

# **WHITEWELL METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**2025**



# Contents

Introduction.....	4
Statement of our commitment to Safeguarding .....	4
Safeguarding procedures .....	8
Safeguarding Team Contact Details .....	9
Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).....	9
Practice Guidance .....	10
Safer Recruitment.....	11
Raising a Concern .....	13
Codes of Conduct.....	14
Appendix A: Terminology .....	16
Appendix B: Statutory definitions of abuse (Children) .....	18
Appendix C: Signs and symptoms of abuse in children .....	21
Appendix D: Statutory definitions of abuse (Adults) .....	27
Appendix E: Signs of possible abuse (Adults).....	30
Appendix F: Process Flow to determine appropriate response .....	34

# Introduction

## **Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle Statement on Safeguarding**

The Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle ('Whitewell') is committed to creating a healthy church and safe space for all. We recognise the ways in which children and adults can be at risk of harm or abuse, so endeavour to create a culture to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur. This requires having a safeguarding policy that sets out the clearly defined principles, standards and guidelines required to keep everyone safe. The policy includes procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of abuse, as well as practical guidance for safer recruitment, and church wide safeguarding training and supervision for all individuals working with children and adults at risk.

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all including children, young people and adults at risk of harm. Children rely on adults to keep them safe, therefore we are committed to safeguarding children in our care. We seek to do this by providing a safe, stable and nurturing environment where children can reach their full potential. Similarly, within our church there are adults in need of protection, care and support due to vulnerability, whether that is a permanent or temporary state. We are aware too that within our church there are relationships of trust, which flourish best within a healthy church and environment where there is openness, transparency and accountability.

We firmly believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone involved in the life of our church and activities have a role to play in keeping children, young people and adults safe.

### **Our Church Safeguarding Policy**

The Safeguarding Policy covers the care and protection of children and adults, through the multiplicity of ways people connect with church, missions, groups and activities including through digital platforms online such as social networking services and social media.

## Statement of our commitment to Safeguarding

We have produced this overarching Safeguarding Policy for the protection, care and well-being of everyone across all our activities in recognition that we work with children and young people, with adults who may be vulnerable or at risk, with victims and survivors of abuse and neglect and with those who pose a risk of harm to children and adults.

### **1. Contacting Thirty-One: Eight**

It is imperative that contact be made with Thirty-One: Eight when Whitewell is faced with a safeguarding issue. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) to do this. The DSO is available in the first instance for advice and support. Thirty-One: Eight should be contacted where any safeguarding concern has implications for the reputation or good standing of Whitewell. This is to ensure that any response is open, transparent and involves the statutory safeguarding authorities; it also provides the necessary quality assurance required.

This is for the purpose of ensuring that the appropriate course of action has been taken. Where a safeguarding matter involves a church worker, then such a response may include initiating complaints or disciplinary procedures in addition to following safeguarding protocols.

<b>Thirty-one: Eight</b>	<b>Email:</b> <b>Helpline@thirtyoneeight.org</b>	<b>0303 003 1111</b> <b>Mon-Fri 9am-5pm</b>
--------------------------	---	--

## **2. Church Statement: Our commitment to Safeguarding**

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We recognise the importance of our ministry with children, young people and adults and our responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that the children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm. All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse. Adults in our church should be enabled to live fulfilling, autonomous lives and should have access to every aspect of church life. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church is the responsibility of the whole church. We endeavour to make our church a safe environment for all.

The following statement is agreed by the Church leadership:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the abuse and neglect of children and adults and to report any such abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect.
- We are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults ensuring their well-being. We recognise that children and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as financial and discriminatory abuse and other forms of harm such as exploitation, radicalisation, domestic abuse and neglect.
- We endorse and adopt the policy, procedures and guidance set out in this Safeguarding Policy in accordance with Government's national legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures, along with guidance issued by Thirty-One: Eight.

### **3. Working with safeguarding authorities**

- We recognise the role that the statutory safeguarding authorities (Social Services and the Police) have in investigating all suspicions and allegations or discovery of child abuse and the abuse of adults and will cooperate fully with all agencies to protect those at risk of harm or abuse:
  - Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there is a concern about a child.
  - Adult Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse when concerned about the welfare of an adult.
  - Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the Police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We will follow the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.

- We will act in accordance with national and local safeguarding guidance and acknowledge that ‘safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility’ and that everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. We also recognise the six main principles of safeguarding: empowerment, prevention, protection, proportionality, partnerships and accountability.
- We will liaise with the local statutory safeguarding partnerships such as the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland or any other local safeguarding mechanisms.
- We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding and sharing relevant information.

#### **4. Promoting a healthy church culture**

- We respect the right of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We value and respect children and want to hear their voices.
- 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 understand the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive, safe and healthy environment and are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of Northern Ireland’s Equality legislation, implementing all other relevant legislation as part of safeguarding.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies, procedures and practice guidance reflect this, so that adults can have access to every aspect of the life of our church.
- We are committed to supporting parents and families and ensuring that our church is a safe place for all.
- The church has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), **Tim Hancock** and a Safeguarding Team as points of reference to act on all allegations or suspicions of abuse in reporting to the statutory safeguarding authorities. In our commitment to openness, should anyone have a concern that our church or the DSO or Safeguarding Team have not dealt appropriately with a safeguarding concern we would encourage that person to contact Thirty-One: Eight or to make a direct referral to social services or the police. Contact details are on page 9.

#### **5. Commitment to those serving children and adults**

- We commit to providing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all our workers. We will also support, resource, monitor and provide supervision to all those who undertake work with children or adults, and those in positions of trust.

- We take seriously our responsibility for ensuring that everyone is safe in our care and that their dignity and rights are maintained.

## **6. Safeguarding under specific circumstances**

- We commit to supporting, listening to and working towards healing for everyone affected, either directly or indirectly by any form of abuse.
- We are a welcoming church, which recognises that in following the mission of the church we may have ex-offenders join us. In such circumstances we will talk with the person concerned, and with any safeguarding professional involved to ensure that their involvement in church does not compromise the safety and well-being of children or adults. To ensure this we will take appropriate and proportionate measures, including working with relevant partners to complete a risk assessment and asking the individual to adhere to a safeguarding agreement (behaviour contract).
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- Where an allegation or suspicion of abuse is made against someone working with children or adults, or is in a position of trust, then the DSO will contact Thirty-One: Eight for advice.
- Thirty-One: Eight can be contacted at: [Helpline@thirtyoneeight.org](mailto:Helpline@thirtyoneeight.org) or 0303 003 111

## **7. Safeguarding Policy**

It is the expectation that all those working with children and adults have access to this church Safeguarding Policy. A condensed version of this policy will be supplied with all new worker application packs and will also be available in various ministry rooms/spaces where children and adults at risk are most likely to be. It is expected that all workers will have read it and agreed to fully adhere to the policy, procedures and practice guidance as a condition of continuing in their role.

The Safeguarding Policy is available to parents, carers and all others within the church. It can be found on the Church Website and on notice boards in the Church and the Youth Centre.

In providing this detailed statement about safeguarding children and adults within our church, in the services, groups and activities we provide, along with the interaction we have outside of these events, including through social media and other electronic communication channels, we hope to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the safety of all. We endeavour to provide a healthy and safe church culture where the welfare of the child, young person and adult is paramount.

Whilst recognising that the very nature of safeguarding means that we must respond to allegations both sensitively and confidentially, this does not mean secretively. We strive to be open, transparent and accountable. This means seeking advice and liaising with social services, the police and other agencies as necessary.

# Safeguarding procedures

## Safeguarding awareness

Child abuse or abuse against an adult can be a difficult and complex issue to understand. A person may abuse or neglect 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 is in a trusted relationship with the child or adult. Research shows that abuse can be perpetrated by males and females, by adults and children, as well as those in positions of trust and authority. Sadly, people in such positions have misused their power and authority within churches to abuse.

‘Position of trust’ is a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with children. In 2022, changes to the law were made, extending the definition of ‘positions of trust’ to include faith group leaders. This refers to faith leaders in any capacity, including volunteers. It is against the law for someone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent (16 or over).

The four main categories of child abuse are physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. It is important to note that a child may be suffering from more than one form of abuse. Safeguarding professionals must assess if they need to intervene to protect a child and this is based on whether a child is suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. There are other forms of abuse (such as child sexual exploitation) which come under these four main headings when instigating a child protection plan.

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 recognises the impact on a child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and treats them as victims of domestic abuse where they are related to or under parental responsibility of either the abuser or the abused. It is also recognised that young people can experience abuse in their relationships.

Adults need protection from physical, sexual and psychological (which includes emotional) abuse and neglect (including self-neglect) as well as financial, institutional, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery, trafficking and domestic violence. Detailed definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse are included in the appendices.

The Leadership of Whitewell will endeavour to ensure that children and adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter of concern. As leaders, we recognise that for many victims/survivors of abuse, where the abuse has taken / takes place within the context of the church or by someone professing a Christian faith, it can have an impact on their spiritual development.

## **8. The Safeguarding Team**

The Leadership have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Safeguarding Team to respond to any safeguarding concern or suspicion of abuse. The Leadership fully supports them in their role of acting in the best interest of the child or adult and reporting to the statutory authorities all allegations or suspicions of abuse.



All safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported to the DSO or Safeguarding Team in the church. **No one in receipt of a disclosure of abuse or suspicion of abuse should investigate the matter.**

## Safeguarding Team Contact Details

Name	Role	Phone Number
Tim Hancock	Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	07554 815971
Alan Cartwright	Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding	07936 937676
Cherith Moore	Safeguarding Coordinator	07734 812595
Sarah Hancock	Safeguarding Coordinator	07774 570344
Julie Kane	Safeguarding Administrator*	07525 462778

\* Responsible solely for managing, storing, maintaining and updating safeguarding records

The Safeguarding Team are to act on behalf of the church in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect, including referring the matter to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the DSO, the report should be made to any other member of the Safeguarding Team.

Where someone has passed information to the DSO or Safeguarding Team and believes they have not been responded to appropriately, then they should make as direct referral to social services or the police. As a Leadership we make this statement to demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding children and adults.

## Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The DSO, or in his absence another member of the Safeguarding Team, will collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and where abuse is suspected will pass this information on to the statutory authorities who have a legal duty to investigate.

Where concerned that a crime may have been committed or there is immediate danger to a child or an adult then contact should be made to the Police dialling 999 or through contacting the Police Child Protection Team.

## 9. Contact Details for Immediate Professional Advice

Thirty-One: Eight	Helpline@thirtyoneeight.org	0303 003 1111
Gateway ( <b>Children's</b> Social Services, Belfast Trust)	Monday to Friday 9am-5pm	028 9050 7000
Gateway ( <b>Adult</b> Social Services, Belfast Trust)	Monday to Friday 9am-5pm	028 9504 1744
Gateway (Out-of-hours)	Weekends & Bank Holidays	028 9504 9999
Police Service of NI	101	In an emergency: 999

## Practice Guidance

### 10. Welcoming environment

Our church should be a safe place for everyone, children and adults, where all feel welcomed, valued, respected and cared for. We can promote this by ensuring that our buildings are accessible, recognising the limitations that the design of some buildings create and addressing this, along with the acoustics and lighting. We should also be careful to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary that reflects a respectful attitude towards others.

Church is not simply a meeting place for collective worship on a Sunday, but can involve many different groups and activities, across a range of ages, throughout the week, and at different times day and night.

We work with children and young people through our children's groups such as Wee Wellers and WOW (Sunday School classes), The Well (Senior Youth Club), the Junior Well (Junior Youth Club), Holiday Bible Clubs and Kick for Christ (Football Club) communicating online by text, social media and app services. For more details, please see our Online Safety Policy.

Our work with adults at risk of harm includes our ministries such as The Befrienders Ministry, the Grief Share Ministry, foodbanks and Christmas hampers, street ministries and clubs for women, men and older people and we connect with young people and adults through community outreach projects. We also provide pastoral care in people's homes and counselling support.

With the various activities we are involved in as a church it is important that we understand the safeguarding considerations and undertake risk assessments enforcing clear guidelines for all in positions of trust in the church.

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 accusations.

# Safer Recruitment

## **Preventing harm through screening to ensure only suitable people work with children and adults**

We will ensure all workers are appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment.

This includes ensuring that:

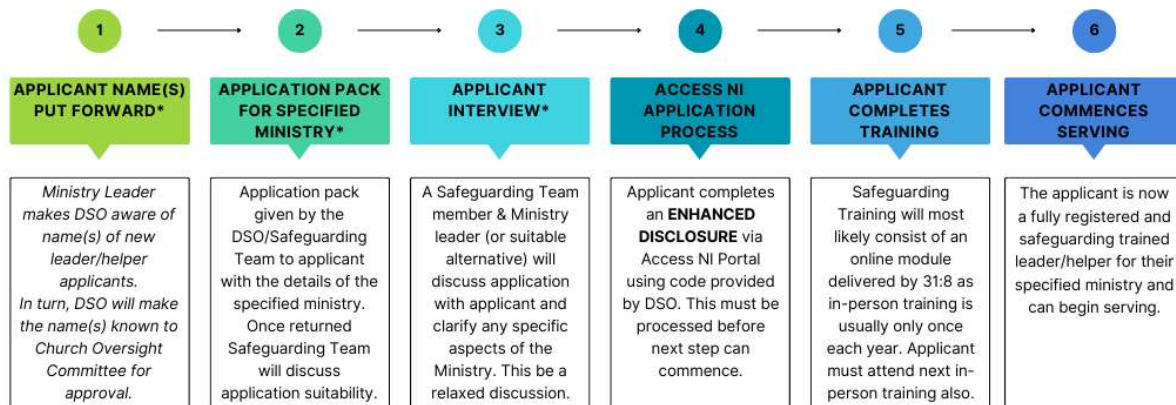
- There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- Those short-listed have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified.
- A criminal record check (Access NI check or equivalent) has been obtained in accordance with the position that the person has applied for, where necessary. It is important to complete checks outside Northern Ireland when someone is applying to work with vulnerable groups and has lived outside the province. This must also be reviewed every 3 years while those involved are in the post unless they are signed up for the update service.
- As a church we will comply with the Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information.
- A suitable training and induction programme (including safeguarding training) is provided for the successful applicant. Safeguarding training is refreshed every two years.
- The applicant has access to and has read the church Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns to the DSO.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- Suitable ongoing support and supervision is provided.
- New volunteers will observe what they will be required to do, under supervision, prior to the recruitment decision. This may be in the form of “taster sessions”. The DSO must be made aware, in writing, in advance, by the ministry leader, of names of potential new volunteers and when they will be attending the ministry of interest in the form of “taster sessions”. The volunteer must not be counted in the leader ratio and must always be supervised during the “taster session”. The DSO can be contacted using the details on Page 8.

The Safer Recruitment Process can be summarised in the following steps:

## Safeguarding Process for Inducting New Volunteer Leaders and Helpers

*This process:*



- is applicable to **ALL** Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle ministries where leader/helper roles involve providing services to or having close and regular supervision of children or adults at risk.
- **MUST** be completed before the leader/helper (applicant) begins to serve in the specified ministry. The process is anticipated to take no longer than 4-6 weeks. The DSO must be aware of all ministries the leader/helper serves in - \*this process will be shorter (1-3 only) for additional leader/helper roles in other ministries.



**DSO contact:** [tim.hancock@whitewell.church](mailto:tim.hancock@whitewell.church)

# Raising a Concern

The below form template is available from all ministry leaders. Upon completion these should be given to the DSO or a member of the Safeguarding Team. The purpose of these forms is to ensure that all the relevant information is captured to aid the Safeguarding Team in reaching a resolution.

 <b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> <b>NOTE OF CONCERN</b> <b>Safeguarding Record - Reports to Designated Leader</b>	
Name of person	<input type="text"/>
Church Group	<input type="text"/>
Date, time of incident/disclosure	<input type="text"/>
Circumstances of incident/disclosure	<input type="text"/>
Nature and description of concern	<input type="text"/>
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom	<input type="text"/>
Action taken at the time	<input type="text"/>
Details of any advice sought, from whom and when	<input type="text"/>
Any further action taken	<input type="text"/>
Written report passed to designated leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'No' state reason	<input type="text"/>
Date and time of report to the designated leader	<input type="text"/>
Written note from leader placed on Safeguarding file	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If 'No' state reason	<input type="text"/>
Name of person/leader making the report:	<input type="text"/>
Signature of person/leader	<input type="text"/> Date: <input type="text"/>
Signature of Designated Leader	<input type="text"/> Date: <input type="text"/>
 837-869 Shore Road, Belfast BT15 4HS Tel: 028 9077 7074 Email: info@whitewell.church Web: whitewell.church	

It must be stressed that it is not the job of the ministry leader or those reporting the concern to carry out an investigation. In our commitment to openness and transparency, flow charts are available in Appendix F detailing the steps the Safeguarding Team may take to determine the appropriate response.

# Codes of Conduct

We are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers will be issued with a Code of Conduct towards children, young people and adults. The Code of Conduct is drawn up in consultation with the DSO and Safeguarding Team. It is important that there is a culture of dignity and respect towards those being cared for. This can be achieved by workers:

- Understanding our Safeguarding Policy and good working practice
- Listening to children, young people and adults
- Respecting boundaries and the privacy of those being cared for
- Knowing how to deal with issues of discipline in line with our Code of Conduct

## **11. Providing Pastoral care**

It is important that anyone seeking pastoral care know exactly what to expect in terms of good conduct, that those caring for them are accountable and that any boundaries set are respected.

In addition:

- Those providing pastoral care should avoid any behaviour that may give the impression of favouritism.
- Workers should be aware of the limits of their own ability and competence and seek further help when dealing with situations outside their expertise.
- There should be clear guidelines to ensure financial integrity where workers are involved in any aspect of personal finance such as collecting benefits or pensions or going shopping for someone.

## **12. Training and supervision**

All workers will be provided with appropriate training and given an opportunity to develop their skills so that they feel supported and valued in the work they undertake. Also, we commit to ensuring all workers are supervised (where possible by a named individual who arranges regular meetings) where concerns or issues can be raised, work related or personal. It is also the role of the ministry leader to ensure all training needs are met.

## **13. Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved; this needs to be balanced with the need to protect a person who has been abused or is at risk of abuse. All those working with children, young people and adults must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential. To protect the individual at risk of harm or others at potential risk of harm means that this will need to be reported to the DSO.

#### **14. Self-determination and independence**

Adults have a right to self-determination and independence. No one should be making decisions for anyone except in particular circumstances, where for example, the mental capacity of the individual is impaired, where a crime is being committed, or where children may be harmed because of adults' inaction. In such cases, the matter must be reported to the DSO. Sometimes an adult can put themselves in situations that others would judge to be inappropriate or abusive in the exercising of their own choice and autonomy. In such circumstances, when unsure of what actions to take, the DSO should seek advice from Thirty-One: Eight.

#### **15. Supporting those affected by abuse**

We are committed to offering pastoral care and support to individuals, who are part of our church or with whom we have contact, who may have been affected by abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

We recognise that pastoral care needs differ from person to person and by the nature of the harm that a person has endured. Those affected by abuse are often dealing with complex issues and recognising this, we offer pastoral care and support and would seek (with the individual's permission) to contact counselling agencies as required.

## Appendix A: Terminology

This Safeguarding Policy covers children and adults. A child is defined as someone under the age of 18; the general term of 'child' is used to describe both children and young people.

An adult is generally defined as someone over the age of 18. As adult safeguarding systems have developed there has been a move away from using the term 'vulnerable adult' whilst recognising that certain pieces of legislation and different agencies use this term. The terms 'adult at risk' or 'adult in need of protection' are generally now replacing the term 'vulnerable adult', focusing on the situation rather than the characteristics of the adult themselves. The label 'vulnerable adult' may wrongly imply that some of the fault for the abuse lies with the abused adult. The Care Act 2014 does not use the word 'vulnerable' but instead uses 'an adult with care and support needs' who is at risk of abuse or neglect. In this policy 'adults' is used to mean adults in need of protection.

This policy will use various terms interchangeably except when referring to specific legislation or government guidance.

Safeguarding is a wider term and encompasses, when referring to children, child protection and the welfare of a child. When referring to adults it covers adult protection and welfare. Defining who is 'an adult at risk' or 'an adult in need of care and protection' can be complex as there are many different definitions within legislation; reaching a certain age or having a disability does not necessarily mean that an individual is vulnerable. For example, determining who qualifies for a criminal record disclosure check through Access NI is based on a specific definition of who is an adult at risk.





## Appendix B: Statutory definitions of abuse (Children)

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Northern Ireland has incorporated the Convention within its legislation and guidance.

The definitions of abuse below are based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the Welfare of Children' (HM Government July 2018).

### **Abuse**

A form 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse that 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 deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In Scotland and Wales, physical punishment of a child (including hitting, shaking, slapping) is now illegal.

### **Emotional abuse**

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another individual. It could involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), frequently causing children to feel frightened or in danger, as well as 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**

Whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or not, it involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. It does not necessarily involve a high level of violence. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving

children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Neglect**

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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

There are additional areas of abuse which should also be considered including:

### **Domestic abuse**

An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence. This is often by a partner or ex-partner but also by family members or carers. The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021 recognises the impact on a child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse in their own right where they are related to or under parental responsibility of either the abuser or the abused. It is also recognised that young people can experience abuse in their relationships.

### **Child criminal exploitation (CCE)**

This occurs where an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into becoming involved in criminal activity. This is often in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and /or through violence or the threat of violence. For example, gifts, status in a group or gang, somewhere to live etc. The acts or favours required in return are usually criminal in nature. A child may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something that they have agreed or consented to. There are several different types of CCE: child sexual exploitation, county lines, trafficking, modern slavery and money mules.

### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

This is a form of child sexual abuse and occurs where an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim wants or needs and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator. The victim may have been sexually

exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

### **County lines**

This involves illegal drugs networks between large urban areas, small towns and rural areas. Intimidation, blackmail and violence are used to coerce children and young people into transporting and selling items for criminal enterprise such as drugs, cash and weapons. This takes place across counties and dedicated mobile phones used to make these arrangements are known as the “county/deal lines”.

### **Modern slavery**

This affects anyone no matter what their age and gender. Examples include human trafficking, exploitation servitude and forced or compulsory marriage. Modern slavery is used as an umbrella term for mostly hidden crime, therefore acquiring a true picture of the situation and its prevalence is challenging.

### **Trafficking**

Moving humans from one place to another with the intention of involving them in forced labour, slavery or sexual exploitation. This is one of the fastest growing areas of international crime involving gangs and criminal organisations.

### **Extremism**

This goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable including the young, by seeking to sow division between communities because of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

## Appendix C: Signs and symptoms of abuse in children

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of a child's whole life.

### Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls or usual children's activities.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse (these can also be indications of self-harm)

### Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia

### Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Depression, aggression or extreme anxiety
- Nervousness or frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Leaving home / care without explanation

- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Returning home unusually late or staying out all night
- Coming home looking dishevelled.
- Suspicion of physical assault or unexplained injuries
- Carrying weapons
- Starting or increasing drug use or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Starting or increasing alcohol use
- Loss of interest in school and significant decline in performance
- Using sexual, gang, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Meeting with unfamiliar people or associating with a gang.
- Becoming isolated from peers or social networks
- Self-harming
- Significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- Sudden changes in lifestyle
- Increasingly disruptive or violent behaviour
- Getting into trouble with the police

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Persistently going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Frequently staying out late or overnight with no explanation as to where they have been.
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going.
- Using more than one phone
- Spending more time online or on their devices
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls, letters or emails
- Having an older girlfriend or boyfriend or having relationships with controlling older individuals or groups
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Suddenly acquiring expensive gifts such as mobile phones, jewellery - even drugs – and not being able to explain how they came by them.

- Having mood swings and changes in temperament
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places
- Noticeable change in behaviour – becoming secretive, defensive or aggressive when asked about their personal life.
- Wearing inappropriate clothing that is too adult or revealing for their age.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and / or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away, stealing or lying

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food.
- untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care

### **Domestic abuse**

- Anxious or depressed
- Difficulty sleeping
- Complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches
- Starting to wet the bed
- Behave as though they are much younger than they are.
- Have problems with school.
- Become aggressive or internalise their distress and withdraw from other people.
- Lowered sense of self-worth
- Older children may begin to truant or start using alcohol or drugs.
- Begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and county lines**

- Persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, jewellery or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Spending more time online or on their devices
- Using more than one phone
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going.
- Relationships with controlling older individuals or groups.
- Significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- Sudden changes in lifestyle
- Increasingly disruptive or violent behaviour
- Getting into trouble with the police
- Bruises, marks on the body, bleeding in their genital or anal area, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse or self-harm

### **Child trafficking and modern slavery**

- Rarely leaving the house
- Living apart from family or having limited social contact with friends and family.
- Living somewhere inappropriate like a work address or cramped, unhygienic or overcrowded accommodation, including caravans, sheds, tents or outbuildings.
- Being seen in inappropriate places (for example factories or brothels)
- Having their movements controlled or being unable to travel on their own.
- Lacking personal items
- Consistently wearing the same clothes
- Not being registered with a school or a GP practice
- Having money or things you wouldn't expect them to have.
- Being moved by others between specific locations (e.g. to and from work) which may happen at unusual times such as very early in the day or at night.
- Being unsure, unable or reluctant to give details such as where they live
- Fearful or withdrawn behaviour.



- Being involved in gang activity
- Being involved in the consumption, sale or trafficking of drugs
- Having their communication controlled by somebody else and acting as though they are being instructed by another person.
- Tattoos or other marks indicating ownership.
- Physical ill-health, looking unkempt or malnourished.
- Physical injury, including the kinds of injuries you might get from a workplace.
- Reluctance to seek help, avoidance of strangers, being fearful or hostile towards authorities.
- Providing a prepared story (which might be similar to stories given by other children) or struggling to recall experiences.
- Inconsistent accounts of their experiences

### **Radicalisation and Extremism**

- Withdrawal from family and friends or changing circle of friends.
- Hostility towards others
- Talking as if from a script
- Being unwilling to discuss their views
- Increased levels of anger
- Being secretive, particularly around what they are doing on the internet.
- Using extremist terms to exclude people or incite violence.
- Expressing the values of extremist or terrorist organisations (including political or religious based grievances)
- Supporting violence and terrorism towards other culture, nationalities or religions
- Writing or creating artwork that promotes extremist values.
- Talking about being a martyr
- Possession of extremist literature or other material or trying to access extremist websites
- Possession of any material about weapons, explosives or military training



## Appendix D: Statutory definitions of abuse (Adults)

The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has a need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect

### **Physical abuse**

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions

### **Domestic abuse and violence**

Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, so-called 'honour' based violence. There is also any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of sexuality or gender. This might involve but is not limited to psychological, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021 created a new offence of controlling and coercive behaviour within intimate and familial relationships.

### **Sexual abuse**

Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

### **Psychological abuse**

Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

### **Financial or material abuse**

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with Wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

### **Modern Slavery**

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

### **Organisational abuse**

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

### **Neglect and acts of omission.**

Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

### **Self-neglect**

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding, incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.



## Appendix E: Signs of possible abuse (Adults)

### Physical abuse

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns or minor injuries.
- Signs of under-use or over-use of medication and / or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Bruising and discolouration- particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite.
- Person flinches at physical contact and / or keeps fully covered even in hot weather.
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular individual or individuals.

### Domestic abuse and violence

- Unexplained injuries or excuses for marks or scars
- Controlling and/or threatening relationships including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, so-called 'honour-based' violence and Female Genital Mutilation
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse was their fault.
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts and broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends or family.
- Extreme jealousy and possessiveness

### Sexual abuse

- Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.

- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and / or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming
- Emotional distress
- Mood changes
- Disturbed sleep patterns

### **Psychological abuse**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious or tearful.
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer.
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes.
- Unexplained paranoia
- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Helplessness or passivity
- Confusion or disorientation
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour.
- Low self-esteem

### **Financial or material abuse**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money
- Sudden inability to pay bills or getting into debt.
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf.
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property
- Missing personal belongings

- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney, or unexplained changes to a Will

### **Modern Slavery**

- Physical appearance unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.
- Few personal possessions or identity documents
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people

### **Discriminatory abuse**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality.
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves.

### **Institutional / Organisational abuse**

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality.
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves.
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users
- Neglectful or poor professional practice

Neglect and acts of omission



- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support
- Lack of medication or medical intervention

### **Self-neglect**

- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene.
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss, is dehydrated, is constantly hungry, stealing or gorging food.
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions.
- Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment
- Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example, no heating or lighting)
- Depression

# Appendix F: Process Flow to determine appropriate response

Appendix F: Responding to safeguarding concerns (children)

