

Safeguarding Policy

Open Heaven Church

St. Peter's Centre

Storer Road

Loughborough

LE11 5EQ

Tel. 01509 215036

Registered Charity no. 1138763

Next Review Date: May 2026

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1. CHURCH DETAILS

Name of Church:

Open Heaven Church

Address:

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Contact:

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Senior Leader:

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Designated Safeguarding Lead:

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Safeguarding deputy :

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Safeguarding Officers:

Nathaniel Alsop, Community Engagement Lead - Nathaniel.Alsop@openheaven.org

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Abbie Bateman, Children's and families worker, Abbie.Bateman@openheaven.org

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Open Heaven Church's Safeguarding Trustee is:

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Charity Number:

1138763

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7244128

2. INTRODUCTION

At Open Heaven Church (“OH”), we want to see children, young people, and vulnerable adults enjoying life in all its fullness (John 10:10), being protected, having the opportunity to safely participate in activities, and being treated with dignity and respect.

All OH staff and volunteers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and should know what to do if they have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

OH has biblical, moral and legal obligations towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm.

The principle of vulnerable adult protection is slightly different to that of child protection and raises different issues. An emphasis for us in our work with vulnerable adults is to promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults and to act in a way which supports the rights of individuals.

The guidelines outlined in this policy form the core safeguarding policies for OH and should be adhered to at all times. We require all staff team members and volunteers to confirm their commitment by signing a declaration to this effect on an annual basis. See the form in [Appendix One](#).

Safeguarding is most effective when it is as a partnership between all involved in an organisation. As the trustees and leadership of OH, we want to say thank you to all those who serve in the church and we hope you will find the information, training and support, helpful in your role with children, youth and vulnerable adults. It is important that you feel well-informed, trained and supported in the area of safeguarding. If you have any queries or concerns, contact OH’s Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding deputy or Expression officers.

Trustees and Senior Leadership Team

Date Signed 02/05/2024

Next Review date: 02/05/2026

Signed by Chair of Trustees Sford

The procedures and policies in this handbook are reviewed annually by the Safeguarding deputy, Lead and Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. Any legislation that is relevant to this policy, will also be used to review current policy as required.

3. OUR COMMITMENT

Open Heaven Church ("OH") accepts the biblical, moral and legal responsibility to: implement procedures; provide a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults; safeguard their well-being; and protect them from abuse.

We aim to do this by:

- teaching the innate value of each person, being created in the image of God
- respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- raising the awareness of staff responsibilities relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout OH
- promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm
- creating a safe and healthy environment within all our activities, reducing the risk of situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur
- recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff team members and volunteers to adopt best practices to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves
- responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults in line with this policy and procedures and the [Local Safeguarding Children's Board \(LSCB\)](#)
- Implementing and utilising, as appropriate, other relevant policies and procedures
- reviewing and evaluating this policy and procedures document on an annual basis to ensure compatibility with the government's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance.

4. DEFINITIONS

- The terms "child", "children", "young person" and "young people" are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years
- All the policies and procedures described within this document are applicable to vulnerable adults as well as children and young people
- The term "vulnerable adult" is a person 18 years old. or more who is: receiving, or may require, community care services because of disability, age or illness; and is, or may be, unable to take care of or protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation
- The term "parent" is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians
- The terms "staff" and "volunteers" are to encompass employees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing OH.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safeguarding deputy and Safeguarding Lead should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and safeguarding, and should undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments.

a) The Safeguarding deputy and Safeguarding Lead will:

- Act as one of the first points of contact for staff or volunteers concerned about the safety or welfare of a child
- Ensure that the OH's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are implemented and followed, including informing Social Care Services/Health Board of relevant concerns about individual children
- Be aware of the LSCB and be familiar with local procedures
- Liaise with children's services authorities and other agencies, as appropriate
- Provide monthly reports to Trustees and keep relevant people within the OH, particularly senior leaders and the Safeguarding Trustee, informed about any action taken and any further action required
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of any action taken by the OH, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Deal with the organisational impact following a safeguarding incident
- Keep up to date with current safeguarding legislation, access training when necessary and organise regular training for OH staff and volunteers
- Review annually the OH Safeguarding Policy, along with the Safeguarding Trustee
- Stay connected to Thirtyone:eight and Pioneer UK's Safeguarding Manager and outwork any Safeguarding Audit Action Plans
- Implement an appropriate rigorous recruitment and selection process for staff and volunteers who work with children
- Implement an appropriate written code of behaviour that outlines good practice when working with children
- Implement an appropriate training plan, and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children, to learn about safeguarding, and health and safety
- Implement an appropriate whistle-blowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for staff and volunteers to voice any concerns in the public interest about wrongdoings involving OH (such as abusive or unlawful behaviour)
- Make information available for young people and parents about our Safeguarding Policy, and where to go for help
- Promote a protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns, someone will listen and take them seriously
- Implement appropriate guidance on taking child recruitment away on trips, a social networking policy, and a photography policy
- Implement working practices where policies and guidelines for those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored, including dealing with sex offenders in church
- Facilitate the provision of pastoral support from our pastoral team for those affected by abuse

b) The Safeguarding Lead, Children and Families Worker, and Youth Worker will ensure that:

- All Trustees, staff, and volunteers working with children and young adults are safely recruited using Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks as well as a reference check. This includes accepting DBS certificates from other agencies where they are still within 3 years of issue or are registered on the National Update Service
- While waiting for the DBS check to be completed, volunteers will still be able to take part, under a Supervision Agreement.
- All volunteers have: completed an application form; read and signed the relevant OH Volunteer Agreement document; and received induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before providing their services
- All volunteers complete Safeguarding training as soon as possible and that ongoing training is appropriately monitored by the Safeguarding deputy . This may be training received from other organisations or the Safeguarding deputy or Safeguarding Lead. Training is recorded for each volunteer
- Children are not alone with anyone other than their parents, where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, making sure doors have windows inserted or having two groups working in the same room.
- Parents are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the Children's Workers/Youth Leaders and is returned to them at the end of the session.
- Parents of all children attending our groups complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies, and giving/withholding consent for photographs to be taken
- Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child, if they are unable to collect them
- All children, regardless of social background, race or disability, are fully integrated and protected within the church community
- Registration forms for each session are kept up to date and any information that may be shared in the Care Diary is monitored
- Any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Safeguarding deputy at the earliest possible moment
- Follow the procedure for safer recruitment and ensure all appropriate training has been completed using the Join a Children and Youth team Document

c) Volunteers will always:

- Abide by the policies outlined in this handbook and by the specific guidelines of their group's working practices. The day-to-day practicalities will vary within different groups, but will never conflict with the core values and guidelines contained in this Policy
- Attend regular safeguarding training. (If you have attended safeguarding training in other organisations, then please inform your leader and produce relevant certificates or evidence. This will assist us in tailoring training for you accordingly)
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watching their language, tone of voice, body language and non-verbal signals
- Care for our children and young people in compliance with our Behaviour Policy
- Report any concerns to the Safeguarding deputy or Safeguarding Lead, at the earliest possible moment in line with this policy. The Open Heaven safeguarding email: safeguarding@openheaven.org can be used for this.

d) The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The role of the LADO is set out in HM Government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) Chapter 4 Section 224 and is governed by the Authority's duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. This guidance outlines procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children who are paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency or anyone self-employed.

The LADO must be contacted within one working day in all cases where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

<https://lrsb.org.uk/lado-local-authority-designated>

6. PREVENTION

a) Introduction

A person may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting; and by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse can be a complex issue. It can come in the form of a full disclosure or small signs over a longer period of time. It is not the responsibility of OH staff, members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk. However, we do have a responsibility to act if we have a concern. Every child and vulnerable adult is unique and it is difficult to predict how their behaviour will change as a result of their experience of abuse.

Disabled People

People with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse. Various factors may contribute to this, such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and powerlessness to protect themselves, or inadequately communicating that abuse has occurred.

Race and Racism

People may have experienced harassment and discrimination because of race. Although racism causes significant harm it is not, in itself, a category of abuse. All organisations working with children should be alert to the risk of institutional racism. This was defined in the MacPherson Inquiry report on Stephen Lawrence as “the collective failure by an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service to people on account of their race, culture and/or religion”.

b) Definitions of Harm of Children

These definitions are taken from “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023”.

Physical

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

c) Definitions of Harm of Adults

Abuse of adults may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, including spouses/partners, relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit people who might be at risk, strangers or the elderly. Mate crime happens when someone is faking a friendship in order to take advantage of a vulnerable person.

There is often particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of power or authority who uses his or her position to the detriment of the health, safety, welfare and general well-being of a vulnerable person. Abuse can occur in any setting. Abuse and crimes against adults may occur in different contexts. Actual or suspected abuse of persons at risk will trigger a safeguarding response in accordance with this policy.

Under the Care Act 2014 statutory safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support, (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect; and
- As a result those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Vulnerable adults can experience abuse as outlined above but several other types of abuse are particular to vulnerable adults. These include financial abuse (sometimes called material abuse), discriminatory abuse and institutional abuse.

Adults can Experience:

- Physical abuse, including but not limited to: assault, hitting, punching and slapping, physical punishments, inappropriate or unlawful restraint, misuse of medication and withholding food.
- Sexual abuse, including but not limited to: Rape, sexual assault, attempted penetration, inappropriate touching and indecent exposure.
- Psychological or emotional abuse, including but not limited to: Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse, enforced isolation including preventing someone from accessing services and cyber bullying.
- Financial or material abuse, as including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions (i.e. benefits), or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Financial abuse may be opportunistic or may be planned. The victim may have been deliberately targeted because of their vulnerability.
- Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or other family members regardless of gender or sexuality. Victims under the age of 18 should have support from Children's Services.
- Modern slavery or human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation such as escort work, prostitution and pornography and debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to.
- Discriminatory abuse is any form of abuse based on discrimination because of a person's race, culture, belief, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation etc. Discrimination may be a motivating factor in other forms of abuse.
- Organisational or institutional abuse, including but not limited to: ignoring or isolating the person, preventing the person from making their own decisions, preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc, failure to ensure privacy and dignity, failure to respond to abuse appropriately and a failure to respond to complaints.
- Neglect or acts of omission, ignoring or isolating the person, preventing the person from making their own decisions and a failure to ensure privacy and dignity.
- Self-neglect including but not limited to: lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety, inability to avoid self-harm and a failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs.

Important Rule

It is important to remember that many children, young people and vulnerable adults will exhibit some of these signs and indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. You should however report anything that causes you concern.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death, or the birth of a new baby in the family, relationship problems between parents/carers, etc.

d) Bullying Policy

The Office of Children and Young People's Services' Anti-Bullying Strategy defines bullying as a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate.

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard to defend themselves.

Bullying may take various forms, including

- Physical e.g. kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating behaviour or interference with personal property.
- Verbal/Psychological e.g. threats, taunts, shunning/ostracism, name-calling/verbal abuse or spreading of rumours.
- Racist Bullying e.g. physical, verbal, written, online or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture or language.
- Faith-based Bullying e.g. negative stereotyping, name-calling based on religion.
- Sexist Bullying e.g. use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender.
- Sexual Bullying e.g. unwanted/inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.
- Homophobic Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on sexual orientation or use of homophobic language.
- Special Educational Needs / Disability Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties.
- Gifted/Talented Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo, ostracism or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort.
- Cyber Bullying e.g. abuse online or via text message, interfering with electronic files, setting up or promoting inappropriate websites and inappropriate sharing of images from webcams/mobile phones.

Leaders and Helpers will:

- Report any concerns regarding bullying to Children or Youth Leaders.
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken.
- Record all the facts around the incident and keep them on record for further action.

Procedure

- The children or youth worker involved in dealing with the incident will issue a warning to the child or young person concerned.
- An apology should be given by the child or young person who has bullied another wherever possible.
- If possible, those involved need to be reconciled.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored by the team and children/youth leaders to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated, the parents/carers of both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying should be informed of the incident and the action taken.

e) Recruitment Process

The Church will follow the following recruitment process for Staff, Trustees and Leadership and volunteers who work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults:

Job description: For paid roles Open Heaven will produce a job description that clearly states the duties and responsibilities of the role, as well as the qualifications and experience required. The job description will also make it clear that the role is subject to this policy. These will always be advertised on our website to ensure that anyone is able to access and apply.

Application form: Open Heaven will require all applicants, for a staff role or volunteer to complete an application form that includes the following information:

- Personal details
- Employment history
- Educational qualifications
- References
- Any criminal convictions or other relevant information

Interview: Open Heaven will interview all shortlisted candidates for paid roles. The interview will be conducted by at least two people, one of whom is the Human Resources lead. At least one of the interview panels will have completed Safer Recruitment training. The interview will cover the following areas:

- The candidate's qualifications and experience
- The candidate's suitability for the role

References: Open Heaven will take up references for all shortlisted candidates. Open Heaven will also ask for references for any leadership or Trustees.

Safeguarding checks: Open Heaven will carry out a DBS check for staff or volunteers before starting in their role. Open Heaven will not appoint any candidate who is deemed to be unsuitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Decision: The Church will decide whether to appoint the candidate based on all of the available information.

Training: Before starting any role staff and volunteers will be asked to read this Safeguarding policy as well as other relevant policies.

f) Safeguarding Training

All paid staff and volunteers who work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults in the Church will be required to complete safeguarding training. The training will cover the following topics:

- Child protection
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Reporting concerns

Everyone will need to have refresher training every three years.

7. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

a) Introduction

Open Heaven staff and volunteers may come across cases of suspected abuse through direct contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. It is your responsibility to report your concerns. Your concerns must be made immediately and shared with Open Heaven's Safeguarding Lead.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused. Our primary concern is to ensure any relevant information is passed to the police or social services without delay. These organisations have a statutory responsibility to make enquiries, to establish if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm.

b) Responding to Disclosure

Documenting a concern

To report a safeguarding concern either;

- Fill in the responding to disclosures form [Appendix 2](#) and give it to the safeguarding lead or deputy
- Send an email to safeguarding@openheaven.org
- Call the Safeguarding Lead

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

Alternatively, contact Social Services or the police.

Listening and responding to a child disclosing abuse:

Abused children, young people and vulnerable adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child, young person or vulnerable adult is saying, you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

Effective Listening

- Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, allowing the child to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.
- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk.
- Above everything else, listen without interrupting.
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking.
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting on words or short phrases they have used.
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different.
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality.
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.

- Use age-appropriate language and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.
- Even when the person has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware they may have been threatened or bribed
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared.

Helpful responses

- You have done the right thing in telling.
- That must have been hard.
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will try to help you.

Don't say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.

Concluding:

- Reassure, show acceptance, let the person know what you are going to do next and you will let them know what happens.
- Contact the Safeguarding Lead
- Make notes (preferably within one hour) of times, dates, what they said, what you said, and what was said in reply. Detail is key.

When Speaking to Adults:

Actions to take

- React calmly so as not to frighten them
- Explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with Open Heaven's Safeguarding Lead.
- Encourage them to stay with you until a decision has been made by the Open Heaven Safeguarding lead, the police, or social services that they are safe to leave.
- Tell them they were not to blame and that they were right to tell.
- Avoid asking direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. It is up to the police or social services to formally interview the person and they should not have to repeat their account on several occasions.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in light of subsequent developments.
- Record all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or vulnerable adult's own words, as soon as possible on the Responding to Disclosures Form, [Appendix 2](#)

Actions to Avoid

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Probe for more information than is offered
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser

- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Speculate or make assumptions

c) Responding to Suspensions

In the first instance if you have any suspicions regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult who you think is being abused it is important:

Step 1- Pass this information straight away to the Open Heaven Safeguarding lead or Safeguarding deputy to ensure the safety of the young person/vulnerable adult.

Step 2- Complete an incident reporting form, [Appendix 3](#). The form should then be shown to the Safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to take the lead on suspicions and report them to Social Services (Adults), Children's Services (Children) and or the Police to take the appropriate course of action.

d) Sharing Concerns with Parents, Carers or Partners

In all cases of alleged abuse, this decision will be taken and followed up by Social Services as the professional body on protection issues.

Whilst delivering services to children, young people or vulnerable adults there is a commitment to work in partnership with parents and share concerns about their child, young person or vulnerable adult. Therefore in most safeguarding circumstances, it would be important to talk to parents to clarify any concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation that a parent can provide.

There are circumstances when children/ young people/ vulnerable adults can be placed at greater risk by sharing concerns with their parents e.g. where the parent/ carer is the one who may be responsible for the abuse, or not able to respond to the concern appropriately. In these circumstances, or where concerns still exist despite an explanation from parents/carers, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead immediately and recorded.

DO NOT inform the parents/carers of the disclosure when they come to collect their child unless instructed to by your leadership or safeguarding advisors.

e) Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Whenever there's a chance that a criminal act might have occurred, it's important to avoid taking any actions that could potentially compromise any future criminal investigation. This includes contacting the alleged perpetrator. Advice should FIRST be sought from the Police/NSPCC helpline and/or Social Services.

Allegations or concerns mustn't be inappropriately discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, their family and any child/vulnerable adult protection investigations that may follow.

Informing the parents/carer of a child or vulnerable adult you may have concerns about needs to be dealt with sensitively and should be done in consultation with the Safeguarding lead and Social Services.

Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff, elected members and volunteers should be informed who the relevant designated Open Heaven spokesperson will be, and all enquiries directed through them. Staff, elected members and volunteers should not reply 'no comment' to all questions/enquiries, but should make a note of the enquirer, the enquiry, their contact details and the timeframe for a response, they should confirm that they will pass it to the relevant designated Open Heaven spokesperson, and they should pass it to that person promptly. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead, along with the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding, to make these decisions and brief staff and volunteers as appropriate.

f) Managing allegations against staff members

Alongside our whistleblowing Policy, Appendix 9, When handling allegations against staff members we would work with the local LADO as well as Thirtyone:eight and would consider working with other agencies who have more experience and relevant qualifications based on the situation.

g) Supporting known offenders in the church

What do we do?

1. Be aware that offenders may be within our community.
2. OH has a responsibility to gain a copy of any Risk Assessments undertaken by other services e.g. Probation.
3. The behaviour contract is written by OH together with the person.
4. Relevant people must be made aware e.g. Safeguarding lead, Safeguarding deputy , Youth/Children Lead.
5. liaise with external services if the contract is breached.
6. Not allowed to volunteer with child or young person or be alone with child or young person if conviction related to sexual offences
7. regular review of behaviour contract.

h) Support for the Reporter of the Alleged Abuse

Strong feelings may be generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult. We will fully support and protect all staff/volunteers who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be being abused.

i) Types of Investigation

Where there are allegations of abuse about a member of staff there may be three strands of investigation:

- Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
- Criminal Investigation

Open Heaven will consider suspending any employee accused of abuse pending a formal investigation. A suspension is a neutral act that does not imply any form of guilt. If suspension is felt unnecessary the member of staff will be relocated to another area of work pending the outcome of the formal investigation. An investigation will be carried out as quickly as is practically possible for the protection of all parties involved. Open Heaven will assess each allegation on its own, taking into account the findings of any criminal investigation and responding to the outcome of the investigation in line with Open Heaven policy and procedure.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Policy Declaration Form

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and should know what to do if they have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

Open Heaven Church has a biblical, moral and legal obligation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm.

We acknowledge the importance of safeguarding and are committed to the protection of all individuals who participate in our programs, services, and activities.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Appendix 2

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Church/Group _____

Name of Child/Young Person _____

Address _____
 _____ Post Code _____

Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____

Name of Person Reporting incident _____

Date ____ / ____ / ____ Time of incident _____

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

Action Taken (including person(s) contacted) to ensure the person's safety

Date ____ / ____ / ____ Time _____

Other Notes: _____

Inform Open Heaven's Safeguarding Lead by email or phone of this report IMMEDIATELY

Appendix 3

Signs and Indicators of Abuse to Children

Physical

Physical Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body • Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching) • Cigarette burns • Bite marks • Broken bones • Scalds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of parents being approached for an explanation • Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts • Flinching when approached or touched • Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather • Depression • Withdrawn behaviour • Running away from home

Sexual

Sexual Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas • Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas • Sexually transmitted infections • Vaginal discharge or infection • Stomach pains • Discomfort when walking or sitting down • Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people • Running away from home • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development age • Sexual drawings or language • Sleeping or eating disorders • Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone • Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts

Emotional

Emotional Abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure to thrive or grow • Sudden speech disorders • Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking • Being unable to play • Fear of making mistakes • Self-harm • Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

Neglect

Neglect	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others • Constantly dirty or 'smelly' • Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight • Inappropriate dress for the conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaining of being tired all the time • Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments • Having few friends • Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

Appendix 4

Contact Information and Helplines

If you have concerns about a child, Contact:

Police

Non emergencies, call 101
in emergencies, always dial 999

Leicestershire county Council

0116 305 0005
childrensduty@leics.gov.uk

ThirtryOne:Eight

0303 003 1111.
They will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.

Childline

0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
(24 hour service for children and young people to call about anything worrying them)

NSPCC

0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk
(24 hour service for adults worried about the safety of a child)

Stop It Now!

0808 1000 900
Helpline for those that are unsure or worried about their thoughts or behaviour towards children.
Experienced advisors can offer confidential advice on what steps to take.

Other forms of abuse/exploitation:

Forced Marriage & Honour Based Violence (HBV)

Forced Marriage Unit on 02070 080 151 for further help and support
safe.met.police.uk has useful website and links to other support organisations

Female Genital Mutilation

If you are concerned that a British citizen may be taken overseas for the purpose of FGM please call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 02070 081 500 or email fgm@fco.gov.uk

Domestic violence

National Domestic Violence helpline: 0808 2000 247
Local helpline
Living without abuse: 01509 550317, alternative telephone: 0800 2000247

Appendix 5

Further Definitions of Harm of Adults

Forced Marriage

One or more partners do not (or in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage, and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced Marriage is an abuse of Human Rights and cannot be justified on any grounds. Forced marriage is not an arranged marriage, nor is it in any way a religious practice.

If the potential victim is due to travel imminently, give them the details of the British embassy or high commission in the country they are travelling to. Try to gather as much information - such as their passport details, dates of travel and destination - from them as possible.

Honour Based Violence (HBV)

The honour code means that women must follow rules that are set at the discretion of male relatives and which are interpreted according to what each male family member considers acceptable. Breaking the rules is seen as destroying the good name of the family, and is deserving of punishment at the discretion of male relatives. Honour is an unwritten code of conduct that involves loss of face on someone's part if offended against, especially in groups where loyalty is considered paramount.

Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, HBV may exist. Evidence shows that this type of violence is often planned and sometimes made to look like a suicide or accident. There tends to be a degree of family conspiracy.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non medical reasons. FGM is a grave violation of the rights of girls and women. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the ethnic group practising it. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood, adolescence, at marriage or during the first labour.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act came into effect in March 2004.

It is illegal to:

- practice FGM in the UK;
- take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in that country;
- to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad;

FGM has a penalty of up to 14 years in prison and/or a fine.

Domestic Violence & Abuse

Domestic Violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial, Emotional. A child is a victim of domestic violence, as they are witnessing it in their home, even if they are not physically subject to it, and it has a direct effect emotionally on any children that may be living in

that home. Of children living with Domestic Violence – 90% witness it and 50% of this group are abused themselves.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Domestic violence can include a range of behaviours as described above. If an adult or child confides in you regarding domestic abuse please feed that information up to your group/team leader, and follow Safeguarding practices outlined above.

Human Trafficking: is defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve consent of a person having control of another person for the purpose of exploitation”.

Sexual exploitation: The term “sexual exploitation” means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Exploitation by radicalisation: The Home Office leads on the anti-terrorism PREVENT strategy, of which CHANNEL is part (refer to www.gov.uk for information). This aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting extremism. All local organisations have a role to play in safeguarding people who meet the criteria. Contact should be made with Police regarding any individuals identified that present concern regarding violent extremism.

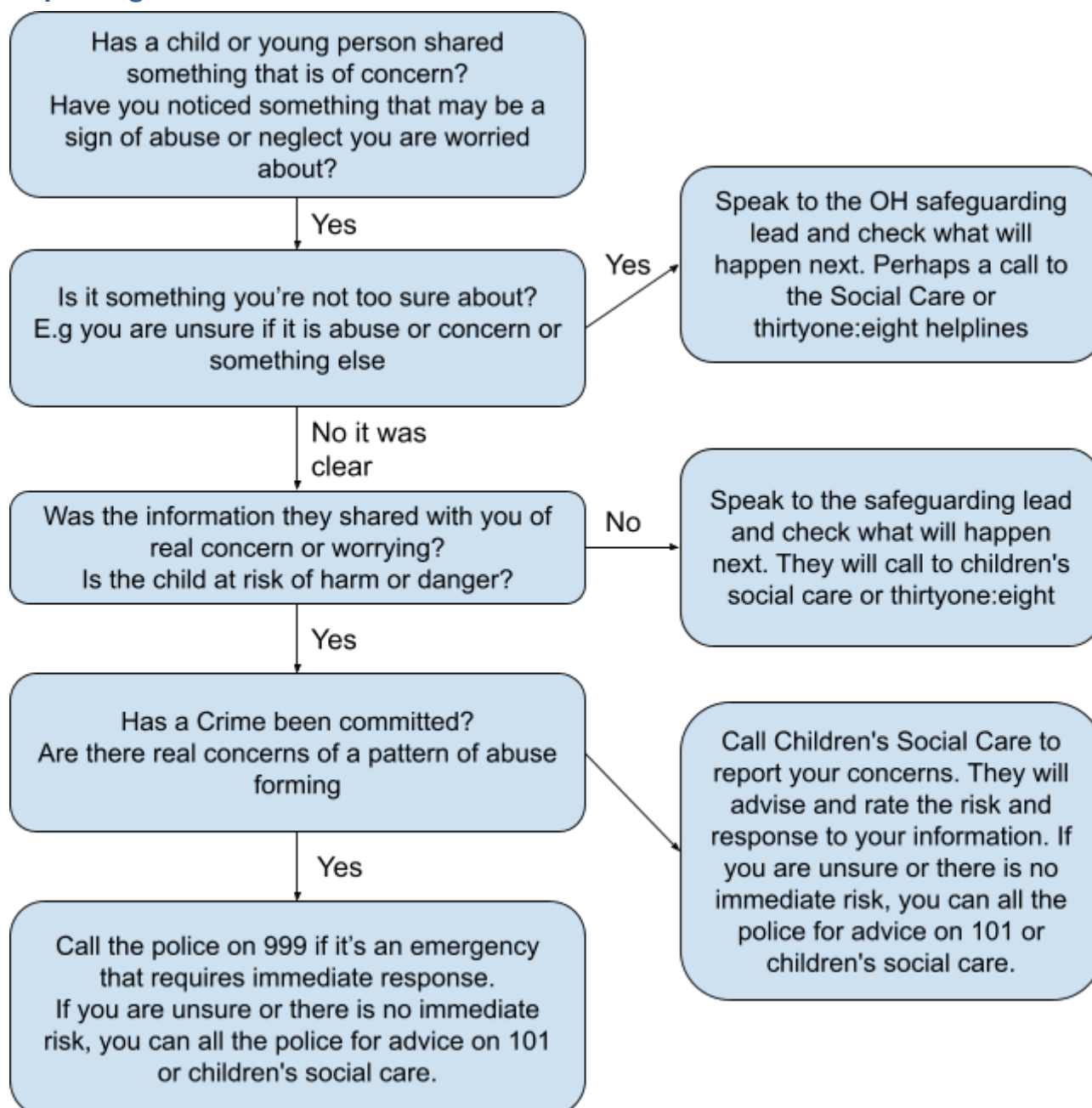
Internet/cyberbullying: can be defined as the use of technology, and particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately hurt, upset, harass or embarrass someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with the technology offering the bully another route for harassing their victim or can be simply without motive. Cyberbullying can occur using practically any form of connected media, from nasty text and image messages using mobile phones, to unkind blog and social networking posts, or emails and instant messages, to malicious websites created solely for the purpose of intimidating an individual or virtual abuse during an online multiplayer game.

Hate crime: Hate crime is defined as any crime that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be racist, homophobic, trans-phobic or due to a person’s religion, belief, gender identity or disability. It should be noted that this definition is based on the perception of the victim or anyone else and is not reliant on evidence.

Mate crime: Mate crime happens when someone is faking a friendship in order to take advantage of a vulnerable person. Mate crime is committed by someone known to the person. They might have known them for a long time or met recently. A ‘mate’ may be a ‘friend’, family member, supporter, paid staff or another person with a disability.

Appendix 6

Reporting a Concern or Disclosure about a child



OH Safeguarding Contact:

Safeguarding@openheaven.org

Thirtyone:eight

0303 003 1111

Leicestershire county Council Children Social Care

0116 305 0005

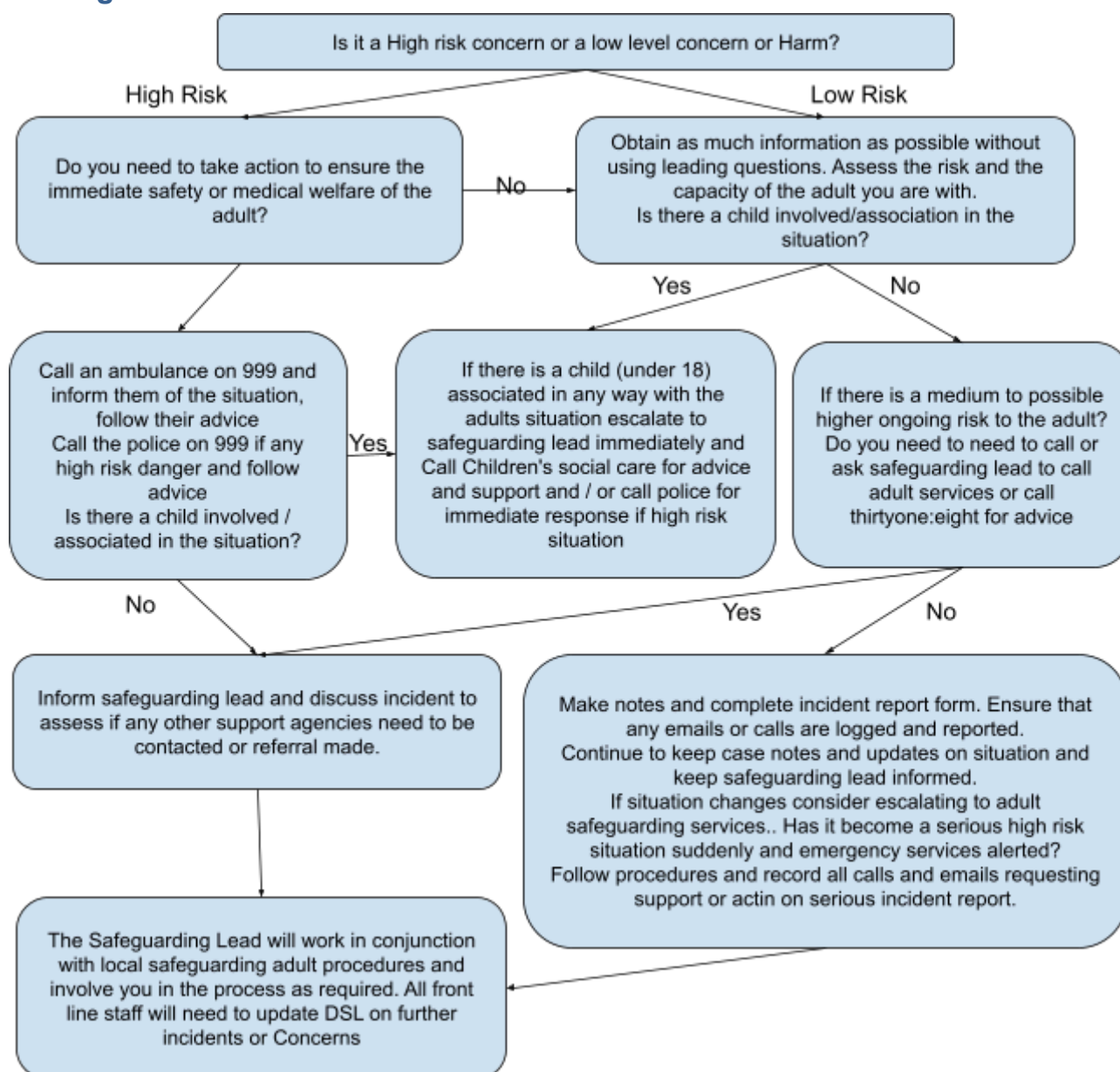
Police

999 for Emergency

101 for non emergency

Appendix 7

Dealing with Concerns of an Adult at Risk of Harm



Remember to involve the adult at risk throughout the process wherever possible and gain consent for any referrals to social care if the person has capacity. If an adult refuses consent but you believe they are in danger or at risk of serious harm, you may still report to adult services ect but log why.

Appendix 8

The 7 Golden Rules for Information Sharing (NSPCC)

1. Remember that **the Data Protection Act is not a barrier for sharing information**, but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share confirmation without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. **Consider safety and well-being**. Base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, relevant, accurate, timely and secure**. Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it. Share only with those who need to have it. Ensure it's accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose

Appendix 9

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy encourages employees to come forward if they witness any activity that could be illegal, unsafe, unethical, or a danger to the public or environment. We will protect the confidentiality of whistleblowers and thoroughly investigate all reported concerns.

This might include suspicions of abuse, acts of discrimination and omissions. This is particularly important where the welfare of children and vulnerable adults may be at risk. If you have concerns about the Children's Worker/ Youth Leader you should report to the Safeguarding Lead. Be assured that all suspicions and accusations will be taken seriously, investigated and if necessary acted upon and you need not fear repercussions.

We will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 an employee making a qualifying disclosure is protected against being dismissed or penalised by their employer as a result of disclosing such concerns publicly, while a worker is protected from suffering any detriment as a result of making a protected disclosure. This means that, where a disclosure is made in good faith, the person making the disclosure ("the whistleblower") will be protected if he or she has a reasonable belief that malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

Procedure

Any individual who has reasonable suspicions of malpractice should initially take their concerns to their line manager. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, they should approach one of the leadership team, or if their concern is related to a leader, they should contact a trustee of Open Heaven.

It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. All reported incidents will be investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff or trustees who need to know, being informed.

The Leader or Trustee will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff, or volunteer will be informed in writing.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chair of Trustees (or another appropriate trustee) who will arrange any further investigation as they think is appropriate. The Chair will send a written response to the individual concerned.