



Weymouth and portlandchurch in action

Refresh, the church of Weymouth and Portland in Action

Safeguarding Policy

Contact Information

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Refresh is a local charity, registered with the Charity Commission and works in partnership with churches of all denominations within Weymouth and Portland.

Our commitment

Refresh recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Refresh safeguarding policy and procedures are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). In this document a “child” is aged 0-18 years old and “workers” refers to both paid staff and volunteers.

Refresh undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- file a copy of this policy and procedure with Refresh Trustees and any amendments subsequently published.

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and 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 vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also, for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in Appendix 1.

SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS

Refresh are committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Refresh will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults 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.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. All workers should follow the procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the **Refresh Safeguarding Coordinator** who is nominated by the Refresh Trustees to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to the Refresh Safeguarding Deputy Coordinator. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made to any of the other trustees or to the Church safeguarding officer of the person receiving the report.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Children or Adult Services, the Police or taking advice from the relevant church's safeguarding officer.
- The Refresh Trustees will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, although the Refresh Trustees hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator / Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Refresh Trustees demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator / Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. The procedures for the Safeguarding Coordinator / Deputy to follow are in Appendix 3.

Prevention

SAFE RECRUITMENT

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

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview, where relevant
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- Disclosure and Barring checks have been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Suitable training programmes are provided for workers
- Workers are provided with a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedure document and know how to report concerns.

MANAGEMENT OF WORKERS – CODES OF CONDUCT

The Refresh Trustees is committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children and vulnerable adults. The Refresh Trustees undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour that might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Pastoral Care

SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The Refresh Trustees is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the organisation.

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When someone connected to and involved in activities with the organisation is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Refresh Trustees will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that

person which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries would take the form of a written contract signed by the offender and a member of the Refresh Trustees.

Good Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Agreed by the Refresh Trustees at a trustees meeting on **10th December 2024**