

# **Strood Gospel Mission Church**

## **Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy**

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## ***General Introduction***

Strood Gospel Mission Church has a moral and legal duty to ensure that it safeguards and promotes the welfare of adults at risk. The trustees (deacons and elders) are committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (POFA), the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS), and other relevant legislation aimed at the protection of adults at risk. We are committed to ensuring that all adults who attend or contact SGMC at times of vulnerability have a safe and secure experience.

An adult at risk may be anyone aged 18 or over who requires help and support in daily living as a result of disability or poor mental health. Many people become vulnerable at different times in their lives due to a variety of stresses of daily living.

The Trustees will approve and regularly review this policy with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of adults at risk and the promotion of a safe environment for them.
- Providing procedures for reporting concerns.
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against staff or volunteers within SGMC.
- The safe recruitment of staff and volunteers
- Affirming that policies remain in line with changes in legislation.

On 1 December 2012 the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged to become the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** under the **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**.

The primary role of the DBS is to help employers and voluntary organisations make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups.

The key principles of the Act are as follows:

- I. Unsuitable persons should be barred from working with adults at risk;
- II. Employers and voluntary organisations should have a straightforward means of checking that a person is not barred from working with adults at risk;
- III. Suitability checks should not be one-offs: there should be an element of ongoing assessment of suitability to identify those who commit wrongs following a suitability check of relevant conduct.

## ***Definitions of Abuse***

SGMC recognises that abuse includes:

- **Physical Abuse** or a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.
- **Neglect** - failure to meet the vulnerable person's basic physical, social and emotional needs, including communicating in an appropriate way with the person.
- **Sexual Abuse** - may involve an adult at risk being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity.
- **Financial or Material Abuse** - taking advantage of, or manipulating, an adult's finances, personal possessions or wills for their own benefit

## ***Inappropriate Conduct***

The trustees accept the following definitions of inappropriate conduct under Schedule 3 of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 in relation to the barring of those who pose a risk of harm to adults at risk. Inappropriate conduct is conduct which must be referred to the DBS and which could lead to a barring decision if it includes any of the following:

- Conduct which endangers an adult at risk or is likely to endanger them
- Conduct which if repeated against or in relation to an adult at risk would endanger them
- Conduct involving sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material)
- Conduct involving sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings
- Conduct of a sexual nature involving an adult at risk (or an act that is considered inappropriate)
- Conduct which denies their humanity
- Receiving a Police caution or conviction for a relevant offence

## ***Disclosure of Abuse and procedure for Reporting Concerns***

If an adult tells a staff member or volunteer about possible abuse:

- a. Listen carefully and stay calm.
- b. Do not cross question the adult at risk. Only ask questions in order to be sure that you understand what the adult is telling you.
- c. Do not put words into the person's mouth, or ask leading questions.
- d. Reassure the person that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- e. Inform the individual that the incident will be reported to the Responsible Person. If permission is granted, reassure them that only those who need to know about it will be told. Let them know to whom you will report the matter and that they are entitled to accompany you as the information is passed on. **Do NOT promise confidentiality**, a criminal offence may have been committed.

- f. Note the main points carefully, using the actual words of the adult at risk.
- g. Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the adult at risk said and did and your questions etc. [A copy of these notes should be kept securely in a confidential folder by the Responsible Person, together with outcomes and conclusion. The folder should be passed to any successors in this post.]
- h. The Responsible Person should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should decide the appropriate action in the circumstances. This will often involve reporting the information to Social Services and/or the Police. If in doubt, the responsible person should seek advice. Social Services are willing to discuss a situation without revealing any names and advise appropriate action. The adult at risk concerned will be involved in the process as far as is appropriate and will be informed of action being taken.

## ***Reporting Abuse***

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, SGMC has a duty to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to an adult at risk, or child, to the Disclosure and Barring Service. There must be sufficient solid evidence that the individual poses a threat before they can be referred.

The DBS website contains useful information about the referral process. Referrals can also be made online at:

<http://www.disclosuresdbs.co.uk>

## ***Personnel***

Peter Brien has been appointed as Responsible Person for safeguarding issues (DSP).

The Responsible Person's role is to ensure the trustees implement Safeguarding policies and in particular will be responsible for ensuring that trustees carry out their legislative responsibilities in this area.

The AGM will receive a report annually from the Responsible Person which reviews how the duties have been discharged and any changes that have been established as a result.

If questions are raised about the responsible person the alternative point of contact is Hales Prestidge-Briston

## ***Appointing a New Worker***

It is important to take proper care when appointing people (staff or volunteers) to work with SGMC, as they are likely to encounter individuals who could be considered adults at risk.

The procedure below outlines the steps that SGMC will take in appointing new workers in order to safeguard adults at risk we may contact. This procedure is not foolproof but it is considered that it will give the best level of protection that is practically possible. The responsible person will ensure it is implemented.

Workers are required to complete a self-disclosure form and apply for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) to include working with adults at risk if their role does, or is likely to, warrant it. Roles which require checks include (but are not limited to) contact involving handling money for a church attender and accompanying attenders on G.P. visits in which personal medical information is disclosed.

As trustees, deacons and elders are required to complete a self-disclosure and have a DBS check.

When DBS checks are required, either they will be submitted on the update service or will be repeated at intervals of not more than 3 years.

Those working with adults in roles where they may have significant one to one contact, e.g. CAP befrienders, are required to complete a self-disclosure form. Before they are appointed to such roles, they will be asked to provide a reference from someone who has known them for at least 2 years. The referee will be asked to verify the volunteer's suitability to work with adults at risk. A record of these reference checks will be maintained. They may be done by telephone in which case the record shall include the date and time of the phone call, the name of the person providing verification and a summary of their comment.

Other volunteers who do not have contact with adults at risk are not required to have references, make self-disclosures or obtain DBS checks.

If in time, SGMC takes on volunteers or staff in new roles, the trustees will be responsible for carefully considering whether it is a position of trust or contact with adults at risk for which self-disclosure and DBS checks are necessary.

## **Role Profile**

For trustees and volunteers or workers who may have contact with adults at risk, a simple role profile is written to clarify the particular role and the qualities and gifts needed in order to perform it.

The profile includes:

- A description of the tasks and responsibilities involved in the position
- An indication of the time commitment required
- The person to whom they will be responsible
- The requirement of the person appointed to comply with the SGMC Adults at Risk Safeguarding policy.
- A statement clarifying which safeguarding checks are necessary - reference, self disclosure, and/or an enhanced disclosure from DBS.
- Job profiles are made available to anyone considering taking on these roles in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

## Referees

Where a volunteer is required to provide the name of a referee, if the person has worked with adults at risk in the past or is currently employed in a role caring for adults at risk, the reference will be required from someone who has known the applicant in that context.

If having received the reference, it is considered that more information is necessary in order to make a clear decision, SGMC will either correspond with the original referee or request extra referee(s).

## Interviewing the candidate

For roles where a volunteer or worker will have significant contact with adults at risk, SGMC may interview applicants. As appropriate, the interview will include exploring the person's past experiences of contact with adults at risk and any details given in their application.

## Checking the candidate's criminal record

When a trustee is elected a self-disclosure (a declaration of all their criminal convictions and cautions) is requested and an application made for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS. Any appointment to this role is subject to a satisfactory check of criminal records.

Only relevant offences will be taken into account and a criminal record is not in itself a bar to being appointed.

If the information contained on the Disclosure shows nothing that is relevant to the application, the applicant may be appointed to the role as trustee.

## Worker Agreements

For any role in which there may be contact with adults at risk, individuals are asked to sign either a volunteer agreement or, in the case of staff, a contract of employment. Among other things, these agreements help to ensure that workers are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

The agreement is to include:

- The job profile
- The name of the person who will be supervising the worker
- The name(s) of any whom the worker will supervise
- A declaration that the worker will abide by SGMC's Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy.

## Training

- This policy will be thoroughly explained to all workers before they commence with SGMC.
- All workers will be given opportunity to receive training appropriate to their role. This is to enable them to develop their skills and increase their satisfaction in their work.
- If required, outside help will be used for this training.