

Latimer Congregational Church
Safeguarding Policy & Plan
(Reviewed December 2025)

Safeguarding Policy

Latimer church provides a range of constructive and enjoyable activities for children, young people and adults in order to promote Christian values in the local community.

The Safeguarding team and wider church takes all possible steps ...

- To ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe, not exposed to unnecessary risks, or left open to any form of abuse.
- To ensure that leaders and helpers are protected from false or unfounded accusations connected with their activities.
- To provide pastoral care to a person who is a victim and/or survivor of abuse and people within their circle who are affected.
- To safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- To ensure that, where possible, and on the basis that the activity leaders and helpers have the necessary skills and experience, activities will be open to any child, young person or adult with access requirements.
- To provide opportunities, where appropriate, to those who have offended, or are rehabilitated, to access church following a detailed risk assessment and contract being put in place.
- To respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- To communicate regularly with Leaders and provide regular updates to Church meetings with regard to Safeguarding matters.

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1. Responsibilities within the church organisation

The Deacons will appoint a fellow Deacon and a Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Assistant from the church membership who are responsible for the following:

1. To issue and annually review the Safeguarding Policy and Plan (SP) to ensure it is fit for purpose.
2. To communicate the SP to the church membership and regular attenders of the church including placing a copy within every Activity Register Folder.
3. To ensure that the SP is available to participants in activities and/or to those responsible for the participants.
4. To maintain a register of approved leaders and helpers.
5. To act as the contact points and co-ordinators in the event of any incidents, disclosures or accusations involving activities for the leaders and helpers.
6. To report incidents, disclosures or accusations, as appropriate to the relevant authorities including the Charities Commission.
7. To record and maintain all documents relating to SP activities in a secure place.
8. To recommend and signpost or deliver suitable training and any Safeguarding updates.

Safeguarding will be an agenda item at every Deacons' and Members' meeting held at Latimer Church.

The current responsible officers are:

Jim Thompson (Deacon): 07521 781467; jrt235@outlook.com

Sarah Harrison (Safeguarding Assistant): 07891 483824; sarahglover30@hotmail.com

The Deacons must ensure that the current plan is lodged with the East Riding Safeguarding Board, "thirtyone:eight" (the support organisation we are members of) and the Charities Commission if required.

The Deacons must ensure that the church is adequately covered by relevant insurances in relation to safeguarding matters.

2. Safer Recruitment Process For Activity Leaders and Helpers. *(Note: this Applies to both Volunteers and Employed Staff¹)*

The safeguarding of our children, young people and vulnerable adults is a matter of great importance both to the church and to all who come to its activities. Therefore we do all we can to ensure that the recruiting of our staff and volunteers takes account of the church's safeguarding standards.

The following points summarise our 'Safer Recruiting Process' for our **regular activities** (for occasional events see below):

1. **All adults** (18+) who work in the regular activities of the church that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults are ...
EITHER members of the church: This means that they have been interviewed by the deacons and accepted by the church meeting. The church fellowship, therefore, is satisfied that there is credible evidence that the person is a genuine follower of Jesus Christ. This process would generally include taking references from a previous church if they have recently come from one;
OR if they are not members they are known by the church leadership, have been recognised by them as suitable and have had a Safeguarding interview.
2. **All adults** working with children and young people have a valid Enhanced DBS certificate. [Note: our ministries to the elderly do not provide health care or personal care, so a DBS certificate cannot be requested.]
3. The recruitment of a **new helper** has been first agreed by the minister and deacons, who are satisfied that the volunteer is suitable for the role. All volunteers have been given basic safeguarding training.
4. An **activities leader** with children, young people or vulnerable adults at Latimer will have been a member of the church for at least a year and so is well known to the church, and has been appointed to the role by the minister and deacons. They will have had a higher level of safeguarding training (a course run by 31:8 or equivalent).
5. Any **younger helpers** (under 18s) have been given basic safeguarding training (in-house) and are supervised by the adult volunteers. They are not left alone with children – none of our leaders or helpers ever are.

For **occasional events** like a mission or a soccer school in which volunteers from other churches are involved, the volunteers would need to have a DBS if working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, they would need to have a reference from their church, and at their induction they would be given basic safeguarding training.

When one-off activities take place a church safeguarding officer will be informed of the team list well before the activity starts, and for weekly activities at the start of the academic year with notification of any changes during the year. The DBS register must be reviewed by the Safeguarding Team on a regular basis to ensure that it is complete and up to date.

¹ The Safer Recruitment process must be applied to all employed staff whether they have regular contact or not with children, young people and vulnerable adults

3. Training, Resources and Communications

It is the responsibility of the Deacons to ensure that the chosen responsible officers are suitably trained and experienced in safeguarding matters.

It is the duty of the responsible officers to ensure that Leaders and Helpers are suitably trained and experienced in safeguarding matters.

The Deacons must ensure that resources are made available to implement the safeguarding plan including related fees and costs, document storage facilities, stationary and external training where necessary.

The responsible officers must ensure that changes in legislation and government policy as well as regular updates are provided to the Deacons, activity leaders and the wider church.

Ideally First Aid training will be provided from time to time for Activity Leaders and Helpers with the plan to run group sessions either on weekends or over evening sessions.

Help can be provided with compiling risk assessments. (All church activities should have one of these.)

Help can also be provided in creating permission forms, in addition to the annual registration form, to get parent/carers consent. It could be an activity or event taking place in a different location, could involve a risk or different timings to the standard activity.

4. Guidance notes for responsible officers, activity leaders and helpers

Responsible officers (along with the Minister and Diaconate) should communicate on a regular basis, be clear between themselves on their duties and areas of responsibility; and those with safeguarding policy and implementation duties should meet formally on a six-monthly basis. This meeting should be recorded by way of minutes.

Activity Leaders and Helpers should apply the following at all times for Safeguarding Children and Young People:

- Ensure that any activity has been approved by one of the responsible officers and a risk assessment (seek help if required) has been undertaken
- Ensure that any activity is supported by a sufficient number of approved leaders and helpers so that safe supervision can be provided at all times
- The level of supervision must take in to account the nature of the activity, the physical location and the need to have at least two helpers with any child or group of children
- Always ensure that a helper or leader is not put in the position where they are on their own with a child or group of children
- Avoid showing favouritism or developing a special relationship with a young person that might lead to inappropriate behaviour or accusations of such
- Do not communicate with children or young people **one to one** via mobile phone or through online social media sites; if you do need to contact an individual, copy in another leader and after first getting permission from the parent/carer
- Avoid any physical contact in a private setting with young people other than in extreme situations such as to prevent a serious accident or harm to themselves or others
- Never smack a young person; physical restraint should only be used in extreme situations such as to prevent a serious accident or harm to themselves or others. Minimal force should always be used. As soon as possible afterwards an 'Accident and Incident Form' (kept in the filing cabinet) should be completed and passed on to the Safeguarding Team
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child. For example, 'high-fives' are better than hugs in celebrating!
- Be consistent and even handed in dealing with young people, be a role model, only use appropriate and fitting language
- Be aware of any problems or unusual behaviour displayed in an individual and raise any concerns with a leader or responsible officer
- Ensure that each young person has a consent form in place, signed by their parent, guardian or carer (annual form September to August)
- Keep a register of all children and young people attending any activity **and** the leaders, helpers and any visitors
- Ensure that any young helpers (aged under 18) are themselves given extra supervision and support

Safeguarding vulnerable adults

Latimer church covers all age groups and some activities are specifically aimed at older people. These currently include Holiday at Home and services of worship in residential care homes as well as pastoral care. Since these are not regulated activities – for example we are not providing health care or personal care – a DBS check is not permitted.

An adult is anyone over the age of 18 years. For the purpose of this policy Latimer church recognises the provisions made in The Care Act 2014, which defines who might be classed as a **vulnerable adult** as follows:

An adult needing care or support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) is one ...

- *... who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect;*
- *... who is unable to protect themselves from the experience or risk of that abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs.*

Latimer Church recognises the types of abuse as defined by The Act as follows:

- *Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Domestic abuse, Psychological and Emotional abuse, Financial or Material abuse, subject to Modern Slavery, Discriminatory abuse, Organisational Neglect or Failures and finally Self-Neglect.*

Those adults who are particularly at risk may have the following characteristics:

- *Learning, sensory or physical disabilities*
- *Frail through old age*
- *Experience mental health problems*
- *Suffering with dementia or confusion*
- *Recovering from bereavement*
- *Have a severe illness*
- *Struggling with addictions such as alcohol, drugs or gambling*

The following list shows the places where abuse may occur (though the church may not interact with vulnerable adults in all of these situations):

- In the adult's home, supported housing, in a carer's home, within a residential care home or hospital, at work or an educational establishment and in places of worship.

As is the case with our Childrens' and Young People's workers, those of our church who engage in activities with adults are known and approved by our church leadership. The Holiday at Home team have been given basic Safeguarding training.

5. Reporting Incidents or Suspected Incidents of Abuse

Children and Young People

Incidents of abuse fall into one of five categories; Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Spiritual or Neglect. If a child makes a disclosure (directly or indirectly that indicates abuse is taking or has taken place) take the following steps:

1. Listen carefully but avoid leading questions. Repeating back key points to the person making the disclosure is a useful technique. Listening is critical at this stage because it is not an interview situation
2. Remember as much detail as possible, don't tone down any language, and record it exactly as it was said
3. Tell the child that you will have to share what they have told you for their own protection, never promise to keep it a secret
4. Make sure that the conversation with the child finishes with appropriate action (can the child simply return to the activity or do they need special supervision?)
5. Share that a disclosure has taken place with the activity leader or fellow helper (you don't need to pass on the details but you will need some practical support to deal with the immediate situation)
6. Write down as soon as possible after the activity, what happened and what was said (not an interpretation of events)
7. Contact should be made with one of the responsible officers as soon as possible (the seriousness of the incident will determine the urgency)

Do Not:

- Tell the parents
- Tell the person being accused if they have been named during the conversation
- Try and re-interview the young person to find out more details
- Make the child feel they are in the wrong. Reassure them that you are there to help

TO SUMMARISE: THE KEY IS LISTEN AND PASS ON...

Vulnerable Adults

If anyone is concerned about a vulnerable adult they should share their findings with a leader and/or one of the safeguarding officers in the church who can then advise on the next steps. These might include the following:

- Take advice from the Safeguarding team and Deacon with responsibility for Safeguarding;
- Take advice and guidance from the Thirty One Eight helpline team;
- Contact the relevant authorities, which could include the Police and Adult Social Services.

Where teams are working with adults in activities such as Holiday at Home, even though the activity does not qualify as a "regulated activity" (for example personal care is not provided), it is the policy of Latimer church to have at least one designated safeguarding lead in the team. All team members should be trained to the appropriate level.

6. Supporting a Victim/Survivor of (Domestic) Abuse

A person may present themselves to Latimer church and be struggling with the following issues: Physical abuse, Domestic abuse, Psychological and Emotional abuse, Financial or Material abuse, being subject to Modern Slavery abuse, Discriminatory abuse, Organisational Neglect or Failures and finally Self-Neglect. Please see Appendix A which gives further detail on Domestic abuse and how this affects both men and women.

7. Supporting Offenders or Offenders who have been Rehabilitated

Known sexual offenders

Where a known sexual offender wishes to worship at Latimer Church the following actions must take place:

- Respect confidentiality and share information on a “need to know” basis;
- Ensure that the responsible officers are informed who will then involve the police and probation services or social service as appropriate;
- A contract must be developed with the person to set very clear boundaries and responsibilities.

Offenders in other areas of abuse

This may include Physical abuse, Domestic abuse, Psychological and Emotional abuse, Financial or Material abuse, Modern Slavery, Discriminatory abuse, Organisational Neglect or Failures.

Some of the actions mentioned above for sexual offenders may also be appropriate to apply here.

Sexual offenders, whether rehabilitated or not, can never work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This should also be true of those exhibiting other abuses listed above with the possible exception of organisational neglect or failures.

8. Useful sources of information

Support, information and advice on Safeguarding matters is available from the following sources:

Responsible officers in the church: See page 4.

thirtyone:eight (our Safeguarding support organisation)

Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ

Telephone 0303 003 11 11

E-mail info@thirtyoneeight.org www.thirtyoneeight.org

Community Vision (formerly **East Riding Voluntary Action Services**)

4-6 Robert Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6NG

Telephone 01482 871077

E-mail office@communityvision.org.uk <https://communityvision.org.uk/>

East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership:

During office hours (Mon to Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm) **Call 01482 395500**

Outside of office hours: **Call the emergency duty team on 01482 393939**

If a child is suffering abuse and requires urgent attention because of immediate danger, call the police on **999**.

LADO referrals - managing allegations of child abuse

Every local authority has a **Local Authority Designated Officer** (LADO), who is responsible for coordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children (a person under 18) may have caused them harm.

- The criteria for making a referral to LADO are that an individual has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose risk of harm to children
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

To make a report to LADO go to <https://www.erscp.co.uk/reporting-concerns/> and follow the instructions there.

East Riding Safeguarding Adults Board:

www.ersab.org.uk

Telephone office hours 01482 396940

Telephone out of hours 01377 241273

Humberside Police

Telephone 101 (non-emergency)

Refuge (concerning Domestic Abuse)

Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

Website www.refuge.org.uk

9. Index of safeguarding related documents and forms

Activity Registers – can be either the issued version or a suitable document created by the activity leaders – records the attendance at all activities both participants, leaders and assistants.

Participant registration forms – completed annually by the parents or guardians of the participants e.g. Sunday Schools, or per event in cases of non-recurring activities e.g. Soccer School, Holiday Bible Clubs.

Register of existing DBS holders and expiry dates (tier one leaders and assistants).

Log of meetings, interviews and other child protection matters.

Appendix A: Domestic Abuse

This section focuses on Domestic abuse which affects both men and women. There are over 2 million reported cases of domestic abuse every year in the UK, the majority are women but one third involve men as victims².

It affects people inside and outside Latimer. We may have contact with someone who is being abused but be unaware of it.

Domestic abuse has been defined as: “An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer.”

In general it is a repeated pattern of behaviour where the Abuser intends to take control over the other person. Some examples may include:

- Constantly putting the partner down (ugly, too fat/thin, stupid, a bad parent etc)
- Treating them as a servant
- Preventing them from seeing friends or family
- Shouting, smashing things, throwing things, sulking
- Sexual violence and rape
- Physical violence
- Psychological abuse, making the person believe the abuse is their fault
- Manipulating Scripture: e.g. ‘your husband will rule over you’ (Gen. 3:16)
- Keeping them short of money
- Stalking and harassment (including online and by phone)

How to respond if someone tells me they are being abused?

- Find a safe place/time for the person to talk. Listen and take what they say seriously
- Have someone else present – if this is acceptable to the victim
- Give priority to their immediate safety
- Empower them to make their own decisions
- Support and respect their choices. Even if they choose initially to return to the abuser, it is their choice. However, if children are involved their safety must come first and the disclosure may well need to be reported
- Give information about relevant support agencies. If appropriate, offer to contact the agency on their behalf, in their presence or offer a safe, private place for them to use. (See Section 10 - Useful sources of information)
- Reassure the person it is not their fault and that they don’t deserve this treatment
- Love and support them and be patient
- Protect their confidentiality
- Note: Couple’s counselling, family mediation, marriage courses will **not** help domestic abuse situations

Refuge (Domestic Abuse information and helpline)

Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247. www.refuge.org.uk

² ‘Together Magazine’ Autumn 2023 edition, thirtyone:eight