

Introduction

Safeguarding is taken seriously by Unity groups and churches

We acknowledge children's and adults right to protection from abuse, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognized good practice in order to protect vulnerable people in our centre/group.

We will seek to establish a caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.

We will implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to abuse.

We will appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, who will have specific responsibilities for safeguarding, although we recognize that safeguarding is a whole group responsibility. The Safeguarding Coordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator should be contacted.

We will organize activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimize the risk of harm to children and adults.

We will follow a safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of people to

work with children or adults at risk, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.

We are committed to providing support, supervision, resources and training to those who work with children and adults.

We will use rigorous and careful supervision to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing contracts with known offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Unity way of living and recognize that it can affect both adults and children.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be responded to appropriately, including referring to the statutory authorities if necessary.

We will co-operate with the statutory authorities in any investigation, will follow multi-agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We will refer concerns about staff - volunteers and paid - that meet the relevant criteria to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Our *Safeguarding Policy Statement* is below.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement has been agreed by the leadership of the AUL&M-UK

- This organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and to ensuring their well-being.
- We believe that all children and adults at risk should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our church.
- We respect the personal dignity and rights of children and adults at risk (for example, as set out in the Human Rights Act 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and will ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk.
- We recognise that domestic abuse affects both adults and children and believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Unity way of living.
- We will report any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Adult Services do so for adults at risk.
- We acknowledge that Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales have responsibility for dealing with all allegations and concerns about people working with children, whether paid or voluntary workers, lay or ordained.
- We recognise that safeguarding is a whole church/centre/group responsibility.

We are committed to:

- The establishment of a loving environment, which is safe and caring, and where there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- Following the relevant legislation, statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that we keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with the relevant Voluntary and Statutory Authorities.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a church, everyone works within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk.
- Following safer recruitment principles in the appointment and selection of all those who work with children and adults at risk, be they volunteer or paid staff.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that the children and adults we have contact with know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Supporting all those in our church/centre/group who are affected by abuse.
- Supporting and supervising those who pose a risk to children or adults at risk, implementing the Unity Code of Ethics, whilst bearing in mind the overarching principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- If an assessment is made that someone poses an unmanageable risk to those in need of protection and could not safely attend our church, we will ensure that they continue to be offered pastoral care and will signpost them to appropriate agencies for support.

Key Contacts: Sources of advice and support

- The centre/group **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed:

For any safeguarding concerns at your local Unity group please contact the Safeguarding Coordinator:

Janice Gushway

safeguardingaulm@gmail.com

- **Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)** (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact the AUL&M-UK Safeguarding Officer)
24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) through your local council**