

St Mungo's Scottish Episcopal Church Policy Statement and Good Practice Procedures on Safeguarding the Welfare of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

(Document Revised: October 2022)

“The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises the special status of children and young people. Because of their vulnerability, children and young people will be awarded special protection. They are to be respected as persons in their own right, created and loved by God. We, therefore commit ourselves to take all steps within our power to keep children and young people from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”

“The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises the special status of all vulnerable people, particularly those who, because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, infirmity or ageing, are unable to protect themselves from abuse, or more vulnerable to being abused than persons who are not so affected. Because of their vulnerability, such people will be awarded special protection. They are to be respected as persons in their own right, created and loved by God. We, therefore commit ourselves to take all steps within our power to keep vulnerable people safe from harm and from an abuse of trust.”

Policy Statements from the Episcopal Church

Ethos

In all St Mungo's ministries we aim to establish an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, safety and co-operation. These guidelines are to ensure that, as we serve God, we do it in a way that is honouring to him and develops high quality work with children and young people and vulnerable adults.

Therefore, these guidelines have been developed for use by the co-ordinators and leaders of the teams with responsibility for these ministries. The vision, values and strategy of the different work is communicated through job descriptions and team meetings.

These guidelines will be reviewed every 2 years and comments on how they could be improved or made more useful will be invited from time to time.

Ollie Clegg, Rector

Definitions

Child - a person aged 0 – 12 years old

Young person - a person aged 12 – 18 years old

Vulnerable adult - Adults (over 16) who are unable to safeguard themselves, their property, rights or interests and are at risk of harm and are more vulnerable than others because they are affected by a disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity.

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1. Adopted Practice for the Safety of Children/Young People and Vulnerable Adults at St Mungo's Church and the Minimising of Opportunities for Harm/Abuse

1.1 At our Meetings/Events

- We will aim to make any venue as safe as possible for Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults minimising any risk in the building or room.
- Our young people and children's groups will be properly supervised and will follow Episcopal Church guidelines.
- We will post the number of Childline/Silverline at our buildings so a young person, child or vulnerable adult know that there is someone they can talk to anonymously.

1.2 At all times

- We will have an awareness that actions are open to misinterpretation and therefore care will be taken to avoid situations that can be misunderstood.
- We will respect a young person or vulnerable adult's privacy and dignity.
- A leader should not meet alone with a child or young person unless it is in a public place (E.g. café or room with the door open). Established pastoral guidelines should be followed in interactions with vulnerable adults.

1.3 Staffing Groups

- Before appointment all volunteers will be interviewed and will complete an application form, with references and a PVG application form. Volunteers will be appointed in consultation with the Church Senior Leadership Team.
- All volunteers will be expected to be part of a housegroup or involved in some form of regular personal discipleship and accountability.
- All volunteers will be given a job description that will provide a clear understanding of their role and who they should report to. They will also be provided with guidelines in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Safeguarding training is compulsory for all leaders, and they will also be expected to attend regular meetings and training opportunities.

2. Behaviour/Discipline

We want to ensure that we create a good learning and fun environment for children/young people in their groups.

2.1 Guidelines

- Children/young people are to be encouraged to listen when leaders are speaking.
- Questions can be asked and comments made by children or young people in a group in a way agreed by the group.
- A child must not physically or verbally attack another child or leaders.
- No child/young person is to be physically or verbally attacked by a leader under any circumstances.
- The use of sarcasm is inappropriate and humour should be monitored to ensure that it is only funny and not discriminatory.
- Volunteers are expected to follow this 5 step behaviour procedure:

1. Ensure expectations have been clearly communicated to the young person and that they understand what they are.
2. If a young person begins to exhibit challenging behaviour try to distract them or re-engage in a specific task.
3. If you have done this and it has not worked, then ask another team member to try. Sometimes simply another adult asking the same thing can make the difference.
4. If this has failed then inform the Team Leader who will then try speaking to the young person and getting them re-engaged.
5. If all of the above have failed to re-engage the young person in a specific task then the team leader sends another leader to get a member of staff immediately. The staff member will remove the young person from the group and have a conversation to try and hear from the young person what their take on the behaviour is and together decide upon a route forward.

- Any young person who is under the influence of alcohol/drugs or carrying a weapon will be excluded from our activities with an explanation of why.
- Any significant behavioural incident should be written up on an incident form and forwarded to David Lyons, the Child Protection Coordinator ASAP.

2.2 Changes in Behaviour

- Where a noticeable change in behaviour occurs in a child/young person this should be passed onto the Team Leader who will speak to a member of the staff team responsible for that young person. Leaders will be encouraged to pass on any information to the next team where there is a rota in operation, via the Co-ordinator.

3. Supervision Levels in Groups, Activities and Residential Events

3.1 Staffing Ratio

We will have the ratio set out below for all events and activities.

0-1 years	1 leader to every 2 children
1-2 years	1 leader to every 3 children
2-3 years	1 leader to every 4 children
3-8 year olds	1 leader to every 8 children
over 8 years	1 leader to every 8 children

3.2 Staffing Guidelines

- It is preferable to have at least 1 female and 1 male leader in each team.
- If a member of a team is unable to do a particular date then it is their responsibility to find a swap with another member of the team. The Team Leader needs to be notified. A leader is not permitted to bring along a friend to help them. If a leader is unavoidably going to be absent due to illness or a situation that arises at the last minute, the Team Leader is to be notified and the member of staff responsible for overseeing the group is to be contacted.

- In the unlikely event of there not being cover for a group then the group will be cancelled and the children/young people will remain in the adult service. The Service Leader would need to be notified if this situation arises.

4. Toilet Supervision and Intimate care

4.1 Children Aged 0-2

- Help will be needed if they are learning how to use the toilet.
- Help in appropriate way and if in doubt ask the Little Wonders leader.
- When changing nappies please use the disposable gloves provided.

4.2 Preschool children

- Help in appropriate way and if in doubt ask the Climbers or Preschool leader.
- When changing nappies please use the disposable gloves provided.
- Some help may be needed at this age, it is important not to be intrusive and to respect the privacy but also to be available to help.
- A good guide is to ask the child if they need help, please also check the toilet after they have finished.

4.3 Adults and young people

- An individual plan should be drawn up for any adult requiring additional support with toileting/intimate care.

5. Travel

As a general St Mungo's policy we do not provide regular travel to and from our weekly events (Sunday Morning Groups and Friday Night Activities). The responsibility of St Mungo's children and young people's groups begins when the event begins. On the occasions where the leader goes past someone's house on the way home they may give a lift but they need to bear in mind the guidelines below.

5.1 Transport guidelines

If it is necessary to provide transport for a church activity:

- Drivers must be over 21 to carry children under the age of 16.
- **Whenever possible**, two adults should accompany children.
- Children must all sit in the rear seats of the car and wear seatbelts.
- If travelling as a lone adult, **try** to organise drop-offs so that you are not left to take a single child home by, for example, arranging in advance to drop off the last children at the same address.
- Inform parents of the time they should collect their child or expect them to be returned and what will happen if their child is not collected.

6. Safeguarding Procedures dealing with a disclosure of harm or abuse

The overriding consideration of all staff and volunteers must be to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All disclosures or allegations must be taken seriously and there is a moral and legal duty to report a disclosure or an allegation of harm or abuse to the relevant statutory agencies.

A disclosure may come from a child, young person or vulnerable adult him/herself and may relate to harm or abuse from a family member or someone outside the family, for example, a teacher, carer or youth leader. Anyone can be a perpetrator.

Third party disclosures should be taken seriously and treated in the same way as direct disclosures, but the recipient should bear in mind the possibility of manipulation and should take extra care to record facts not opinions.

6.1 Defining harm and abuse.

Abusing or deliberately allowing harm to be experienced by a child, young person or vulnerable adult is a misuse of power. This can take many forms, and includes causing direct harm or using continuous patterns of behaviour intended to exert power or control over another person. In some cases, the perpetrator may perceive their actions as being for the good of the individual. We must also be aware of potential harm to a vulnerable person as a result of their circumstances, rather than due to the actions of others.

Physical harm	Actual or attempted injury to the child, young person or vulnerable adult by another person. It also includes when a carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child or vulnerable adult they are looking after.
Neglect	A persistent failure to meet a child, young person's or vulnerable adult's basic needs for food warmth, protection and care.
Emotional harm	Persistent and severe emotional neglect or ill treatment, that severely affects emotional and behavioural development in a child and young person, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable adult.
Sexual harm	The use of a child or young person to meet an adult's sexual needs or a child being exposed to inappropriate sexual material. This may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child and behaving in sexually inappropriate ways. It can also include non-consensual sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult.
Spiritual abuse	The manipulation of a child, young person or vulnerable adult through distortions in religious teaching or prayer activities to exert power and control over that person.
Domestic Abuse	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. Legislation now recognises that children witnessing domestic abuse are equally harmed.

Financial Abuse	A type of abuse which includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, being put under pressure in relation to money or other property and having money or other property misused.
Failure to thrive	This type of harm is found where children fail significantly to reach normal growth and developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been eliminated by medical professionals. This may result from inadequate diet, lack of emotional support or lack of physical care. In addition, children can also find themselves in harmful situations where one or more of the following issues are evident: Bullying Drug/alcohol abuse Domestic abuse Disability Verbal abuse Children affected by mental health issues (either their own or their parents') Children displaying problematic sexual behaviour

6.2 Recognising Harm and Abuse

It is not your role to decide if a child or vulnerable adult has been subjected to harm or abuse; leave it to the professionals!

Children, young people and vulnerable adults who suffer harm or abuse may behave in a variety of ways. Workers need to detect the signs because they are cries for help. The following **may** be signs:

Physical harm	Injuries that do not fit within normal injuries for a person of that age. Unexplained injuries or those that have received no medical attention.
Neglect	Malnourished, unkempt, dirty and generally uncared for Maybe a loner, lacking in energy.
Emotional harm	Loss of confidence and self esteem. Demanding and attention seeking. Poor communication skills. Withdrawn and anxious. Uncontrolled temper.
Sexual harm	Sexual knowledge, inappropriate for their age. Sexualised behaviour, play or drawings.
Financial abuse	Increasing reluctance to talk openly about family and friends. Increasing isolation or avoidance of once-usual social contact.

Lack of amenities such as TV, heating, personal grooming items or clothes that the person should normally be able to afford.
Increasing timidity, nervousness or lack of confidence.

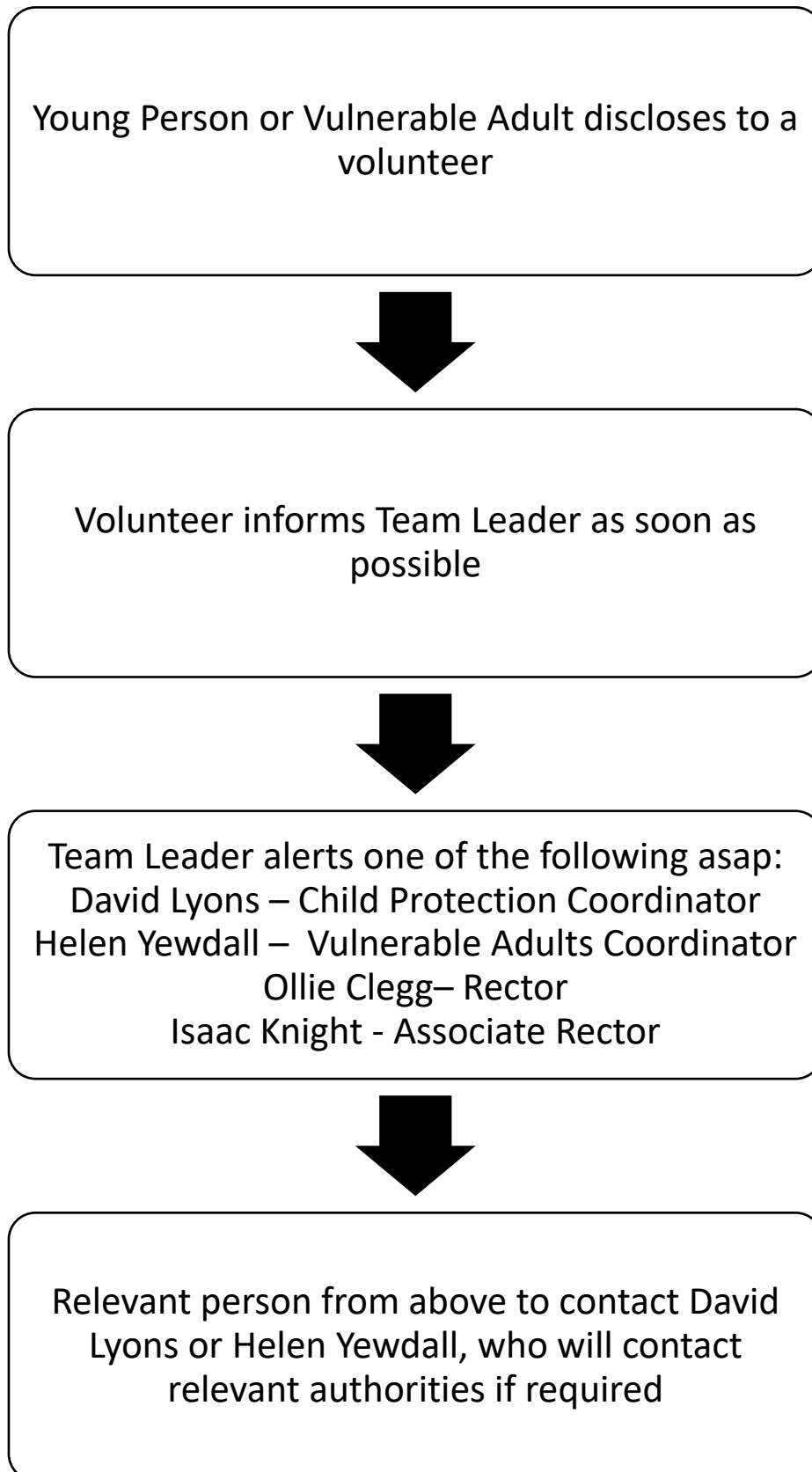
Domestic abuse

Becoming aware of destructive criticism, threats and verbal abuse within an relationship.
The use of pressure tactics and disrespect between partners.
Isolation and secrecy to prevent the domestic abuse being detected or suggestions of coercive control being used.
Harassment and invasion of privacy within a relationship.
Sexual and physical violence.

6.3 Actions to take in the event of child, young person or vulnerable adult beginning to tell a worker about harm or abuse:

- **Listen to the child or vulnerable adult** – REALLY LISTEN. Take what they say seriously.
- **Remain calm** – no matter how difficult it is to listen to someone speaking of harm or abuse, think of how hard it must be to say it. You have been chosen because the child or vulnerable adult feels they can talk to you.
- **Be honest** – tell them you cannot keep a secret, you have to talk to someone else who knows what to do. Don't make false promises.
- **Do NOT ask questions** other than to clarify your understanding; you risk "contaminating" evidence. If you must ask a question make sure it is open ended (What, Where, Who, When).
- **Do not make value judgments** about a perpetrator. The child or vulnerable adult will want the hurt to stop, but the person causing the harm may be someone they love.
- **Reassure** - tell them they have done the right thing by telling you.
- **Tell them** - what you are going to do and, as far as possible, what is going to happen next. Always finish on a positive note.
- **Do NOT investigate;** leave that to the professionals.
- **Write down** everything they have told you, in their own words, as soon as possible, but not in front of them. Sign and date/time your report. If you transcribe your report to make a 'clean' legible copy, make sure you keep your original handwritten notes; they may be needed as evidence in a subsequent investigation.
- **Report** what you have heard or seen to the Team Leader of your group. They in turn should contact David Lyons or Helen Yewdall. They will then decide what action has to be taken.
- **Treat them** the same as you always have. This may be difficult, but children or vulnerable adults do not like to be different and want to be treated 'normally'.
- **Keep what you have heard or seen confidential** between yourself, the child or vulnerable adult and the person to whom you have reported your concerns.
- **Seek support** for yourself if you think you require it, you will probably feel shocked and upset and this is a normal reaction. You can speak to the Safeguarding Leads. The **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000 or Hourglass (Action on Elder Abuse) on 0808 808 8141** can provide additional information on sources of help.

Disclosure Procedure



7. Use of social media and photographic and video images

Please see separate policies with regards this, but the common principles of good practice are:

- **Transparency/openness** – tell others what it is you want to communicate and why.
- **Keeping people safe:** the volunteer and the child/young person.
- **Consent:** get permission from all involved (or their guardians/representatives if they are under 16 years of age) if their words or images are to be transmitted and made public or shared with a selected group of people.
- **Privacy** – respect for individuals' personal information.
- **Separate the private (home) from the professional (paid or voluntary work):** explicitly maintain boundaries. Often the perceived problem is that of the 'suggestion' of or actual blurring of boundaries and the risk of actions being viewed as harmful rather than actual harmful conduct from a safeguarding point-of-view.
- **Christian principles** – respect, dignity, truthfulness.

