

LEAF Safeguarding Policy 2021

This Policy was agreed at the Trustees Meeting of xxth of xxxxx 2021

Introduction

LEAF along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

LEAF is committed to creating safe spaces for all. We recognise the ways in which children and adults can be at risk of harm or abuse, so endeavour to create a culture to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur.

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all, including children, young people and adults at risk of harm. Children rely on adults to keep them safe, therefore all our churches working with children, either directly or indirectly, should be committed to safeguarding children in their care. We seek to do this by providing a safe, stable, and nurturing environment where children can reach their full potential. Similarly, we will support those adults in need of protection, care and support due to vulnerability, whether that is a permanent or temporary state.

We firmly believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all involved in the charity have a role to play in keeping children, young people and adults safe. LEAF recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We recognise the importance of our work with children, young people and adults and our responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm. All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse. Adults engaging in our activities should be enabled to live fulfilling, autonomous lives, and should have access to every aspect of our activities.

LEAF recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people

The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in activities is the responsibility of all those working in LEAF.

As a leadership we endeavour to make our activities a safe environment for all.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

Working with Safeguarding Authorities

- We recognise the role that the statutory safeguarding authorities (Social Services and the Police) have in investigating all suspicions and allegations or discovery of child abuse and the abuse of adults and will cooperate fully with all agencies to protect those at risk of harm or abuse:
 - Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there is a concern about a child.
 - Adult Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse when concerned about the welfare of an adult.
 - Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We will follow the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- We will act in accordance with national and local safeguarding guidance such as laid out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and acknowledge that "safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility" and that "everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play".
- We will liaise with the local statutory safeguarding partnerships such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) or any other local safeguarding mechanisms.
- We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding and sharing relevant information.

Promoting a Healthy Culture

- We respect the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We value and respect children and want to hear their voices.
- 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 understand the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive, safe and healthy environment and are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, implementing all other relevant legislation as part of safeguarding.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures and practice guidance reflect this, so that adults can have access to every aspect of the life of organisation.
- We are committed to supporting parents and families and ensuring that our projects are a safe place for all.
- LEAF has appointed a Safeguarding Coordinator as a point of reference, to act on all allegations or suspicions of abuse in reporting to the statutory safeguarding authorities.

Commitment to those Serving Children and Adults

- We commit to ensuring that all workers are cognisant with good safeguarding practice
- We commit to supporting, listening to, and working towards healing for everyone affected; either directly or indirectly by any form of abuse.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- It is the expectation that all those working with children and with adults have access to the safeguarding policy and will have read it and agreed to fully adhere to it as a condition of continuing in their role.

- Whilst recognising that the very nature of safeguarding means that we have to respond to allegations both sensitively and confidentially, this does not mean secretively. We strive to be open, transparent and accountable. This means seeking advice and liaising with Social Services, Police and other agencies as necessary.

Safeguarding Procedures

Child abuse or abuse against an adult can be a difficult and complex issue to understand. A person may abuse or neglect 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 is in a trusted relationship with the child or adult. Research shows that abuse can be perpetrated by males and females, by adults and by children, as well as those in positions of trust and authority. Sadly, people in such positions have misused their power and authority within churches and charities to abuse.

The four categories of child abuse are physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. It is important to note that a child may be suffering from more than one form of abuse. Safeguarding professionals must assess if they need to intervene in order to protect a child and this is based on whether it is felt a child is suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. There are other forms of abuse (such as child sexual exploitation) which come under these four main headings when instigating a child protection plan.

Adults are in need of protection due to physical, sexual, psychological (which includes emotional and spiritual abuse) and neglect (including self-neglect) as well as financial, institutional, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery, trafficking and domestic violence.

As a charity we will endeavour to ensure that children and adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter of concern.

Responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse

All safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported to the **Safeguarding Coordinator**. This should be undertaken within 24 hours of the allegation being made or a disclosure being shared. No one in receipt of a disclosure of abuse, or suspicion of abuse should investigate the matter.

As a charity we have nominated:

Name: Phil Warrey

Contact Details: 1 Prince Rupert Road Ledbury Herefordshire HR8 2FA

He will act as the **Safeguarding Coordinator** on behalf of the organisation in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

Where someone has passed information to the **Safeguarding Coordinator** and believe this has not been responded to appropriately, then they should make a direct referral to Social Services or the Police.

The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion of abuse and where abuse is suspected will pass this information onto the statutory authorities who have a legal duty to investigate. The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will also report to the Trustees to allow incidents to be reported to the Charities Commission.

Trustees Responsibilities

- I. promote safeguarding best practice within the charity
- II. ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Charity commission policy and practice
- III. ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- IV. ensure that all volunteer workers are safely recruited.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved; this needs to be balanced with the need to protect a person who has been or is at risk of abuse. All those working with adults must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential. In order to protect the adult at risk of harm, or others at potential risk means that this will need to be reported to the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.

Self-determination and independence

Adults have a right to self-determination and independence. No one should be making decisions for anyone except in particular circumstances. Where, for example, the mental capacity of the individual is impaired, where a crime is being committed, or where children may be harmed as a result of adults in action then the matter will need to be reported to the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.

Supporting those affected by abuse

As a leadership we are committed to offering pastoral care and support to individuals who we have contact with who may have been affected by abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

We recognise that pastoral care needs differ from person to person and by the nature of the harm that a person has endured. Those affected by abuse are often dealing with complex issues, recognising this, we offer pastoral care and support and would seek (providing the individual has given permission) to contact counselling agencies, as required.

Safer Recruitment

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following LEAF's safer recruitment procedures. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (eg food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc).