abuse
Appendix 5	Working with offenders
Appendix 6	Guidelines for discipline of children
Appendix 7	Disclosure information
Appendix 8	Equal Opportunities Policy
Form 1	Application form for paid or voluntary work with children and young people
Form 2	Contract for children's workers and young people's workers
Form 3	Statement on Child Protection Guidelines as displayed on the Church notice board.

1. APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS

The procedure for the appointment of any person working with children or vulnerable adults such as; youth leaders, youth club workers, children's club workers or Sunday School teachers; will be initiated by the Children's Leader, Pastors or small group leader in consultation with the Pastors, Trustees and Elders. The procedure for an appointment will include:

- Completion of an application form (form SF1-Form 4 - Application form for Voluntary Workers)
- Interviewing a potential worker and finding out about their past, and ensuring that they have resolved any issues of their own from the past.
- Talking to others who may know the person, e.g. previous church leaders, friends, house group leaders, etc., and taking up formal references in the case of a senior appointment.
- Discussing with the applicant in detail the Church's Guidelines on safeguarding children's welfare, and expectations in regard to practice issues, e.g. supervision of children's activities and workers, etc.
- Issue of a copy of the Church's Guidelines on Safeguarding Children's Welfare policy to the applicant.
- Agreeing to a probationary period, e.g. three months. During this time, if appropriate, the worker could be attached to a more experienced worker, and feedback encouraged from all involved on the progress of the new appointee.
- Completion of all forms to obtain a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check or provide a valid DBS registration number.
- No appointment will be made until these procedures have been completed. The offer of the appointment will then be made using form 2 ensuring they sign to acknowledge that they have read and will adhere to the Church's Guidelines on safeguarding children's welfare. The appointment is only made with the condition that a full clearance is given from Disclosure & Baring Service.

When considering the suitability of a prospective worker, reference will be made to the following criteria:

- Any adult who is a known convicted offender who has committed acts of violence or sexual offences against children or adults will not be allowed to work with children, help with a crèche, serve refreshments to children or have any contact with children.
- If church leaders have reservations about an individual's behaviour, lifestyle, attitudes or spiritual commitment, they should not be appointed to work with children but found some other sphere of work within the church.
- Applicants who are not successful will be offered a discussion as to why this decision has been made.

All Children's & Youth workers will be encouraged to meet together with a leader to discuss work programmes and areas of concern, including issues relating to discipline (see Appendix 6 for discipline guidelines).

2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPERVISION OF GROUP / CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

In New Life Church we have a number of departments or services which involve children, e.g. youth club, children's club, Sunday School, etc. We recognise that church groups often fail to provide guidelines for workers to supervise the children in the church's departments and specific activities. It is easy to assume that everyone knows what is appropriate in the circumstances and is working to the same end. This is rarely related to the supervision of children and specific activities. These Guidelines are provided to assist our case when there is an absence of specific expectations. We believe that clear guidance to protect children from abuse and workers from false accusation needs to be given, to include matters dealt with in this section.

2.1 CHILD SUPERVISION: PRACTICAL ISSUES

We as a Church will attempt to follow the ratio of adults to children recommended by the CCPAS and based on regulations concerning day care for under eights

	Adults	:	Children
0 to 2 years	1	:	3
2 to 3 years	1	:	4
3 to 8 years	1	:	8

Where possible ensure that a worker is not alone with a child, but being realistic in acknowledging circumstances where this might be necessary or helpful. In these cases we would leave doors open when seeing a child.

Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling) and a young person is being seen on their own, then ensure that others know the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.

No person under 16 years of age should be left in charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

A register of children or young people attending the club or activity shall be kept, and a register of helpers.

We will encourage our workers to record unusual events with each leader recording what they witnessed. This can be very helpful if leaders have to deal with a difficult young person who may subsequently make accusations of assault. A young person who constantly makes throwaway sexual comments about church workers may later make an allegation of actual abuse. Records of previous examples of this behaviour will enable any allegation to be seen in context. Of course, if a number of young people all make similar comments about one worker, this should warn the leadership that they have a problem with that person. Log books can protect both children and workers.

It is suggested that workers also record in the log book incidents such as fights and what action was taken by the leaders. As the information in the log book is likely to be very sensitive, the log book should be kept separate from the accident book, which is used to

record any accidents or injuries. Parents (and older children) should be asked to sign the accident book (but they would not see what was written in the log book). As accusations of abuse may be made many years later, records should be kept for as long as possible. Insurance companies advise that records should be kept indefinitely. Certainly the experience of the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service is that allegations can be made very many years after an event.

2.2 BOUNDARIES

Wherever possible workers need to follow the following guidelines or boundaries:

- The level of personal care, e.g. toileting, must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Guidance on touch - e.g. physical contact between adults and children - can be quite healthy and acceptable in public places, but discouraged in circumstances where an adult/child is on his own.
- Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activity, e.g. rough/sexually provocative games and comments.
- If you invite a child to your home, ensure this is with the knowledge of the team/leadership and that a parent is aware. (This will not necessarily mean that a child will be safe.)
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children are with the knowledge of the team/leadership and have parental approval. In some circumstances it may be unwise to carry a particular child on their own.
- Consider carefully arrangements for residential holidays and whether adults should share sleeping accommodation with children. This might be an unwise practice generally, but appropriate, say, with very young children or in a large dormitory situation or on an activity such as youth hostelling where it is the custom.
- Avoid one to one social media interactions including being friends/buddies etc. with any child under your supervision. Use group pages where communication is shared to avoid this.

2.3 SAFETY MATTERS

The Church will expect leaders in the department dealing with children to be aware of and adhere to the Church's policy on safety.

Transportation of children - check that drivers carry a full driving licence and valid insurance and that seat belt rules, requirements for minibuses, etc. are complied with. A fact sheet, "Driving a minibus in Great Britain" explains the rules in more detail and can be obtained from the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (tel: 01792 782318).

As part of an annual review of this document, safety issues will be reviewed.

2.4 SUPPORTING/SUPERVISING WORKERS

In supporting our workers we will encourage teamwork and mutual accountability.

We will encourage anyone seeing another worker acting in a way which could be misinterpreted, to speak to that individual or the supervisor about the concern.

We will arrange regular workers' meetings to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing of concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance, and to support each other.

We would expect all our workers to adhere to the guidelines listed in this document. In circumstances where it is necessary to depart from agreed procedures, say in an emergency or for some valid reason (perhaps to protect a child), permission should be sought in advance from a leader, or reported immediately afterwards where this is not possible.

We will review reported incidents and how the guidelines were found to be adhered to or not in these situations. If necessary we will amend our guidelines as based on our experiences.

We will keep a written record of issues/decisions discussed at meetings.

As a Church we undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office. It will therefore be unacceptable for those people in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst ever the relationship of trust continues.

3. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

The Church takes the possibility of abuse very seriously and has appointed three people to act as "Co-ordinators". A Co-ordinator's responsibility is to ensure that the incident is properly discussed, followed up and action recorded. The Co-ordinator will contact the statutory authorities if necessary. They may be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company. The Co-ordinator has a collective responsibility with the other two to make sure that procedure is reviewed annually.

3.1 WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK THAT ABUSE MAY HAVE OCCURRED

If you have any concerns, do not panic but contact one of the Co-ordinators. Posters with contact details are in the foyer and upstairs hall.

- If a child has talked to you about abuse, make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of being told), writing down exactly what the child said. Write down what you said in reply to the child, when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity). Record times and dates of these events and when you made the record. Keep all the handwritten notes securely, even if these have been typed subsequently. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to a Co-ordinator. Do not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the Co-ordinators.
- If a child has talked about abuse, the worker/Co-ordinator should discuss whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.
- Wherever possible suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
- When the incident is resolved, the Co-ordinators will review what has been learned in dealing with it.
- If you are suspicious in any way of a child or youth worker. Report your concerns as soon as possible to a Co-ordinator. Do not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the Co-ordinators.
- If the suspicions in any way implicate a designated Co-ordinator, and the others are unavailable, a report should be made to and advice obtained from the PCCA Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).
- It is of course the right of any individual or citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although we hope that members of the Church will use the above procedure.
- A Church Child Protection Guidelines Statement (Form 3) will be displayed on the Church notice board.

For Definitions of Abuse, see Appendix 1.

For Signs and Symptoms of Possible Abuse, see Appendix 2.

3.2 CO-ORDINATOR RESPONSES

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Co-ordinators will:

1. Contact Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The church in these circumstances should not inform the parents.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. A Co-ordinator will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances, speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor (or health visitor) will then initiate further action if necessary.
4. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, a Co-ordinator will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, a Co-ordinator should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
6. Where the Co-ordinators are unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations of sexual abuse, a Co-ordinator will:

1. Contact the Social Services duty worker for children and families or the Police Child Protection Team directly. The Co-ordinator will NOT speak to the parent (or anyone else, except the church leaders if it seems necessary).
2. If for any reason the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
3. Under no circumstances will the Co-ordinators attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of a Co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of neglect will normally be reported to a Co-ordinator, the absence of a Co-ordinator should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.
5. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Co-ordinators as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services Department, that person retains a responsibility as a member

of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department, and should do so without hesitation.

6. The Leaders will support the Co-ordinators 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.

3.3 DEALING WITH KNOWN OFFENDERS

Where someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, e.g. a Schedule 1 offender, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the leadership in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. Before this takes place the Co-ordinators will meet to discuss this. For guidelines on working with offenders see Appendix 5.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006), are as follows:

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. 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 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 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.

Sexual Abuse

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 or 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

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, 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-takers, 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.

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

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

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

1. Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
2. Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
3. Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
4. Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
5. Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
6. Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
7. Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.

Emotional Signs of Abuse

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

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General Points

1. Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
2. Keep calm.
3. Look at the child directly.
4. Be honest.
5. Tell the child you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality.
6. Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for abuse.
7. Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
8. Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful Things You May Say or Show

1. I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says).
2. Thank you for telling me.
3. It's not your fault.
4. I will help you.

Don't Say

1. Why didn't you tell anyone before?
2. I can't believe it!
3. Are you sure this is true?
4. Why? How? When? Who? Where?
5. Never make false promises.
6. Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else".

Concluding

1. Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
2. Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
3. Contact the person in your church/organisation responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC.
4. Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

HELPING VICTIMS OF ABUSE**PASTORAL CARE/COUNSELLING**

Counselling for sexual abuse is complex, requiring a great deal of skill and training. As a general rule counselling will not be offered until after any court proceedings unless agreed by Social Services and/or Crown Prosecution Service/Police. Where professional counselling is needed before a court case, it should be made available subject to the above.

Pastoral support, however, is often useful in helping the survivor to deal with the situation, acknowledge feelings and pray about issues.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Some children will have been hurt so badly that they will need medical help. There could be lasting damage. Sexual and emotional abuse and neglect may not, perhaps, leave visible scars (although in certain cases it will) but there are often other possible effects which could continue into adulthood as outlined below.

EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL EFFECTS

There can be problems of poor self-image and blame. A child may feel she/he is "dirty" or unlovable. Self-esteem may be affected. "God couldn't love me, I am too bad". We need to stress that they are not to blame for the abuse. Sensitive pastoral support can help a child to accept that God loves them just as they are, no matter what. Romans 8 v 35-39 asks if anything or anyone can separate us from the love of God. The answer is, no, nothing can.

As this truth begins to dawn on them, their self-esteem and confidence may grow. They also need to know that you will not reject them either because of the "shameful" things that have happened to them. John 15 v 12 says, "Love each other as I have loved you".

ISSUES OF FATHER GOD

Abused children and adults will often speak of difficulties in relating to "Father God". This may be because "Father" represents an absent, silent, mocking, violent or sexually abusive person in a position of power and authority. A child or young person needs to understand the truth that Father God will not treat them as the abuser did, but it may take some time to fully accept. Be patient - God is patient!

Some survivors may relate more comfortably to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, or the imagery of a Mother Hen (Matthew 23 v 37).

FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL ISSUES

Sexual abuse may make the victim feel they could never have a sexual relationship again - they have been too hurt; it would bring back memories of the abuse and the abuser; they feel that they are not good enough for someone to love.

Others might feel that the only safe sexual partner would be one of the same sex, because their abuser was of the opposite sex. Still others might choose to have a same sex relationship because they "must be gay for it to have happened". Just because a person is abused by a person of the same sex, it does not mean that they will necessarily acquire homosexual tendencies. Conversely, just because someone is homosexual it does not mean they have been abused.

A young person may need reassurance on what is OK within the sexual side of a relationship.

Sexual abuse may have the effect of awakening the sexual feelings of the child in a way which they find hard to deal with and feel guilty about. They might have “enjoyed” certain touches and feelings, they might even have approached the abuser for further contact because it felt “nice” or because it was expected. They may indulge in frequent masturbation. All this happens because children may have had their sexual beings aroused for the purpose of gratifying their abuser. Such activity is age-inappropriate. A crime has been committed against them. They will need reassurance that they are not to blame for the abuse. Sexual feelings just show that their bodies are working OK. (Read Song of Solomon, ch 8 v 4 NIV.)

FORGIVENESS

Sometimes Christians make the mistake of forcing an abused person to forgive. Certainly, many Christians accept that God expects us to forgive those who sin against us (Matthew 6 v 12) but you cannot rush people - forgiveness may eventually be achieved in stages. In counselling, survivors of abuse are helped to understand that it is impossible to fully forgive until the full effects of that abuse is known (e.g. a child who is abused and subsequently suffers pelvic inflammation leading to sterility, will not understand that at the time. Further layers of forgiveness must follow as an adult.) Forgiveness may be an act of the will first but, by God's grace, it can become a reality. This has the effect of freeing the victim and releasing the abuser into God's hands. Forgiveness may be at the end of the road to healing. Whatever we believe, the victim may choose not to forgive and it is not for us to condemn them. God knows the difficulties that survivors face in this area.

THE OTHER SIDE OF FORGIVENESS

The other side of forgiveness is for an abuser to understand the awfulness of the crime committed by them against the child. If they are able to lessen the harmful after-effects by a full apology and an offer to pay for any therapy needed by the person, so much the better, providing that the survivor does not see this as another attempt to control them. However, just because someone apologises and is forgiven, it does not mean that all can be forgotten and that the victim can/should be fully reconciled with them. That might be very unwise (see Responding to Perpetrators) nor would we assume that forgiveness is inevitable.

ISSUES OF TOUCH

The abused person may be frightened by touch because they associate it with violence or sexual assault. They may not have received tenderness and love, so hugging or even a handshake could feel threatening.

Consider how you pray for someone who has experienced abuse. Don't assume it will be OK to “lay hands” on them. Ask first and respect their answer.

Children and young people who associate touch with sexual activities may feel sexually aroused and flirt provocatively with adults or other children, touching them in the genital or breast area. For your own safety and to help them learn what is acceptable behaviour, you will need to explain why you are not responding to their overtures. It might be wise not to see such children and young people on their own.

OTHER COUNSELLING ISSUES

Like some victims of other kinds of trauma, survivors of child sexual abuse may try to avoid remembering what happened and many report periods of time when they totally or partially forgot the abuse. Remembering may be triggered by an event or may be spontaneous. Memories leading to allegations of abuse may emerge in the course of counselling or therapy quite unconnected with abuse.

Church leaders and counsellors need to take memories of sexual abuse seriously. They are not necessarily the key to the person's present problems. The counsellor or therapist should work with the individual examining memories, thinking about experiences and dealing appropriately with the past and the present. Counsellors must not impose their own conclusions even if they suspect that child sexual abuse may have occurred.

Distressed people are in a vulnerable state and may be susceptible to suggestion from an untrained counsellor or other helper. They may fear being rejected if they appear uncooperative or may want to please the person helping them. Both counsellor and client may be tempted to look for a single identifiable cause for a complex problem. Group sessions, hypnotism, workbooks or other techniques which strongly encourage the pursuit of memories of abuse may actually make it harder to determine truth unless carried out in a professional way. It could damage not only the individual, but others too, if that person responds to what they have come to believe by, for example, wrongly accusing family members of abuse.

There have been occasions when a well-meaning leader suggested to a person seeking counsel that perhaps they have been a victim of abuse. Such remarks can be taken on board and owned by the counsellee without any foundation whatsoever, but the person comes to believe it. In some cases it has been known that an individual providing this information has claimed it is a message from God - a word of knowledge. Great pastoral care is required in churches which use spiritual gifts and the Bible also tells us to test these gifts (1 John 4).

COUNSELLING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Trained counsellors will need to consider very carefully the basis on which services are provided, as in some circumstances it will not be possible to maintain confidentiality if this places a child at risk. This can include circumstances when an adult tells you of past abuse, naming the perpetrator as someone who is known still to have responsibilities for or contact with children. Understandably, you are concerned for your counsellee, but it is quite possible that other children are being abused now or could be in the future. You may have information which could protect them.

There are a couple of things we need to remember. Firstly, the sexual abuse of children is often addictive. People can continue abusing into old age. Secondly, it is our view that responsibilities for the protection of children override our responsibility towards a counsellee. Clearly the matter has to be handled very sensitively and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service would be happy to advise in individual circumstances. We suggest that in any event total confidentiality should never be offered.

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the leadership in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep.

SAFETY OF CHILDREN FIRST

NB: Don't forget that a sexual offender could be male or female, though we have referred to "he" consistently in this and sections which follow. Sexual offences are addictive in nature, so no matter how old the offence is, there may still be a current risk.

An adult who is a known convicted offender who has committed acts of violence or sexual offences against children or adults should never work with children again. This is in the interests of children and the person who has offended in the past. They might have accepted responsibility for their previous acts, be genuinely repentant, and have responded positively to a programme of help but it would be completely unacceptable to place children in a situation where there is a known risk - i.e. the abuser could succumb to temptation and re-abuse.

There is a place for each of us within the church, but for those who have offended or are not suited or we have reservations about, it should be in an area unconnected with children's and youth activities. Don't even think about letting them serve the refreshments or drive the minibus! You will be placing them on a pedestal in the children's eyes and give them opportunities to cultivate relationships with children.

Churches should consider the criteria by which they exclude young people and adults from being involved with children. If churches have reservations about an individual's behaviour, lifestyle, attitudes and spiritual commitment, then they need to consider the risks to which they might be exposing children. We should never use children as experiments if we have reasons to doubt a worker's suitability for the job. **No one has a right to work with children.**

If the Church fails to comply with the new Vetting and Barring laws, legal action could be taken against both the Church and the individual concerned which could lead to custodial sentences for both.

BOUNDARIES AND CONTRACTS FOR OFFENDERS IN CHURCHES

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then it will be important to extend love and friendship to the individual, but at the same time the leadership will need to ensure that a frank discussion takes place with the person concerned and efforts made to sustain open communication. It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries for both the protection of the young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly suspected of abuse.

Someone who is on an after-care licence for sexual offences against children may be receiving a high level of intensive supervision from a specialist probation officer. There could well be a restriction on where he lives and works - particularly if he is thinking of returning to his family when children are still living there, or if he was lodging where there are children, or if he was living close to a school. An offender who has served his sentence may still have restrictions placed on him and be registered with the police. Not

everyone who commits sexual offences against children will have a custodial sentence, some will have been placed on probation.

Sexual offences are often addictive, so you cannot assume that he has “learnt his lesson”, “forgive and forget”, etc. He may well be tempted to re-offend, he may fantasise about abusing and he might try to gain access to children and young people by befriending their parents. He may try to manipulate and control and be coming to the church specifically to contact children.

Churches should be looking for direct contact with the person's supervising probation officer, and also expect that the supervising officer would be making contact with the church on any issue relating to the safety of children.

With the individual's agreement (and, in certain cases, even without the individual's agreement) it may be possible to explain the circumstances to the church congregation in such a way that promotes understanding and support to the individual, but at the same time ensuring that other church members do not unwittingly allow children contact with the individual concerned. Often church leaders fear the effect that telling everyone would have on the congregation - they may gossip widely, tell the press or vote with their feet! The offender might not want the church to know anyway, or get sexual pleasure or undue attention from relating their story.

In deciding whether or not to tell the church, it will be important to not only listen to what the offender says but talk to statutory agencies who may be involved. For example, a probation officer will know the person's background, crime details, risks, treatment plans, etc., and will be able to advise you on management.

In any event, it will be important for key people, like crèche leader, Sunday school leader, youth leader, etc., to know that the person is attending the church and that he should not be having contact with the children. He should never be on his own with children and young people.

1. In all circumstances we advise that leaders (we suggest more than one) should meet with the offender at an early stage. Boundaries that the person will be expected to keep to should be discussed. A written contract is advisable. Although this sounds very formal, it would need to be because of the manipulative ways of sex offenders. This contract should involve the person's family and partner who may also be attending church and will need to be informed. The statement might begin by setting out the pastoral support and care which is being offered. The following example might be helpful in considering other points to be included:
2. I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people.
3. I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the church leadership.
4. I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people.
5. I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where children's activities are in progress.
6. I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
7. I accept that “x” and “y” will sit with me during church activities, accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a Schedule 1 offender/registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act.

8. I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care.
9. I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary (where appropriate).
10. I accept that "z" will provide me with pastoral care.
11. I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation.
12. I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every 12 months and will remain for an indefinite period.

The document will need to be signed and dated by the offender and by the church representatives. There is, of course, always the issue of someone not keeping to the boundaries set. The legal advice we have received is that the management body of the church (Trustees or whoever) are perfectly entitled to prohibit someone coming onto the premises. In circumstances where you have concerns and someone leaves to go elsewhere, then we do feel that the statutory agencies, such as probation and social services, as well as other local churches or relevant organisations, should be informed.

These issues do raise a lot of anxiety. However, if you know of someone's past, then you can do something actively to protect children. The fact of the matter is that the majority of those who offend against children are not caught. Of those who are, few are prosecuted, and of those few are convicted. Therefore, there is a sense in which it is easier to deal with one known person than the other ninety and nine we don't know about and who could be coming to our church every week. Sometimes it is worth reminding congregations of this fact. In certain circumstances the grass might seem greener down the road, but that church might not take child protection as seriously as we do!

Every effort should be made to protect children whether or not we have a known problem. If we have established boundaries already as to who has access in the crèche, etc., then we don't suddenly have to change everything immediately a person with a known problem comes into our church. However, be prepared to re-assess arrangements on a regular basis as well as when a known offender joins the church.

The Church has a duty to refer to the ISA information about individuals working with children or vulnerable adults where they consider them to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm.

PASTORAL CARE AND OTHER ISSUES

When an allegation/suspicion arises in a church, a period of investigation will follow, which will be stressful for all involved. Support will need to be given to the suspected perpetrator without compromising the children or their families. This is one reason for limiting information in relation to allegations of abuse on a "need to know" basis. In this way leaders not privy to the details are free to offer support to other parties, including the suspected perpetrator. Where an investigation is underway this support should be with the knowledge of the child protection authorities.

It may be necessary, for the sake of the child (or to satisfy the needs of an investigation), for the alleged perpetrator to worship somewhere else. In such cases the new church

leaders will need to be informed of the reasons so that the individual is given as much support as possible and so that child protection issues in the new church can be considered.

Whilst pastoral care for an alleged perpetrator is essential - retaining contact, prayer, support, encouraging him to seek legal advice and possibly accompanying him to court hearings - it should not be at the expense of the victim, their family or of justice. The victim should not sense collusion or the taking of the perpetrator's side. There should be no minimising of what has been done (or alleged) or even the denial of the perpetrator's responsibility.

The church can help by ensuring that one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, another offers support to the victim and their family, and yet another gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator. It may be necessary to appoint yet another person to support the perpetrator's family.

Where the perpetrator is accepting some responsibility, then they should be encouraged to seek specialised interventions/treatment to reduce the risk of re-offending. This may only be effective once the investigation and legal processes have been completed.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE IN CHURCH GROUPS

- ✧ Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. (Hebrews 12:5-12 and Proverbs 22:6).
- ✧ Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding and pray for and with the child.
- ✧ Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- ✧ Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model, setting a good example. You can't expect children to observe ground rules if you break them yourself.
- ✧ Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy.
- ✧ Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said - this avoids manipulation.
- ✧ Look honestly at your programme - if children are bored, they misbehave. Is the programme at fault?
- ✧ NEVER smack or hit a child and don't shout - change voice tone if necessary.
- ✧ Discipline out of love, NEVER anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger.)
- ✧ Lay down ground rules, e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, a respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.
- ✧ Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We need to ask why the child is behaving that way.
- ✧ Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate if they are disruptive as a last resort.
- ✧ Have the child sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to the child.
- ✧ Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.
- ✧ Take the child aside and talk to them, challenge them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.
- ✧ Warn a child that you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. Warn them, send them outside the room (care re supervision), back into the service or ban them for a week. (Never a total ban without reference to your leader and ensure parents are advised in cases of banning.)
- ✧ If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from a leader. (See Church Guidelines on Child Protection.)
- ✧ Pray before you meet, and talk over the session before you leave.

HANDLING, USE, SECURE STORAGE, RETENTION & DISPOSAL OF DISCLOSURES AND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

In consideration of our use of the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service, to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, we agree to comply with the DBS Code of Practice, Data Protection Act and other legislation in regard to the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information.

Storage and access

Disclosure information is stored in a locked filing cabinet, with access strictly limited to those who are entitled as part of their official duties.

Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. Disclosures or Disclosure information are only revealed to The Administrator and The DBS Co-ordinator (Church verifiers) and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, the only information retained on file is a letter from CAS indicating an applicant's suitability for the post applied for. Disclosure information may be kept by CAS for up to six months for the resolution of disputes or complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If this happens it will be done in consultation with the CAS who will seek advice from the DBS giving full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. The conditions regarding safe handling and storage will continue to apply.

Disposal

Once the retention period has lapsed, CAS will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately and appropriately destroyed (e.g. by shredding, pulping or burning). While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will continue to be kept securely. Neither New Life Church nor CAS keep any original documents or copies relating to the disclosure certificate. However, we may keep a record of it, i.e. the name, date and type of disclosure, the position for which it was requested, the unique reference number and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Our relationship with CAS (The Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) as an Umbrella Organisation

We accept that the CAS, as our umbrella organisation, has a responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, that we comply with all the requirements in the DBS Code of Practice, this and other policy statements, and in other DBS procedures and processes. We undertake to keep CAS informed of any changes in our organisation, personnel or practices which could materially affect our ability to work within these expectations.

1. Statement of Equal Opportunities Employment Policy

The church is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields of its activity in accordance with this Policy Statement.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'Personal Status' refers to sex, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, marital status, disability, age, offending background or religious belief.
- 2.2 'discrimination' is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits of the case but on grounds of 'Personal Status'.

3. The Church's Policy Statement

The Church is an equal opportunities employer and will seek to ensure that:

- 3.1 Every applicant for a job, or every employee, shall be given equal opportunity whatever his or her Personal Status, except in a matter of religious belief in any case where the nature of the work is declared and is seen clearly to require a Christian commitment, membership of or links with a Baptist Church, or another Christian church, or sympathy with its aims.
- 3.2 Persons already employed will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.
- 3.3 The application of any recruitment, training and promotion policies will be solely on the basis of job requirements and the individual's ability and fitness for that work.
- 3.4 All persons responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees will be given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.
- 3.5 Appropriate training will be provided to enable employees to perform their jobs effectively.
- 3.6 Encouragement is given to all employees to take advantage of opportunities for training.
- 3.7 Age limits for entry to training are not such as unnecessarily to exclude certain groups of employees.
- 3.8 Recruitment, literature and advertisements will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants as against another unless there is a genuine occupational requirement, which will be clearly stated.
- 3.9 The most effective ways will be employed to bring job vacancies to the attention of potentially disadvantaged groups.
- 3.10 Applicants for posts will be given clear, accurate and sufficient information through advertisement, job descriptions and interviews, to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post.

- 3.11 As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- 3.12 A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for 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.
- 3.13 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 separately and in confidence to the Recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process.
- 3.14 Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 3.15 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 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.
- 3.16 At interview, or in separate discussions, 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 directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
- 3.17 We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- 3.18 Employment policies and procedures are kept under review, in appropriate cases by formal monitoring routines, to ensure that they do not operate against the church's Policy Statement.
- 3.19 Where it appears that the church's Policy Statement is not being observed the circumstances will be investigated to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage employees and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable.
- 3.20 Appropriate action is taken where necessary to redress the effects of any actions, policies or criteria which are found to have unjustifiably limited the observances of the church's Policy Statement.
- 3.21 Particular care is taken to deal with any complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment.

This document is based on a Model Child Protection Policy supplied by the Churches Child Protection Advisory service - a project of PCCA Child Care. A copy of the policy and all amendments will be filed with CCPAS. This policy must not be copied by other Churches/organisations without the written agreement of CCPAS.

