

Safeguarding Policy: Children and Adults at Risk

Our **mission** is to provide a breathing space where the people of Coventry and the surrounding areas are readily able to enjoy hospitality of heart and hearth, experience beauty and silence, in all seasons. We offer a haven where the general public can experience renewal and reconciliation, rest and restoration, and where conversations unfold that draw their spirits towards God.

In seeking to outwork that mission, we believe that all people – irrespective of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity – have a right to be treated with respect, protected from harm, and offered hospitality, nurture and healing in a space that is safe and caring.

As part of the Christian Church living in the spirit of the Gospel, we are committed to protect and care for everyone in our community, but especially adults at risk and children.

We are committed to:

- The care of, the nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children and adults
- The establishing of a safe, caring community which provides a loving environment where those affected by abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse

We will seek to keep children and young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Sharing information about safeguarding with users, staff and volunteers
- Following appropriate local and national legislation and guidance in relation to safeguarding
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing concerns, including any allegations against any trustee, staff member, or volunteer, with agencies who need to know, and involving those affected appropriately
- Offering informed support to anyone who has suffered abuse, recognising the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation, and seeking to protect survivors from the possibility of further abuse or harm
- Offering care and support to any member of our community known to have offended against a child or adult
- Challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of respect and responsibility, where they are trusted by others

Staff and Volunteers: recruitment, training, supervision and support

All staff and volunteers who engage in activities involving direct contact with children and young people or adults at risk will undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Breathing Space will accept as proof of this a recent (within 2 years) DBS certificate obtained through a recognised church, charity, or statutory organisation.

Volunteers offering spiritual direction or retreats through Breathing Space will be required to provide evidence of engagement with ongoing supervision and training/cpd.

Any employed staff working directly with children or adults at risk, in addition to providing a CV and completed application form will also supply the names of two referees who can testify to any previous work with children or adults at risk. References will always be checked.

Staff and volunteers will only work in a supervised capacity until all checks and references are complete.

All employed staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role as part of their induction and at regular intervals throughout their employment.

Volunteers will be trained as appropriate for their specific role but as a minimum should be alerted to the fact that if they become concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk they should always contact a Trustee or supervisor without delay and share their concern.

The Trustees will ensure that support is provided to any staff member or volunteer through stressful situations, including dealing with child or adult welfare concerns, complaints or hostility. All employed staff will have an identified line manager and be appraised regularly.

Sharing information and responding to concerns

Breathing Space staff and volunteers will conform to the procedures of the Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Boards of Coventry and Warwickshire. If any concerns for the welfare of children or adults at risk come to the attention of staff or volunteers, the concerns should be discussed without delay with a supervisor or Trustee.

All staff and volunteers must be aware that no absolute guarantees of confidentiality can be offered. If a staff member or volunteer becomes aware that a child or vulnerable adult has been harmed or is at risk of harm through abuse or neglect, they have a responsibility to discuss those concerns with their supervisor or a Trustee, and may be obliged to share that information with statutory agencies.

If any person (adult or child) makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse, past or present, the person to whom that disclosure is made carries a responsibility to ensure that the disclosure is responded to appropriately. This includes the following actions:

- Listen to the disclosure in a respectful, attentive and validating manner
- Be clear and honest with the person making the allegation about the limits of confidentiality, especially in relation to child protection

- Discuss the concerns with their supervisor and/or a Trustee to decide on the appropriate course of action
- Where appropriate, refer the concerns to the relevant authorities (social services or police) following the local Children or Adults Safeguarding Board procedures (see links below)
- If there is any concern that a child or adult may be at immediate risk of harm, the police should be contacted immediately
- Keep careful records of the allegation and any actions taken in response to it

Allegations against staff/volunteers

It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a staff member/volunteer that action is taken quickly and professionally whatever the validity. In the event of any member of staff /volunteer suspecting another member of staff/volunteer of abusing a service user, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to a Trustee as soon as possible.

On being alerted to any allegations against or suspicions of abuse by a staff member or volunteer, the Trustee must contact the Coventry Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – see link below)

Definition of terms

Abuse - the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. This includes physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, institutional abuse, financial or material abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and acts of omission.

Child - anyone under the age of 18 years.

Adult at Risk - a person aged 18 years or over who is experiencing or at risk of abuse (including neglect). People may be additionally at risk because of the impact of previous experience, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. The term 'vulnerable adult' is also used in some legislation.

Breathing Space – refers to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation 'Breathing Space, Coventry'; any premises owned or used by the CIO; and any activities carried out under its auspices.

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Links

Coventry Safeguarding Children Board:

www.coventry.gov.uk/info/206/coventry_local_safeguarding_children_board

Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board:

www.coventry.gov.uk/info/233/coventry_safeguarding_adults_board/2414/coventry_safeguarding_adults_board

Warwickshire Safeguarding (Children and Adults): <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/>

Coventry Local Authority Designated Officer:

www.coventry.gov.uk/info/206/coventry_local_safeguarding_children_board/2628/local_authority_designated_officer_lado

Coventry Diocese Safeguarding resources: <http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/Safeguarding>

Legal and policy framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of national and international law and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk, including:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- European Convention on Human Rights, 1950
- Children Act, 1989, 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015

Church of England Safeguarding policies

- Protecting All God's Children – a policy for safeguarding children, the 4th Edition published in 2010
- Promoting a Safe Church – a policy for safeguarding adults, published in 2006
- Safer Recruitment – published in 2015
- Responding to Domestic Abuse – published in 2006
- Responding Well – to those who have been sexually abused, published in 2011
- Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations relating to Church Officers –published 2015