

Purpose & Chief Commitment

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to abide by the Care Quality Committee (CQC) definition of safeguarding, aiming to protect “[people at Victoria Park Community Church's (VPCC)] health, wellbeing and human rights, and [enable] them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect”.

We are committed to abiding by UK safeguarding legislation and best practice, as delineated by the Care Act 2014 and the FIEC Safeguarding Policy Template, particularly to ensure we safeguard: children, young people and adults at risk.

Scope

- This policy applies to all members, volunteers, staff, and leaders at VPCC
- All activities and ministries occurring in the church, particularly those involving children, young people or adults at risk
- All locations where formal church activity occurs, whether in church premises or elsewhere

VPCC Safeguarding Commitments

- We will provide a safe and caring environment, treating all who engage with the church with courtesy and respect, seeking to uphold their safety from harm, abuse, neglect
- We will take all safeguarding concerns seriously, seeking to support and care well for anyone who discloses they have been a victim of abuse or neglect, by:
 - Listening well to any concerns, complaints, or other expressions of dissatisfaction and to respond in a proportionate, impartial, transparent, and accountable manner
 - Reporting this conveniently, first to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and then, where required, to statutory services (e.g. social services, police, etc.) in line with local procedures
 - Carefully examining any allegations made or concerns raised about any member or leader and responding appropriately
- We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are competent to fulfil their roles and the legal duties associated with safeguarding, by safely recruiting and appropriately training them for this

VPCC Safeguarding Responsibilities

1. *To ensure that we have suitable systems and processes in place to manage safeguarding risks, including:*

The appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Matilde de Sousa Antunes

Email address: matilde.sousaantunes@gmail.com

Mobile number: +44 7713 923 903

The appointment of a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), who will act on behalf of the DSL if the DSL is absent

Name: Lucy Virgo

Email address: lucyavirgo98@gmail.com

Mobile number: +44 7804 192449

The appropriate forms, made readily available to all people involved with VPCC (pinned in the description of the VPCC group chat and linked on the website):

- [Safeguarding Report Form](#) for any safeguarding concerns that have occurred or been disclosed
- [Incident Record Form](#) for any physical incident that has occurred during regulated church activity

2. To deal appropriately with a safeguarding concern

If something is disclosed to you:

- Listen carefully to what the person says if disclosed verbally, or read thoroughly if in written form (e.g. text, email, letter)
- Be clear to them that what has been disclosed is a safeguarding concern and it will need to be passed on to the DSL
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999
- Immediately report to the DSL (you are obliged to report it within 24 hours, but the sooner the better)
- Fill in the Safeguarding Report Form and send it to the DSL
- An action plan for consequent action is to be recommended by the DSL, and agreed to and recorded in discussion with you

If you witness something:

- Deescalate the situation where appropriate and necessary. If de-escalating would put you in imminent danger it is not appropriate to do so
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999
- Immediately report to the DSL (you are obliged to report it within 24 hours, but the sooner the better)
- Fill in the Safeguarding Report Form and send it to the DSL
- An action plan for consequent action is to be recommended by the DSL, and agreed to and recorded in discussion with you

If you want to report something that has occurred to you:

- Immediately report to the DSL (you are obliged to report it within 24 hours, but the sooner the better)
- Fill in the Safeguarding Report Form and send it to the DSL

- An action plan for consequent action is to be recommended by the DSL, and agreed to and recorded in discussion with you

The DSL will:

- Ascertain whether any action needs to be taken. If required, support and advice will be sought from either the relevant statutory services, Christian Safeguarding Services or safeguarding helplines (confidentiality standards will be abided by)
- **Safeguarding helpline contact:** Thirtyone:eight - 0303 003 1111
- Make any necessary referrals according to local procedures
- Cooperate with statutory services and provide the link between the church and those professionals involved in responding to the situation

3. *To ensure confidentiality procedures are adhered to:*

- Make clear to whoever is involved in the safeguarding concern that the information will need to be disclosed to the DSL
- Ensure you only share the information disclosed to the DSL
- If the DSL believes another person/other people should know, inform the person who has disclosed first, and then disclose solely to said person/people

4. *To ensure that those who act on our behalf are competent and safe to do so:*

If a regular volunteer/member of the church is working with children or adults at risk, we will:

- If a regular volunteer/member of the church is working with children or adults at risk, we will ensure the DSL is informed of and has approved this, and will regularly supervise this person's work
- If someone is formally employed by the church to work with children or adults at risk, we will ensure the DSL has received appropriate references for this to occur (former job, former pastor, character ones), has approved them, and will regularly supervise this person's work, we will ensure the DSL has received appropriate references for this to occur (character one by person recommending them work), has approved them, and will regularly supervise this person's work
- If someone who is not a regular volunteer/church member the church community knows working with children or adults at risk, we will
- Ensure this person has a valid DBS check for any regularly occurring (weekly, monthly, annually) formal church work
- Ensure the DBS check is kept up to date, according to FIEC standards
- Ensure a copy of this DBS check is provided to the DSL before the work commences
- Ensure this person is appropriately trained to do so, needing to complete basic safeguarding training, as well as being inducted into their responsibilities

5. *To ensure everyone in the church knows how to recognise a safeguarding concern:*

- Ensure everyone who is in regular contact with children or vulnerable adults in a formal church activity is safeguarding trained

- Ensure everyone is aware of the key safeguarding definitions outlined in this document, in the section below

Safeguarding Definitions

Abuse

Abuse is a general term that is used to cover a wide range of harm caused to people. It always involves a violation of the person's rights. It can take various forms as described under "Categories of Abuse" later in this section

Adult at risk of abuse (sometimes referred to as adult in need of protection)

These are adults who have care and support needs, however, in addition, they are at risk of abuse, and because of their support needs, are unable to protect themselves.

Since these adults are unable to protect themselves, we have a legal duty to protect them

Adult with care and support needs

An adult who requires help or support with basic and essential day-to-day tasks such as:

- Getting up, washing, or dressing
- Cooking meals
- Cleaning the house
- Shopping
- Managing their finances
- etc.

Adults with care and support needs have the right to choose whether they want support or not

Allegation (against a member of staff or volunteer)

An allegation is a claim that a person who has a role that provides access to a vulnerable person has used their position to exploit, abuse, or otherwise harm the person they should have been caring for

Categories of abuse

This term is used to refer to the legally recognised forms of abuse.

When considering the safeguarding of children, abuse is categorised under four headings:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional

- Neglect

When considering the safeguarding of adults, abuse is categorised under ten headings:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological (or emotional)
- Neglect
- Domestic
- Institutional
- Financial or material
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect
- Discriminatory

Child

A person (including an unborn child) who has not yet reached the age of 18 years

Child protection

Child protection is defined as the protection of children who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, "significant harm". It is our legal duty to report all Child Protection concerns to either Children's Social Care or the Police as per local procedures

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Frequently abbreviated to DSL, this is the person appointed by the church to take responsibility for many aspects of safeguarding, including receiving safeguarding concerns from staff or volunteers, and passing them on to the local authority where their threshold is met

Early Help / Child in Need

Early Help and Child in Need are the areas of safeguarding where a child who has additional needs is receiving targeted support to meet their needs. Support is consent-based, and so the parents (or the young person if deemed competent to make decisions for themselves) can choose whether to access the support

Neglect

Neglect is one of the categories of abuse that is characterised by the failure to provide the basic necessities for life, where we have a responsibility to do so

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a broad range of activities that range from the general duty of care that we have for everyone who comes into contact with the charity, through early intervention and targeted support, to protection from significant harm. It relates to both children and adults

Spiritual Abuse

This term has become widely used, although it remains ill-defined and is not a legally recognised category of abuse. We understand this to be a term referring to emotional, psychological or spiritual harm caused within the context of a religious community, often, but not always, involving the misuse of power, authority, position, or scripture to manipulate, control and abuse others. This policy does not refer specifically to the different categories of abuse since it covers all forms of abuse and harm

Universal safeguarding

This refers to the general duty of care that we must provide for everyone who comes into contact with the church

Vulnerable adults

This term is only used as a generic term. It is no longer used as a technical descriptor for a specific group of people. A vulnerable adult is less able to protect themselves and meet their own needs than an adult who has no vulnerabilities

Reviewing Policy

This provisional policy will be reviewed within six months to ensure compliance with current UK safeguarding guidance and denominational requirements

Signed on behalf of Victoria Park Community Church:

Name: Gilbert Virgo

Role: Pastor

Date: 03/11/2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert Virgo".

