

Union Croft Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

The Pastor and Deacons of Union Croft Independent Chapel are both responsible and dedicated to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults within the life of the church. The Holy Scripture takes the physical and spiritual welfare of all individuals extremely seriously. We believe that mankind is created in God's image and as such, we believe every individual will stand accountable at our Lord's second coming regarding our treatment of one another. The Bible commands Christians everywhere to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" (Luke 10:27).

The officers of our church are committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for children, young people, and adults
- Identifying children, young people and adults who are suffering
- To take appropriate action when such suffering is suspected or identified

In order to pursue these aims the church will annually review our child protection and vulnerable adults policy and will make appropriate changes when necessary.

Key concepts and definitions

i) Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iii) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

iv) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm. We recognise that abuse as a whole may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect.

Designated Staff & Raising Concerns

Our nominated lead person for our child protection and vulnerable adult policy is Heather Conboy, a church Deacon and HLTA in one of our local schools. She is already trained in the application of child protection and brings great experience to the role. Any concerns with regards to child protection and vulnerable adults should be reported immediately to Heather our designated officer.

Our designated child protection and vulnerable adult officer will be the main contact point for Child Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees

and volunteers. This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police child protection unit.

Dealing with disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

If a child, young person or adult informs one of our church officers about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm
- Do not interview the child or person in question, but ask relevant questions without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the vulnerable child, young person or adult is telling you.
- If you see a child with an injury, always ask them how they sustained the injury.
- Do not put words into the child's, young persons, or adults mouth.
- Give reassurance that they've taken the correct action by telling you
- Inform the vulnerable child, young person or adult that the information they've shared must be passed on, but only to those that need to know about the situation in hand. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.
- After conversing with the vulnerable child, young person or adult, express your concerns to their parents/family unless you consider, in consultation with our nominated lead person that the situation is so serious to warrant instant medical treatment and/or referral to care services.
- If you have serious concerns about the welfare of children, young people, or vulnerable adults, do not delay in seeking advice.

Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against church members and officers.

In rare instances, members and officers of churches have been found responsible for child abuse. Because of their frequent contact with children and young people, staff may have allegations of child abuse made against them. Union Croft Independent Chapel recognizes that an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

Union Croft treats the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously. We also recognise that hasty ill informed decisions in connection with church officers and members can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore the church will deal with such allegations with care, sensitivity and wisdom.