

# StreetChurch

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures

### Policy

#### Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, drug/alcohol dependency, a disability, sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness. For further information see NCC website – booklet ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults from Abuse’

StreetChurch is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that their needs are paramount. Each approved volunteer will sign to say they have read the policy .

StreetChurch recognises the serious issue of the abuse of vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect.

#### Types of abuse

**Neglect:** Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate medical care, and withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, adequate hygiene, clothing, funds and heating

**Discriminatory:** Including racism, sexism, based on a person’s disability (vulnerability), and other forms of harassment, or similar treatment.

**Financial:** Misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing changes to a Will and Testament, preventing access to money, property, possessions, inheritance or theft.

**Physical:** Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication and unapproved restraint or restriction.

**Psychological:** For example treating a person in a way which is different because of their age and/or cultural background; bullying, blaming, verbal abuse, insulting, harassing, deprivation of contact or privacy and denial of basic human rights such as choice, privacy and dignity.

**Sexual:** For example rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting

**Institutional:** Mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution. This can be through isolated or repeated acts of poor or inadequate care. Institutions may include registered residential and nursing homes as well as settings such as Day Centres, Hospitals, Sheltered Accommodation or Supported Living.

StreetChurch acknowledges the effects these types of abuse may have on people and their development including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

StreetChurch commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern **that a vulnerable adult may have been harmed** and to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

## Procedures

### 1. Good Practice in the care of Vulnerable Adults

- a. Always be publicly open when working with vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where a volunteer and an individual vulnerable adult are working completely unobserved.
- b. If any form of physical manual support is required, two volunteers should always be present.
- c. If a vulnerable visitor to StreetChurch discloses something that indicates they are at serious risk of harm to themselves or others or that a crime has been committed, then staff/volunteers have a duty to report this to the volunteer in charge on the day.

### 2. Volunteer interactions with StreetChurch guests.

The guests attending StreetChurch are vulnerable adults and due to the nature of their addictions are not always in control of their actions. Calm situations can quickly become difficult and it is important that you have the support of other volunteers available at all times, not just to prevent physical abuse but as a witness to protect you against any false accusations.

You also need to remember that vulnerable adults may not react in a manner that you would expect from others.

Your actions may be good, but they can be perceived differently from how you intended; what is intended as good may be perceived as harassment.

It is not uncommon for vulnerable adults to twist things to boost their self-esteem, to gain leverage over volunteers or even to make claims for compensation.

Boundaries are in place not just to protect the guests but also to protect you as a volunteer and StreetChurch as a whole. They must be observed at all times.

In order to protect both volunteers and guests from risk, **volunteers should not** :

- a. Give your address or telephone number to a guest
- b. Give a member money.

- c. Give a lift to a guest without another trusted adult in the car (see Health and Safety appendix on transport)
- d. Agree to meet a guest outside StreetChurch without first discussing it with one of the leaders who will assess the suitability of the arrangements
- e. Spend time alone with a vulnerable adult except in a public place.
- f. Take vulnerable adults to their home where they will be alone.
- g. Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- h. Dress provocatively whilst at StreetChurch, or act in an over friendly or intimate way. You may communicate an inappropriate message.
- i. Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- j. Enter into a close personal relationship with a guest
- k. Allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

If you find yourself in danger of crossing any of the above boundaries you are required to discuss the situation with one of the StreetChurch leaders or a member of the steering group. Depending on the exact circumstances you may have to stand down from being a volunteer.

### **3. Responding to allegations of abuse**

- b. All allegations of abuse from a volunteer or management committee member must be reported to the Steering Group. If referrals need to be made to the Adult Care Team, this should be done at least by initial contact, on the same day that the abuse is reported. The number for the Adult Care Team is **0300 126 1000**.
- a. If a guest (client) makes an allegation, it will be investigated by one member of the steering group and at least one volunteer. If a steering group member is not available, two volunteers may begin the investigation in order to avoid delay.
- b. If the guest (client) formalises the allegation, the volunteer will not attend StreetChurch until the investigation is over.
- c. Handling a disclosure:
  - Give a suspected victim time and careful attention to enable them to disclose the facts.
  - Do not show shock or disbelief.
  - It is important that at all times careful factual notes are taken. Personal opinions or hearsay should not be included.
  - Establish if there are witnesses
  - Note dates and time of any incidents reported or witnessed.
  - In making notes, describe the condition of the victim.

- Establish if there are there injuries and access appropriate medical attention if necessary
  - Consider if the incident is isolated or ongoing
- d. Should the investigation determine that there is a case to answer, the police may also be contacted to pursue legal action against the perpetrator.
- e. If there is a case to answer and the allegation is proven to be founded, the volunteer will meet with members of the steering group and consideration will be given as to the appropriateness of continued involvement with StreetChurch or any other course of action.

This policy was adopted by the StreetChurch Steering Committee on -----

..... (signed) CHAIR OF STEERING GROUP

..... Print Name