



MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to the wellbeing of all in our community. We seek to ensure the safety and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults by preventing, identifying, investigating, and responding to abuse as follows:

- Valuing, listening to, respecting them, and promoting their welfare and protection.
- Carefully recruiting, training, and supervising all staff and volunteers.
- Adopting a clear procedure to recognise, record, report and refer concerns of possible abuse.
- Ensuring good practice for communicating with under-18s, including messaging, emails, and social media.
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers.
- Supporting those in the church community affected by abuse.
- Accessing the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations when needed.
- Raising awareness of these ideals and procedures among the church community by regular teaching, including an annual 'Safeguarding Sunday'. Copies of this policy will be circulated.

CHURCH POLICY

This policy is a bespoke document written for the use of The Deptford Ragged Trust (TDRT) and The Bear Church. It lays out the commitments made by The Bear Church Leadership Team and the Trustees of The Deptford Ragged Trust (hereinafter jointly referred to as "we") to ensure the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It informs staff, volunteers and the wider church community of their responsibilities and the protocols that have been set in place to ensure that The Bear Church provides a safe and caring environment for all.

We recognise the role of statutory and voluntary safeguarding agencies. This policy is based on a model published by the 'thirtyone:eight.org' (formerly CCPAS) and has been reviewed by them.

Where appropriate, codes of practice based on this policy will be drawn up to cover specific activities provided for children, young people and vulnerable adults. These include the church's regular activities for children/youth, Bear Cubs Toddler Group, the Evening Service Soup Kitchen, English Fridays language class etc. It will be the responsibility of those leading these activities to ensure that the protocols are appropriately applied.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

In the UK, safeguarding is defined as protecting people's health, well-being and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults from harm that may arise from

coming into contact with our staff, volunteers, members or activities, or those beyond our organisation.

What do we mean by 'vulnerable adult'?

The broad definition of a vulnerable adult is a person *'who is 18 years of age or over, and who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.'* (*'Who Decides':1997, Lord Chancellor's department*)

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) definition of vulnerability is: *'Vulnerability may result from an environmental or individual's circumstance or behaviour indicating that there may be a risk to that person or another ...'*

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is defined as a single act or repeated acts, which may be perpetrated because of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. There are many types of abuse, for example:

- Physical – any way of causing physical harm or a change to someone's physical state, e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment.
- Sexual – involving someone in sexual activity under the legal age of consent (16 years) or against their will, whether forcing, coercing or tricking them into contact, non-contact or illegal sexual activity, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- Emotional – continual emotional or psychological mistreatment, e.g. intimidation or humiliation.
- Spiritual – coercion, control or exploitation in a spiritual or religious context.
- Discrimination – treatment which excludes individuals from opportunities available to others
- Financial - such as theft or exerting pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- Violation of rights - preventing an individual from speaking their thoughts and opinions, forcing them to perform tasks that are against their will.

Children, young people and adults can also be at risk of grooming, modern slavery and trafficking, bullying, domestic abuse, historic abuse and all forms of online abuse.

CODE OF PRACTICE

The trustees are responsible to ensure that our policy requirements are met. Day-to-day implementation and monitoring will be under the oversight of the Leadership Team, who will work with those heading up the teams and activities to ensure good practice.

All trustees, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of the policy, to carry out their work in accordance with it and to report any concerns of abuse that they might have, as set out below.

We aim to ensure a high level of practice is achieved by:

- Careful recruitment/selection of all engaged in any activity, whether staff or volunteers, including appropriate DBS checks and references.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers receive a clear induction process (including security and health and safety procedures) and training as appropriate, with refresher courses as required. Our intention is that staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults complete Level 1 Safeguarding, which may be done online, and we will create time within their volunteer/staffing hours for them to complete the training.
- Anyone in a position of trust must not engage in any behaviour that might allow an inappropriate relationship to develop. We require all staff/volunteers to sign our code of conduct.
- Communicating the policy with The Bear Church and partners. The policy will be published on our website and available on request. It will be printed out and displayed in the building and communicated regularly at our church meetings.
- Monitoring and reviewing our procedures annually to ensure they are working and being upheld. This will be overseen by the Safeguarding Trustee and a report presented to the Board. Additional reviews will be held promptly following any incidents that have arisen to identify:
 - What caused/allowed this to happen?
 - Was the response swift and effective?
 - Were the appropriate authorities informed and/or engaged?
 - What has been learned and what changes have been made to our policy and procedures?

Responding to concern, allegation or disclosure of abuse for under 18s

The Leadership Team has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy (DDSL) to act on its behalf in dealing with all concerns, allegations or disclosures of neglect or abuse, and will, where necessary, refer matters to statutory authorities as appropriate. See Appendix 1 for contact details of the DSL, DDSL and Safeguarding Trustee (as defined in point 3 below).

The role of the DSL/ DDSL is to collate and clarify the precise details of concerns, allegations or disclosures and pass this information on to the relevant authorities. It is Social Services' task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Under no circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into the concern, allegation or disclosure of abuse. Anyone who has, or is in receipt of a **concern, allegation or disclosure** of abuse should:

1. Report as soon as possible to the DSL, and it may be helpful to have a third party present. The DSL may be required to report to the relevant authorities. In the absence of the DSL, or if the concerns in any way involve the DSL, then the report should be made to the DDSL. The DSL is required by Ansvar, the Church and Charity Insurance (01323 737541), to keep records of any allegations, notifications or incidents.
2. If the concerns implicate both the DSL and the DDSL, then the report should be made to 'thirtyone:eight', PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel: 0845 120 4550.

Alternatively, contact:

- Children's Health and Social Care (between 9 am-5 pm) on 020 8314 8553
 - The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at Lewisham on 020 8314 6660. The out of hours number is 020 8314 6000.
 - Adult Social Care enquiries, London Borough Of Lewisham, Second Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU. Tel: 0208 314 7777
 - The Police Safeguarding Team may be contacted on 020 7232 6364
3. In addition to the DSL/DDSL, The Deptford Ragged Trust has appointed a Safeguarding Trustee to act on its behalf. The DSL/DDSL will update the Safeguarding Trustee on an annual basis and in the case of a reported incident.
 4. Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be kept in a secure place. No copies are to be kept electronically (on computers/laptops/in emails).
 5. While concerns, allegations or disclosure of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, the absence of the DSL or DDSL should not delay referral to the relevant authorities.
 6. The Leadership Team will support the DSL/DDSL in their roles and accepts that any information they may have in their possession will be shared on a strictly limited 'need-to-know' basis.
 7. If the individual raising the concern feels that the DSL/DDSL has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL/DDSL as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly. It is the right of any person to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight.

Responding to concern, allegation or disclosure of physical injury or neglect for under 18s

In the case of a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the DSL/DDSL will:

1. Refer to Lewisham Social Care or Adult Social Care in cases of suspected deliberate injury, if concerned about the person's safety or if they are afraid to return home.

2. Inform the parents or carers on a need-to-know basis.
3. Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any concerns.
4. For other concerns, encourage the parent/carer to seek help, but only if this does not place the child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany/support them. In cases of real concern, if the parent/carer still fails to act, contact Social Care or NSPCC.
6. Refer cases to 'thirtyone:eight' or the NSPCC if unclear whether to refer a case to Social Care/Police.

Responding to concern, allegation or disclosure of sexual abuse for under 18s

In the event of concerns, allegations or disclosures of sexual abuse, the DSL/DDSL will:

1. Seek and follow advice given by 'thirtyone:eight' (or the NSPCC) if, for any reason, the DSL/DDSL are unsure whether or not to contact Social Care/Police. thirtyone:eight and the NSPCC will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.
2. Contact the Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Safeguarding Team direct.

Our response to concern, allegation or disclosure of abuse of any adults

This may involve:

- putting in place immediate safeguarding measures
- contacting emergency services
- referring appropriately
- providing strong advocacy
- and/or supporting them to access the assistance and safety they need.

If a crime has been committed first support the adult to decide about reporting:

- Do they want to report?
- Are they able to decide about whether they report?
- Is there a threat to public safety?

The DSL may decide that third-party reporting is necessary.

SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The Leadership Team is committed to offering pastoral care and support to those attending the church who have been affected by abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate. The Leadership Team will signpost to such agencies when necessary.

WORKING WITH THOSE WHO HAVE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS OR HAVE DISCLOSED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

This includes those who wish to attend The Bear Church and who have sexually offended, are perpetrators of domestic violence and those who pose a threat of serious harm.

The DSL/DDSL will cooperate with local police and other organisations to develop an agreement of attendance. This agreement may preclude the individual from attending church activities. Further details are available from the DSL/DDSL.

This policy will be reviewed annually by 31st March

For any safeguarding related emails: safeguarding@thebear.tv

