**Churches Together in England (CTE)**

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**1. Introduction**

Churches Together in England is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, whose objectives (“the Objects”) are defined as the advancement of the Christian Religion in accordance with its statement of faith, the relief of poverty and the advancement of education and any other purposes which are charitable according to the law of England and Wales.

The charity seeks (within its general objectives) to be a visible sign of the churches’ commitment to one another, in obedience to our Lord’s Prayer “that they may all be one. As you, Father are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me”. (John 17:21).

Churches Together in England is the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range of traditions to work together in unity.

This policy is made in accordance with CTE’s vision and mission, to enable all members of CTE’s member churches and Bodies in Association to take a full part in its mission and unity work and activities. CTE has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and safety of all people it comes into contact with and believes that it is always unacceptable for a person to experience abuse or neglect of any kind. CTE is committed to practice that protects vulnerable adults from harm and recognises its duty to ensure that at any event organised by or on behalf of CTE appropriate action is taken if a vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

CTE’s events are open only to people aged 18 and over, so safeguarding of children is not included in this policy.

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, which, for these purposes, includes employees, trustees, temporary, contract and agency workers, other contractors, interns and volunteers.

All staff must be familiar with this policy and comply with its terms.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Staff must also comply with any related policies and privacy notices. Any breach of this Safeguarding Policy may result in disciplinary action.

CTE may supplement or amend this policy by additional policies and guidelines from time to time.

**3. Definitions**

**3.1 Vulnerable adults**

The statutory framework introduced under the Care Act applies to any person aged 18 or above who:

* has needs for care and support (regardless of the level of need and whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs).
* is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and
* as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:

* Has a learning or physical disability.
* Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol, drugs or other substances.
* Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity.
* Is in receipt of any form of healthcare.
* Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability.
* Is living in sheltered or residential care home.
* Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**3.2 Abuse**

The Care and Support statutory guidance identifies ten types of abuse, these are:

* Physical abuse
* Domestic violence or abuse
* Sexual abuse
* Psychological or emotional abuse
* Financial or material abuse
* Modern slavery
* Discriminatory abuse
* Organisational or institutional abuse
* Neglect or acts of omission
* Self-neglect

Evidence of any one potential indicator under any of these types should not be taken on its own as proof that abuse is occurring. However, it should alert practitioners to make further assessments and to consider other associated factors.

The follow link provides lists of possible indicators and examples of behaviour are not exhaustive and people may be subject to a number of abuse types at the same time.

[www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse](http://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse)

**4. General principles**

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and to protect them from harm. All Staff and Trustees should have a basic awareness of safeguarding issues.

This includes:

* Being alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect.
* Having enough knowledge to recognise an abusive or potentially abusive event or set of circumstances.
* Knowing who in the organisation to raise concerns with.
* Being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action.

If any member of staff has any concerns about a vulnerable adult, they must alert CTE’s Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately. If the DSO is unavailable, then the Deputy DSO should be contacted.

**The CTE Safeguarding Lead is Ben Cross (Staff member), who acts as the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).**

* **07450 997141**
* **ben.cross@cte.org.uk**

**The Deputy CTE Safeguarding Lead is Maddy Thomson (Trustee), who acts as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (Deputy DSO), and Board-Level Lead for Safeguarding.**

* **07813 162347**
* **maddy.thomson@hotmail.co.uk**

If the DSO agrees there are grounds for concern, they must take appropriate action to safeguard the vulnerable adult. This may include contacting the relevant local authority social care service.

If a vulnerable adult is **in immediate danger** the member of staff who first becomes aware of the danger should contact:

**999 - Police**

If a vulnerable adult is **not** **in immediate danger** the CTE Safeguarding Lead should contact:

**London Borough of Camden - Adult Social Care**

**020 7974 4000 and select option 1**

[**adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk**](mailto:adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk)

The welfare needs of the vulnerable adult must come first, even where there may be a conflict of interest e.g., where the suspected perpetrator may be a member of staff.

**5. Procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults**

**5.1 Organisation duties and responsibilities**

* Raise awareness of the need to protect vulnerable adults and reduce risks to them.
* Ensure that staff who may come into contact with vulnerable adults have the requisite knowledge, skills and qualifications to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.
* Ensure safe practice when working in partnership with other organisations, in particular that they have in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance.
* Maintain an organisation that is safe for vulnerable adults and an environment where poor practice is challenged.
* Ensure that all staff who will be working with vulnerable adults consent to vetting through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme where applicable.
* Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.
* Ensure that the General Secretary and the Designated Safeguarding Officer are accountable for the effective implementation of this policy.
* Ensure that all staff receive a copy of the safeguarding policy, are trained in its meaning and application, and understand their responsibilities.
* Within the organisation’s means, offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel. This could include consultation with a qualified counsellor, medical assessment or assistance or personal protection such as relocation. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

**5.2 Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer**

They are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given high priority within CTE. Specific responsibilities include:

* Providing support and advice to staff on safeguarding matters related to vulnerable adults.
* Ensuring that all members of staff receive training on safeguarding as part of their induction, and on an ongoing basis where required.
* Carrying out referrals to the relevant Local Authority Social Care team where abuse of a vulnerable adult is reported or suspected.
* Referring the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where a member of staff is suspected of abuse relating to Children/Young People.
* Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The DSO has responsibility for deciding whether to refer any reported matters onto the Police or to the Local Authority Social Care service. Where possible, referrals should be made on the same working day and certainly within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the DSO to decide whether the carers (if applicable) of the vulnerable adult should be informed of the referral.

**5.3 Responsibilities of Staff and Trustees**

All CTE Staff and Trustees have a responsibility to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact in the course of their work, to promote good practice and minimise and manage potential risks.

* Staff and Trustees must be aware of the requirements within this Policy; they should discuss any issues requiring clarification and any training issues with the General Secretary.
* Staff and Trustees should make sure that they have a working knowledge of the different forms of abuse and possible indicators. They may have a role as referrers, witnesses or supporters in safeguarding processes.
* If a member of Staff or Trustees suspects that a vulnerable adult is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, they must talk to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The DSO will agree next steps including making any necessary referrals.

**5.4 Responsibilities of trustees**

To comply with their legal duties, trustees must react responsibly to reports of safeguarding risks and incidents of abuse and take steps to make sure all staff know how to deal with these. Trustees should report a serious incident to the Charity Commission if:

* there has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated (alleged or actual) and this is connected with CTE’s activities.
* If any member of staff is involved in an actual or suspected serious safeguarding incident.
* there has been a breach of procedures or policies at CTE which has put vulnerable adults at risk.

In addition, trustees will take immediate action to:

* prevent or minimise any further harm.
* report it to the Police, if it is suspected a crime has been committee.
* plan what to say to staff, volunteers, members, the public and the media.
* review what happened and prevent it from happening again - this may include strengthening internal controls and procedures, and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

**6. Staff and Trustee behaviour and support; dealing with allegations**

**6.1. Code of conduct**

CTE Staff and Trustees who may come into contact with vulnerable adults may be required to undergo awareness training. Staff and Trustees should not:

* meet with the vulnerable adult on their own.
* ask overly personal questions, including those about age or appearance (unless specifically related to a specific activity, in which case it must be documented).
* send/give out material that could be considered offensive, which includes material on social media sites.
* suggest or imply a personal relationship could develop.
* take an aggressive or bullying tone.
* offer or accept personal gifts.
* normally travel alone with a vulnerable person.

**6.2 Website/online safety**

If a vulnerable adult reports to a member of of the CTE Team that they have sent, or been sent, indecent images (sometimes referred to as ‘sexting’), the member of the CTE Team should discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Police and Adult Social Care should always be contacted if:

* there are concerns about the ability to give consent.
* the images are extreme or show violence.
* the incident is intended to cause physical or emotional harm.
* there is reason to believe that the vulnerable adult has been blackmailed, coerced or groomed.

Details of the incident and the actions taken must be recorded in writing. Staff should avoid looking at the image, video or message in question.

**6.3 Supporting staff**

CTE as an organisation takes responsibility for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their potential involvement with vulnerable adults. All staff will:

* be supervised and supported in their work.
* work to the CTE Safeguarding Policy, which is reviewed and updated as necessary, and at least annually.
* receive training in safeguarding at a level appropriate to their work situation.
* be able to raise concerns about poor and dangerous practice through CTE’s Whistle- blowing Policy.

**6.4 Allegations against staff**

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a vulnerable adult by an employee, trustee, volunteer, mentor, student, agency worker, contract, and unpaid staff must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. If there are concerns that abuse has taken place the DSO will pass this information to the Police for investigation.

If the allegation relates to a child/young person, then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should also be consulted.

[www.cscp.org.uk/professionals/managing-allegations-against-staff-and-volunteers-lado](http://www.cscp.org.uk/professionals/managing-allegations-against-staff-and-volunteers-lado)

[LADO@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@camden.gov.uk)

The DSO and General Secretary will refer to the CTE Disciplinary Policy and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation. If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the DSO, then they should refer to CTE’s Whistle-Blowing Policy.

**7. Confidentiality and sharing information**

**7.1 Respecting confidentiality**

CTE staff will discuss confidentiality and safeguarding with vulnerable adults to ensure that they understand what responsibilities members of staff have on a need-to-know basis.

While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject’s consent, if they have concerns or suspicions of abuse, CTE staff will not allow concerns about confidentiality to override the rights of vulnerable adults at risk of, or suffering, harm.

While ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidentiality, CTE staff will not use confidentiality as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the vulnerable adult’s best interests to share information.

**7.2 Obtaining consent**

Should it become necessary to pass on information relating to the safeguarding of a vulnerable adult, CTE staff will discuss this with the person in question, and where possible and appropriate, seek their cooperation.

CTE staff will not promise to keep secrets; if a vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse fears the effect this will have on their family or retribution from the abuser, CTE staff will explain why the referral (to the Designated Safeguarding Officer) must be made and what is likely to happen as a result.

**7.3. Confidential Record-Keeping**

CTE staff will record in writing any concern about safeguarding whether or not further action is taken. If action is taken, the record will specify what and by whom. Where no further action is the outcome the reason for this will be clearly recorded.

Records will be kept securely in a locked place or file to which access is restricted. The transfer of information will be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by CTE.

Approved by the Board of Trustees of Churches Together in England

Signed:

Dated: ##############