Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

February 2025 Version 1.0

1. Overview

1.1 LifeSpring church recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults at risk. We have therefore, adopted the procedures set out in this policy in order to:

1.1.1 Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.

1.1.2 To ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

1.1.3 Stop that abuse occurring.

1.2 LifeSpring Church recognises the need to support overseas projects to have adequate safeguarding policies as much as is practical, while taking account of what is appropriate in a local context. We will ask for copies of safeguarding policies and guidelines where they exist and ensure those projects without the appropriate paperwork, understand the importance of safeguarding and are working towards complying with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and UK national guidelines.

1.3 LifeSpring will also work to ensure:

1.3.1 All personal data is handled in an appropriate and safe way,

1.3.2 Appropriate safeguarding guidelines are followed when organising overseas trips

all those involved are aware of the imbalance of power that exists when funding overseas projects.

1.4 Ultimate accountability for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk sits with the LifeSpring Church Directors and will be dealt with by those with designated responsibility for safeguarding (hereafter referred to as the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team). Please see Section **Error! Reference source not found.** for contact information.

2. Directors Undertaking

The Directors undertake to:

2.1.1 endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.

2.1.2 develop a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone

2.1.3 provide appropriate safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers in relevant positions on a regular basis

2.1.4 regularly review operational guidelines

2.1.5 endeavour that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.

2.1.6 support the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children, young people and adults at risk

2.1.7 build constructive links with statutory and voluntary protection agencies

2.1.8 ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 This policy has been drawn up in line with law and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and adults at risk as set out in the Children's Act 2004 and The Care Act of 2014.

3.2 Further information can be found regarding adult and children's safeguarding on the websites of the relevant local authority, local Safeguarding Adults Board, or Safeguarding Children Partnership (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**)

4. Define Abuse

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

4.2 Abuse can take many forms and may include:

4.2.1 Physical abuse

4.2.2 Domestic abuse

4.2.3 Sexual abuse

4.2.4 Psychological abuse

4.2.5 Financial abuse

4.2.6 Modern slavery

4.2.7 Discriminatory abuse

4.2.8 Organisational abuse

4.2.9 Neglect or acts of omission

4.2.10 Self-neglect.

4.2.11 Spiritual Abuse

4.3 For definitions of each form of abuse and do what the signs to look out for, please see safeguarding guidelines.

5. Definitions of Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult/Adult at Risk

5.1 Child or Young Person: All children and young people up to the age of 18 years, including unborn babies. The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is in the armed forces, in hospital, or in prison or a young offender's institution, does not change their status or their entitlement to services or their protection under the Children Act 1989.

5.2 Vulnerable Adult or Adult at Risk: An adult (18 years and over) who:

5.2.1 has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;

5.2.2 is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and

5.2.3 as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

6. Responding to Allegations or Concerns of Abuse

6.1 If the Child or Vulnerable Adult is at immediate risk of danger, the police should be contacted. If the Child or Vulnerable Adult is not at immediate risk of danger, the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

6.2 If the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team is not available, the local authority safeguarding team should be directly contacted.

6.3 If you make a direct referral to the police or local authority, then the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team **must** be advised at the earliest opportunity.

7. Disclosure of Abuse

7.1 If a person discloses abuse to you then:

7.1.1 Listen, reassure and respond sensitively

7.1.2 Let them use their own words and repeat back to them what they have said and ask them to confirm it.

7.1.3 Record what is said, (see below for guidance).

7.1.4 Preserve any physical evidence

7.1.5 If the person is a child explain that you have to tell someone else and explain what you are going to do next

7.1.6 If the person is an adult, then ask what they would like to happen and discuss the options with them. They should give their consent before a formal safeguarding referral to the council is made, unless they do not have the mental capacity to make this decision, in which case a referral can be made without consent.

7.1.7 Speak to the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team to report the concern at the earliest opportunity (whether or not, in the case of an adult, consent has been given to refer the concern to the local authority)

7.1.8 Maintain confidentiality between yourself, the person and others involved in the investigation.

7.2 You should write a record of your concerns as soon as possible. In order to ensure confidentiality, consider where the record is being held until you pass it to the designated safeguarding officer. The record should include:

7.2.1 What you saw if you witnessed the abuse

7.2.2 Information on the setting

7.2.3 Describe any significant points about the person's appearance and emotional presentation

7.2.4 What was said, use exact words where possible

7.2.5 Make a careful record of the person's condition and any injuries. Use a body map as necessary

7.2.6 Ensure that you separate factual information from your opinion

7.2.8 Who the concerns were reported to

7.3 Please treat all conversations with the strictest confidence and do not share personal details with anyone except the Safeguarding Director and LifeSpring Safeguarding Team. **No assurances of confidentiality about allegations of abuse should be given.** Where a person is unable to act for themselves, we have a duty of care to act on information given to us. It may also be that the abuse goes beyond the individual and we have a wider duty to protect others as well. We will strive to ensure that the individual's dignity is upheld at all times during investigations of abuse allegations.

7.4 If the individual with the concern feels that the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team as to the appropriateness of a referral they may contact the director with responsibility for Safeguarding or the local authority directly

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8. Reporting Safeguarding concerns or abuse

8.1 All staff and volunteers will use the procedure outlined above to report a concern and direct referral to the local authority safeguarding team should be through the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team. It is the right of any individual to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies but they should then notify the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team at the earliest opportunity.

8.2 If there is a concern about a child at risk the procedures outlined by the relevant local authority should be followed including:

8.2.1 Contact the Children's Single Point of Access Team (CSPoA) for advice in cases of unexplained or non-accidental injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.

8.2.2 Consider whether consent should be obtained from the parents before making a referral. If you believe a child is at-risk of immediate harm or you are unsure if this could be the case – you should contact a social worker in the CSPAT Team directly. The social worker will be able to support you in what to say to parents – particularly as there are times when telling parents about the referral could place the child/children at further risk.

8.2.3 Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.

8.2.4 For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage the parent / carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm. If in any doubt advice should be gained from your line manager or the safeguarding team

8.2.5 Where the parent / carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact the CSPoA team directly for advice.

8.3 If there is a concern about an adult at risk, the procedures outlined by the relevant local authority should be followed including:

8.3.1 Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.

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

8.3.3 For advice contact MASH who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse.

8.4 If there is an allegation about the behaviour of a member of staff, volunteer or member of LifeSpring Church, then this should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Director and LifeSpring Safeguarding Team. They will then make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and liaise with the local authorities' children or adult safeguarding team, who will provide advice on the action to be taken.

8.5 The LifeSpring Directors will contact the Charity Commission about any safeguarding issues, or serious safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations in line with the regulatory guidelines.

9. Support and Prevention.

9.1 The Directors will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

9.1.1 There is a written job description / person specification for the post

9.1.2 Those short listed have been interviewed

9.1.3 Safeguarding has been discussed at interview

9.1.4 Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate

9.1.5 A Disclosure & Barring Services Check has been completed in accordance with guidelines (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)

9.1.6 Qualifications where relevant have been verified

9.1.7 A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant, which covers safeguarding.

9.1.8 The applicant has completed a probationary period

9.1.9 The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

9.2 Appropriate checks will be carried out during the recruitment process for all LifeSpring staff members and volunteers. Any applicant who has committed serious crimes against a child or adult, shall be prohibited from working or volunteering with any vulnerable adult or child.

9.3 It remains a criminal offence for anyone on a Barring List to apply to work in regulated activity with that particular group of people. If any LifeSpring staff member or volunteer becomes aware that a person they are working with is on a Barring List this must be reported to a member of the LifeSpring Safeguarding Team immediately.

9.4 Suitable applicants will not be prevented from working or volunteering because of offences that are not relevant to the role applied for.

10. Online Safety

10.1 The LifeSpring Safeguarding Team will ensure that relevant training about online unsafe organisations is given to group leaders and those responsible for young people in LifeSpring including what constitutes appropriate contact.

10.2 Group leaders and those responsible for young people will support and encourage young people to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe Snapchat or other similar apps should not be used to make contact where there is no is no record of the conversation.

10.3 Where any of our events take place online or involves online activity clear directions will be given to staff and volunteers on how to behave online and there will always be at least two DBS-checked adults as part of any online youth activity.

10.4 Parents will be asked to give consent for the LifeGroup leader to contact their child by WhatsApp or text. Parents will also be asked to give consent for their child to meet their LifeGroup leader and this **must** take place in public if they are meeting one to one.

11. Training

11.1 All staff and volunteers working with children are required to attend Safeguarding Training every 3 years. Staff, SLT and Directors not working directly with children are encouraged to do the same.'

12. Contacts

Name	Role	Contact
Safeguarding Director	Kate Peirce	TBC
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Lauren Lane	TBC
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer	Jacob Budd	TBC
Vulnerable Adults	Jackie Jackson	TBC
DBS Check Lead	Jackie Hollands	TBC
DBS Check Alternate	Lauren Lane	TBC

Statutory Safeguarding Referral

Name	Contact	
Children's Safeguarding Team	*Reading:*	0118 937 3641
	West Berkshire:	01635 503090
	Wokingham:	0118 908 8002
Adults Safeguarding Team	*Reading:*	0118 937 3747
	West Berkshire:	01635 519056
	Wokingham:	0118 974 6371
RBC Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	0118 937 3555/07841 253871	
Police Protection Team	101 or 999	
Charity Commission Serious Incident Reporting	rsi@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk	
Mental Health Support CPE (Common Point of Entry)	0300 365 0300	
Mental Health Support Crisis Team	0300 365 9999	

Document Control				
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1.0	Kate Pierce	February 2025	Director responsible for Policy Oversite: Safeguarding.	Complete

Next Review	
Date:	**Reviewer(s):**

February 2026	Children’s Team Leader