



# Safeguarding of Adults at Risk (SOVA)

March 2016

[godmanchesterbaptist.org](http://godmanchesterbaptist.org)

Godmanchester Baptist Church  
East Chadley Lane, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, PE29 2BJ  
Registered Charity No: 1089263

# **Contact Details**

## **Designated Person for Safeguarding**

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## **Safeguarding trustee**

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## **Regional Minister (Eastern Baptist Association)**

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## Godmanchester Baptist Church

### PROTECTION OF ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

This statement was adopted at a church meeting held on 21 March 2016

It will be presented each year to a church meeting held in the month of March where progress in putting it into practice will be reviewed.

1. As members of this church we commit ourselves to the safeguarding of adults at risk and ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
2. It is the responsibility of each of us to do our best to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of adults at risk and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
3. We are dedicated to providing pastoral care and support to those who have experienced abuse.
4. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with adults at risk.
5. The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
6. The church adopts the guidelines of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, outlined in Safe To Belong.
7. Each person who works with adults at risk will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding at this church is responsible for representing the concerns and views of adults at risk at our meetings and to outside bodies. This is also the person to contact for any concerns or questions regarding protecting adults at risk. The Designated Person is Rob Alliot.

Please note: If an adult is in imminent danger of harm, you should contact the police or emergency services without delay on 999.

Signed:

Position: Senior Pastor

Date: 21 March 2016

## Part 1 – Responding to Concern

### A RESPONDING TO ABUSE

This section will help you know what to do if you know or suspect an adult is being abused or may be at risk of abuse, or you have concerns about their wellbeing. It is often not easy to recognise abuse or harm. Therefore, it is important to act if you suspect abuse - don't wait until you are absolutely sure. This doesn't mean that you are jumping to conclusions or making judgements about the situation, it simply means that there is a safeguarding concern. The key principle: **Share your concerns**.

You may suspect abuse because:

- You have a general concern about someone's wellbeing.
- You see or hear something which could be abusive.
- Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them, or to an adult at risk, which could be abusive.

In these circumstances, do not delay. Pass on your concerns to the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours. If they are not available or are implicated in the concern, get in touch with the EBA Safeguarding Contact. If an adult is in imminent danger of harm, contact the police or emergency services on 999 without delay.

If someone discloses abuse directly to you, then remember to:

<b>Listen</b>	Take what is said seriously
<b>Reassure</b>	Tell them that they have done the right thing by telling you, and that you believe them
<b>Remain Calm</b>	No matter how difficult it is to listen to what is being disclosed. You have been chosen because the person feels able to talk to you
<b>Be honest</b>	Do not promise full confidentiality or offer false reassurance
<b>Be open</b>	Do not ask leading or closed questions, such as "Did she hit you?" It is not your role to investigate. As soon as you have enough information to concern you, stop probing
<b>Ask</b>	Request their consent to share information and seek help;
<b>Explain</b>	Tell them that you are going to tell 'x' the Designated Person for Safeguarding and give them a timescale
<b>Write</b>	Document everything the adult at risk has told you, in their own words. You will need to record the questions you asked as well as the answers or information given. This should be done as soon as possible after the disclosure and should include the time and date
<b>Report</b>	Contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours (or appropriate alternative if necessary - see above) and report the disclosure;
<b>Keep quiet</b>	The concerns you have should be kept confidential between you, the adult concerned, and the Designated Person for Safeguarding. The Designated Person for Safeguarding may need to inform the Association Safeguarding Contact and the statutory authorities.

**Never go and talk to the alleged abuser or try to investigate the allegations yourself.**

Be aware that the person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, language, communication skills and disability. You may need to ask the person to repeat themselves or to check that you have understood what they said.

### **B WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...**

If a referral is made to Adult Social Care Services about a disclosure of abuse it is known as an **adult safeguarding alert**. Firstly, they will check to see if the adult at risk or alleged abuser is known to them. If the individual(s) are known, then details of the disclosure will be passed on to the social worker involved, who, with their manager, will decide what action should be taken next. If the individuals are not known to Adult Social Care Services then it is likely that a duty worker and manager will make the decision of what to do next, possibly liaising with the police.

If there is an urgent need for the adult at risk to be protected, to be found alternative accommodation or for any other safety measures to be put in place, they will be given priority. If the adult at risk is in immediate danger of physical harm or their life is threatened, then it is appropriate for you to bypass Adult Social Care Services and contact the police for help.

Following the initial referral to Adult Social Care Services and the creation of an adult safeguarding alert, a referral will be made to the local **adult protection officer**, who will start to investigate the alleged abuse. They will liaise with the adult at risk and discuss options and procedures and find out what the individual wants to happen. The adult protection officer will involve other agencies as necessary, to ensure a coordinated response to the alleged abuse.

The outcome will be communicated to the local **Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)**. Safeguarding Adults Boards are multi-agency groups (which may include Adult Social Care Services, the police and Crown Prosecution Service, health services, Quality Care Commission and voluntary organisations) who work in partnership to promote and develop effective protection systems for adults at risk in their locality.

Generally, families will be informed when there is an allegation of abuse and what action is being taken. However, there are a few circumstances which may prevent this communication from happening. These include:

- If the adult at risk does not wish their family to be informed
- If the alleged abuser is a member of the family
- If a police investigation is likely to take place

This process can be daunting and if at any stage the adult at risk wants someone to support them and help them through the process, then independent advocates are available through Adult Social Care Services.

### **C. MINISTERING TO THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABUSE**

There are many adults within the church who are suffering from the effects of abuse. The church has a responsibility to support these people, no matter what form of abuse they have suffered; whether they suffered abuse as children or as adults; whether it was prolonged abuse or a one-off attack; or even whether the abuse seems trivial to the onlooker.

## Part 2 – Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

Safe recruitment applies to all roles within GBC or its organisations where there is work with or for adults at risk. It doesn't matter whether the role is paid or voluntary, and it doesn't matter if we have known the potential worker for many years.

Recruiting safely is a key element in safeguarding adults at risk, it is not simply an administrative human resources process. Recruitment to positions of trust are carried out carefully to ensure that those who work with adults at risk are carefully chosen, supported and supervised, and to try to prevent inappropriate appointments being made.

Young people aged 16 or 17 years who are assisting as helpers, will be appointed in the same way as adults, but will need their parent's permission and should only undertake roles where adult supervision will be in place at all times.

### A. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

#### **Step 1. Provide each role with a job profile**

This helps everyone to know what the role is about and the kind of person needed to do it.

#### **Step 2. Complete an application form**

This gives us an opportunity to find out more about the candidate and their life and experience outside of the church.

#### **Step 3. Take up references**

At least one reference should be from someone outside of the church community.

#### **Step 4. Undertake an interview**

This gives a further opportunity to find out about the candidate as well as explaining the role in more detail and giving them the chance to ask any questions.

#### **Step 5. Carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, where applicable**

There are six regulated activities which require a worker to have an Enhanced DBS check with a barred list check. These are: *Providing personal care* (assisting with activities such as drinking, eating, going to the toilet, etc), and the supervision or training of those who do; *Providing help with cash, bills and/or shopping*; *Providing help in the conduct of a person's own affairs*; *Conveying an adult to, from or between places where they receive health, personal or social care* (but not to and from church); *Providing healthcare*; and *Providing social work care*.

Very few roles at GBC require a DBS check but workers should not undertake any of the above activities without having had one.

#### **Step 6. Sign an employment contract or volunteer agreement**

This will clarify exactly what the person is expected to do by setting out the roles and responsibilities of the job (whether paid or voluntary) and the name of the person who will supervise them.

#### **Step 7. Receive ongoing training and supervision**

Safe recruitment practices are not about being suspicious, but are there to protect all people involved with or linked to the job concerned.

### B TRAINING

All those working with adults at risk will receive safeguarding training as soon as possible after they are appointed to their role. Retraining will be completed every three years in order to keep workers refreshed and up to date with practices and procedures.

## Part 3 - Safe Behaviour: a code of behaviour for workers

### A. WHO ARE ADULTS AT RISK?

The term 'adult at risk' has replaced the previously used '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 any abuse lies with the abused adult.

There is no standard single definition for an adult at risk, so for our policy we are using the following simple definition:

**Any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.**

Some adults might be more at risk than others, and there are some times in life where risks may increase. Some of these circumstances may include:

- Learning, sensory or physical disability
- Old age and frailty (especially if it creates a dependency on or needing help from others)
- Mental health problems
- Dementia or confusion
- Illness
- Addiction or dependence on alcohol, drugs or medication
- Bereavement
- Past abuse or trauma
- English is not their first language
- Domestic abuse

### B. RECORD KEEPING

It is good practice to record pastoral visits or meetings, noting the date, time, location, subject and any actions which are to be taken. The record of these meetings should stick to facts and try to avoid opinion. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be stored in a safe and secure manner for at least 75 years. Please speak to the Designated Person for Safeguarding if you have records that need to be stored for this purpose.

### C. CONFIDENTIALITY

With adults at risk, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the statutory authorities or the Local Association. However, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what someone has disclosed, not even for prayer ministry.

### D. PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

All those involved in pastoral ministry should work in a way that protect those carrying out the pastoral ministry as well as those receiving it.

- Workers should be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship, should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.

- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with dignity and respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Workers should recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies, and they should not hesitate to get further help when working with situations outside of their expertise or role.

## **E. MENTAL CAPACITY**

Within safeguarding, mental capacity is defined as whether or not someone has the capacity or ability to make decisions about themselves and their safety and well-being. There is a fine balance between the individual's rights to autonomy and their need for protection.

If there are any concerns about the mental capacity of an adult at risk, always refer to your local authority Adult Social Care Services for advice.

## **F. WHAT IF THE ADULT DOESN'T WANT HELP?**

The mental capacity of the adult at risk is vital in deciding what should be done. All actions should be based on the assumption that the individual has the capacity and the right to make their own choices in relation to their personal safety and well-being. This includes upholding their right to follow a course of action which others may deem unwise or eccentric, including staying in a situation of abuse.

If the adult at risk doesn't want help it may still be necessary to inform the police or Adult Social Care Services, who can put a safeguarding plan in place so that, as far as possible, the adult continues to be protected. This is particularly important:

- When the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
- When there is a risk of harm to others
- In order to prevent a crime

If at all unsure of whether or not to pass on information about abuse without permission, the Designated Person for Safeguarding should contact your Association Safeguarding Contact for advice.

It is also important that the individual knows where to get appropriate help and support if they should change their mind.



## Part 4 – Safe practice and safe premises

### A. PREMISES

We aim for our building to be as accessible as possible to all people. We handle accessibility issues under our health and safety procedures so as to ensure that they are carried out to meet legislative requirements.

### B. LANGUAGE

We make every effort to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility.

### C. WORSHIP

On request, we make available large print type of all printed materials. We provide a hearing loop system and can make video and sermon notes available for those with sight or hearing impediment. We will provide gluten free bread as an alternative at communion services.

### D. INSURANCE

We will follow any additional advice from our insurance provider for specific guidance on their requirements.

### E. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

- Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.
- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the Leadership Team, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled in accordance with the GBC Financial procedures.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the Leadership Team. We strongly recommend that church workers (including ministers) should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.

### F. PHOTOGRAPHS

Make sure that you have the person's permission to take a picture, and if you intend to upload it, make sure that they're happy for people to see it online. When taking group pictures remember to get permission from everyone who will be photographed.

### G. COMPUTERS

GBC computers may only be used by workers in accordance with our IT policies.

## Part 5 – A Safe Community

If it becomes known that an offender or someone against whom a serious allegation has been made is attending GBC, we will seek support and advice from the EBA.

### **A. THE PROCESS**

- A small group of people is set up to work with the alleged or known offender. This should include the minister, and it may be an existing church safeguarding group. This group will liaise with the Local Association and statutory authorities where necessary.
- A risk assessment is carried out to determine the level of risk that the alleged or known offender poses.
- A formal agreement is written and then agreed by the alleged or known offender. This lays out the conditions under which they can attend church services and various other activities organised by the church.
- The formal agreement is reviewed at regular intervals (not less than annually and when circumstances change) by all parties.
- A press statement is prepared and written in advance, where appropriate.

It is important that no information about the alleged or known offender or the formal agreement is shared with anyone outside of the small group without the individual's knowledge, and that confidentiality is maintained.

### **B. ALLEGED OR KNOWN OFFENDERS WHO ARE THEMSELVES ADULTS AT RISK**

A formal agreement may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties or a young person, yet having something in place is still necessary. Rather than signing a formal 'agreement', the individual would instead sign to say that they agree with the minutes or meeting notes, and that they will stick to what has been agreed during the meeting. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure the individual is complying, exactly as a formal agreement would be.

### **C. PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR ALLEGED OR KNOWN OFFENDERS**

An important aspect of this care and support is the imposition of boundaries or a formal agreement (or equivalent). If the offender truly wants to participate in the life of the church, has an understanding of the extent and damage of their crimes, and is committed to a new life, then they will understand the necessity of the restrictions placed upon them.

Alleged offenders should also be able to access pastoral care and support and a formal agreement (or equivalent) needs to be put in place and reviewed once the outcome of the situation is known.

### **D. PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF ALLEGED OR KNOWN OFFENDERS**

Families of alleged or known offenders will also be affected by what has happened, and in particular how they are now perceived and treated by the wider community. The church has the opportunity to play a vital role in the care and support of families of alleged or known offenders.