

## **Buxton United Reformed Church Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults Who Are Vulnerable**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure procedures are in place and all adults are clear about roles and responsibilities for the protection of children and adults who are vulnerable working in or on behalf of Buxton United Reformed Church. It is supported by the detailed overarching Safeguarding Policy of the East Midlands Synod, and the national URC Safeguarding Guidelines.

### **Statement of Safeguarding Intent**

**Buxton United Reformed Church seeks to serve the needs of our members and community.**

**In doing so, we take seriously the welfare of everyone who comes onto our premises or who is involved in our activities.**

**We aim to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.**

**We acknowledge that the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and adults who are vulnerable may happen anywhere. It may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological, online, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. We acknowledge the effects these may have on people and their growth and development, including spiritual and religious development.**

**This church accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained.**

**We have a responsibility to listen and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them.**

**We will respond appropriately to all concerns and allegations of abuse, including referring to the statutory authorities if necessary.**

**We will co-operate with the statutory authorities in any investigation, will follow multi-agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.**

### **Church commitment – children and young people (under 18years)**

Buxton United Reformed Church is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its children and young people.

All adults working with children must be perceived by those children as safe and trustworthy. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are made for adults working with children and young people in church activities.

All leaders who work with children and at church based activities will have undertaken safeguarding training.

Safe practice ensures that children and young people are safe, and that all adults:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- work in an open and transparent way
- discuss and/or take advice from the named Safeguarding Link Person (SLP) over any incident which may give rise to concern. Where the SLP is unavailable the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted.

We are committed to working with parents and carers positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents/carers are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents/carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

### **Church commitment – adults who are vulnerable**

Buxton United Reformed Church recognises that all its members, visitors, volunteers, its congregation and users of its community services may be vulnerable at times in their lives and there needs to be particular care taken for those whose vulnerability is increased by certain situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible.

### **Church Commitment- groups using our premises**

Buxton United Reformed Church is pleased to welcome other users of our building. We will establish with all our regular user groups that, where relevant

- they have their own safeguarding/ risk assessment policy
- they have DBS checks for at least some of their staff/ volunteers
- they know where to find information about the Church's Safeguarding Link Person.

### **Procedures**

Buxton United Reformed Church will undertake to keep records which will ensure:

- that DBS checks are made and renewed for those members requiring them
- that regular user groups are aware of our Safeguarding policy.

It is not the responsibility of the church to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. However, all adults have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of children will be reported and discussed with the Safeguarding Link Person.

The Safeguarding Link Person, working with the East Midlands Synod, commit themselves to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or an adult who is vulnerable may have been harmed during any church based activity of whatever type. They commit themselves to challenge the abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.

### **Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of church**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the church that he or she has:

- \* behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or vulnerable adult
- \* possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult
- \* has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children
- \* has behaved in an unsuitable manner towards an adult who is vulnerable.

Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be securely retained. Whilst we acknowledge such allegations may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is therefore essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

### **Initial Action**

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and have been abused, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listen carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- informs the church Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this. This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.
- The SLP may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support children and their parents/carers and to the families of adults who are vulnerable.
- The SLP will inform East Midlands Synod and ask for support if necessary.

### **Managing those who may pose a risk to the welfare of people**

Where it is known that someone has a caution or conviction for committing a sexual offence, the church can play an important role in the prevention of further abuse by helping the offender to live an offence-free life. If anyone is made aware that a person attending their church has been convicted of an offence against a child or has had an allegation of this nature made against them at any time, the church safeguarding link will immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim Moderator. It is important to provide known or alleged offenders with a group of people who will offer support, friendship and supervision. Following advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer, when appropriate, a formal safeguarding contract will be drawn up between the church, the person who is considered to pose a risk to the welfare of people in the church, and any statutory agencies when involved.

### **Training**

All relevant volunteers will undertake appropriate safeguarding training delivered by the synod or other appropriate training organisation. The Safeguarding Coordinator will ensure that leaders/elders and people involved in regulated activities with children or adults have been offered safeguarding training, as recommended by the URC and will keep a log of training sessions attended.

**Key Contacts:**

The safeguarding link person for children, young people and vulnerable adults at Buxton United Reformed Church is: Jennie Gill 07775932741

The Synod Safeguarding Officer is Ben Twelves 07935991545  
[safeguarding@urc5.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urc5.org.uk) (Ben's usual working days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. On other days, contact the police or statutory services for assistance.)

Children's Services: (Call Derbyshire) 01629 533190 or, out of hours, 01629 532600

Adult Social Care: (Call Derbyshire) 01629 533190

Police: 01773 730215

Local Authority Designated Officer: 01629 531940

**Policy to be reviewed and approved at the Annual Church Meeting**

Policy approved: November 2023

Due to be reviewed: November 2024