

New Life Christian Church Safeguarding Policy

March 2021

Senior Pastor: Matthew Warren

Email: Matthew.warren@nlccuk.org

Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding: Chris Papathanassi

Email: chris.p@nlccuk.org

Safeguarding Coordinator: Suzanne Matthams

Telephone: 07933274078 Email: safeguarding@nlccuk.org

Safeguarding Deputies: Francesca Failes; Sue Gidney

Email: safeguarding@nlccuk.org

The above are nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

New Life Christian Church is an independent Evangelical church with links with churches in France, Spain, Senegal and Ghana.

We embrace the Evangelical Alliance statement of faith.

Charity Number:275014

Regulated by the Charities Commission

New Life Christian Church is insured by Case Faith Insurance

New Life Christian Church subscribes to the churches child protection advisory service
Thirtyone:eight for advice.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by Thirityone:eight.

Section 1

About New Life

New Life Christian Church is a growing, diverse community of people who, over the last forty years, have helped to bring hope, goodness and faith to the neighbourhood. Our mission is to strengthen and serve people both locally and around the world. Our church experience is lively, fun and family friendly. We have a growing youth and children's ministry which include: parent and toddler group, kids church, youth church, youth ministry on a Friday night and youth life groups. Adult members of the church are encouraged to be part of a mid-week life group.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and volunteers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.

- support the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Section 2

Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard children we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

1. States; Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Statutory definitions of abuse in children – Annex 1

Signs and indicators of abuse in children– Annex 2

Statutory definitions of abuse in adults – Annex 3

Signs and indicators of abuse in adults – Annex 4

Responding to a disclosure of abuse – Annex 5

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in a voluntary capacity will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- An interview is conducted with the volunteer and Safeguarding has been discussed.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate in particular when a volunteer has been in the church for less than three years.
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful volunteer within the department they are working.
- The volunteer has completed a probationary period of at least 1 month.
- The volunteer has been given a copy of New Life's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- The volunteer has received a copy of the children, young people and vulnerable adults volunteer agreement and code of conduct and signed the document to say they agree to adhere to its content.

Every volunteer working with children and/or vulnerable adults will be expected to sign and adhere to New Life Christian Church volunteer agreement and code of conduct. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in a worker/volunteer being asked to step down from the activity they are involved in. See Annex 6

Paid employees of New Life Christian Church working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are in addition subject to the New Life policies and procedures for employed members of staff.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Section 3

Practice Guidelines

As a local church working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

Working in organisations

New Life Christian Church serves a diverse community which includes working with other churches and organisations both at home and overseas. When working with other churches and organisations New Life expects that church or organisation to have its own safeguarding policy and procedures. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, will have their own policy that meets Thirityone:eight's safeguarding standards.

New Life Christian Church would not send any member of the church to work with another church or organisation if the receiving body did not have clear safeguarding policies or procedures. New Life Christian Church understands these guidelines will reflect an oversees organisations own context.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those withwhom we may work with. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 4

Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

- All concerns should be reported as soon as possible to Safeguarding Co-ordinator Suzanne Matthams following the procedures outlined in annex 5.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinators Frankie Failes or Sue Gidney can be contacted via safeguarding@nlccuk.org.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place – Annex 7
- The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- Depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern the Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others including statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.
- The absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

Hampshire Children's Social Services

Tel: 0300 555 1384 8:30am-5pm Mon-Thurs 8:30am-4:30m Fri

Out of hours Tel: 0300 555 1373

Email Address: children's.servicess@hants.gov.uk

Hampshire Adult Social Services

Tel: 0300 555 1386 8:30am-5pm Mon-Thurs 8:30am-4:30m Fri

Out of hours Tel: Hampshire Police 101

West Sussex Children's Social Services

Tel: 01403 229900 8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri

Out of hours Tel: 033022 26664

Email Address: mash@westsussex.gov.uk

West Sussex Adult Social Services

Tel: 01243 642121 8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri

Out of hours Tel: Sussex police 101

Thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Chris Papathanassi is the trustee responsible for safeguarding and may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.

If the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18 the Hampshire or West Sussex safeguarding children's board may need to be contacted

If the suspicions in any way implicate the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinators. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then please report to Thirityone:eight or Chris Papathanassi: chris.p@nlccuk.org

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirityone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of New Life Christian Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child

Where a referral to children services is not deemed necessary the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy may:

- Encourage individuals to seek support
- Signpost to other voluntary agencies
- Accompany individuals to access services
- Support individuals to access pastoral support

Where individuals are resistant to accepting support and disengage with the support offered the Safeguarding Co-ordinator may reconsider contacting Children's Services.

Allegations of physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect

Where there are concerns about physical abuse, emotional or a symptom of neglect the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services or Thirtynine:eight for advice in cases of suspicion of non-accidental injury, if they are concerned about a child's safety or if a child reports being afraid to return home.
- Give careful consideration as to whether it is appropriate to contact the parents or carers.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the medical staff of any suspicions.
- Give consideration to historical concerns, support that has already been offered and what actions have already been taken
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtynine:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department or Police Child Protection Team direct. It may not be appropriate to speak to the parent/carer before a referral is made if it is felt this may cause further risk to the child, young person or vulnerable adult concerned.
- Seek the advice of Thirtynine:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtynine:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtynine:eight can be contacted for advice.

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse

Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact Thirityone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is for Adult Services to decide not the church.

Section 5

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with other agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

A sexual offender is someone who has committed sexual offences against either children or adults. In this guide we are primarily referring to people who have offended against children or vulnerable adults. Sexual offences include rape, indecent assault and indecent exposure, exposing children to pornography, and encouraging children to perform sexual acts on themselves, other children or the offender. They also include looking at images of children being abused or photographed in provocative poses. These are called indecent images of children.

A number of sexual offenders will have downloaded child abuse images. Others will have made these images, or distributed them to others as well as possessing them. Whilst some offenders will also have gone on to 'hands-on' offending, others may gather large collections of images on their computer. These offences are often described as 'child pornography' but this is inaccurate as every image captures an actual situation where a child has been abused, therefore a more appropriate term is indecent images of children.

The Christian church is unique in that, based on the uncompromising message of the gospel, it opens its doors to all. It has also been known for some time that a significant number of sexual offenders living in the community also attend church.

When someone attending New Life Christian Church is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties. A written contract will be drawn up between the offender, church leaders and the safeguarding coordinator.

The supervision of offenders is managed in the following ways:

- The offender must be monitored and discreetly supervised when attending church gatherings.
- Where provision cannot be made to monitor the individual at meetings involving children or adults who are vulnerable, it may be necessary to ensure that such offenders only attend meetings where those who are vulnerable are not present which may mean for the person not to attend morning worship where large numbers of those who are vulnerable may be present.
- Offenders will if appropriate be offered a life group where the host and members of the group know of the offense and undertake to supervise the offender. It is important that such a group does not include families with children or is held in a house where children reside.

Like anyone, an offender wanting to change will need people around them who will love and accept them, offering care and protection with the assurance that God does not reject them.

Alongside this, the people supporting the offender will need to:

1. Challenge risky or wrong thinking and behaviour.
2. Not allow themselves to be manipulated.
3. be relied upon to be supportive to help maintain self-control.

On-going monitoring is essential and it is important that, with changes of staff and leadership over time, knowledge of the offender is passed on to new leaders or staff. It is important that the offender is never placed in a position of trust including leadership, a door welcomer, a leader of worship, a member of a worship band. All these roles suggest that the person is trustworthy and may lead others not to see the risk they may pose.

In every situation a careful assessment needs to be made as to whether New Life Christian Church can safely and adequately work with the person. New Life will seek the help of police and probation in carrying out risk assessments which need to consider the details of offending and subsequent behaviour and attitudes. It is accepted that some people will be just too risky and may need to be helped to find another fellowship where the risk to children can be more easily manage