

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy and Guidelines

Warsash United Reformed Church

Date : 12th February 2019

Issue 07

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Date for next review: 12.02.20

NB This policy document will be reviewed annually by the serving Elders of Warsash United Reformed Church or sooner if legislation, directives or advice on it's content is significantly updated within the this period.

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1.0 Introduction

This policy was originally adapted with permission from YMCA England for use within the United Reformed Church. The URC has its own Guideline Document – “Good Practice Rev 4” dated June 2015

The YMCA policy on Safeguarding Young People and Children was drawn up with close reference to the Home Office document “Safe from Harm”, which was prepared as a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people [up to the age of 16] in voluntary organisations in England and Wales.

The policy recognises the obligations and duty of care on organisations working with children and young people as covered in The Children Act [2004]. This Act defines children and young people as anyone up to age 18. The policy is applicable to all workers, staff and volunteers.

The policy is designed to encourage good practice in local churches and synods and groups such as Fury to prevent the neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse of young people and children while they are in the care of the United Reformed Church. It stresses the responsibility of all workers to be alert to signs of abuse and provides for a prompt and effective reporting procedure should abuse be suspected, disclosed, or discovered, regardless of the setting in which the abuse has taken place. The policy is also intended to protect those who work with young people and children from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways, which may be well-intended but inadvisable, and to enable the United Reformed Church to fulfil its “duty of care”.

There are cross references to a YMCA publication within this document. A copy of the YMCA Children’s Work Handbook is available in each Synod through the Youth and Children’s Work Trainer, Youth leadership Training Officer or the Synod Training Team. It is recommended that further information be sought through the Synod.

Childrens Work Handbook – available from the Programme Development Department, YMCA England.

It is specific to children aged 0-13 and contains more detail and provides examples of good working practices.

Child protection training is widely available through a variety of sources – see the Resource List in the Good Practice Pack.

NB: Failure to observe the provisions of The Children Act [2004] can result in the withdrawal of licensing and permission for certain types of children’s activities, and may lead to civil and criminal prosecution. It may also affect insurance cover.

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2.0 Policy Statement

Child Protection Policy Safeguarding Young People and Children

As one of its major activities, Warsash United Reformed Church seeks to serve the needs of young people, promoting holistic development.

In doing so, Warsash United Reformed Church takes seriously the welfare of all young people and children who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

Warsash United Reformed Church aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

Warsash United Reformed Church recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of young people and children and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

Warsash United Reformed Church recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

Warsash United Reformed Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and children and to providing supervision.

Warsash United Reformed Church is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities.

Link Person A
Debbie Couzens



Link Person B
Ken Chan



Safeguarding Coordinator Safety / Fire Coordinator
Brian Reid



Alan Clark



Link persons will act as liaison between Social Services, Authorities and Church Leaders in the event of a reported incident. If you discover abuse or suspected abuse, you must report this to any of the Church leaders or to one of the Link persons above.

First Aiders are Identified on the Main Noticeboard

Childline Help Number

0800-1111

NSPCC Helpline

0808-8005000

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3.0 Child protection - Recommended Procedures

- 1 Plan work to minimise situations where the possibility of abuse of young people or children may occur.
- 2 Have policies and procedures on the management and supervision of all activities, and provide training on the implementation of them.
- 3 Appoint two “link” people and the Church Safeguarding Coordinator as described in the Good Practice Pack 4
- 4 Provide a safe environment, undertaking all types of safety checks, regular equipment inspections, controlling access and identification of all those using the facilities and keeping adequate records.
- 5 Give all workers, staff and volunteers, clear roles.
- 6 Carry out a full recruitment procedure as described in the Good Practice pack, for all workers, staff and volunteers.
- 7 Use supervision and support as a means of protecting young people and children.
- 8 Establish a system whereby young people and children know they may talk with an independent person.
- 9 Implement and issue guidelines to all workers with young people and children on how to deal with abuse or suspected abuse. Ensure training is available on the use of these guidelines.
- 10 Confirm with groups/organisations, who work with young people and children and wish to hire/use United Reformed Church premises, that they undertake to follow the Home Office code of practice “**Safe from Harm**” (Appendix 1)

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4.0 Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.1 Plan work to minimise situations where the possibility of abuse of young people or children may occur.

- During normal services when other activities are going on at the same time on the premises, we will arrange to have more than one group in the same room together. Deviations from this may occur if the activities require more privacy. In this instance the groups can be separated using portable screening or one of the groups can use an adjoining room.
In the event that only one group is able to meet in a room and if the numbers of children or young people in any group is only one, our policy is for that group not to meet at all. In that event there is a resource table at the back of the main Church meeting room, which can be used with young children. All children are expected to stay with their parents or with friends in the main meeting. The duty group leader should either remain with the child at this resource table, or assign the responsibility back to the parent by bringing the child back to them.
- During times when a group activity is the only activity going on at the premises our policy is to have no fewer than two responsible persons* present during the activity.
* Responsible persons must be adults recognised by the Church as leaders for the group or recognised by the Church as capable to support the group leader.
- Workers that need to meet a child or young person off the Church premises on Church business must only do so with a parent or other adult carer present.
- Groups are not to be taken off the premises e.g. on outings etc, with less than two adults present.
- When children and Young people have to be transported by car or minibus, we insist that each passenger must wear a seat belt at all times. The no of passengers per car is strictly regulated by the no of available seat belted seats. Where possible we aim to have more than one passenger in a car at any time.

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.2 Have Policies and Procedures on the management and supervision of all activities and provide training on the Implementation of them.

- Our policy for governing all activities relating to Children and Young people is this one entitled – “Safeguarding Children and Young people”. It includes a policy statement which is prominently displayed on the Main Church notice board. This also gives details of where copies of this policy document can be obtained for consultation.
- A risk assessment is carried out on each activity addressing child protection and safety issues. Risk assessments are filed with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator.
- We have working links with our local Social Services Department, they have a copy of our policy document on file.
- We have appointed two link persons who have the responsibility to oversee the policy and the way it is put into practice. These people also have the responsibility for ensuring that child protection issues are reported to the relevant authorities.
The names of the link persons are given on the displayed policy statement.
- We have appointed First Aiders who are regularly trained. They are identified on the displayed policy statement.
- We have appointed a Church Safety Officer / Fire Marshall. This person is also regularly trained and they are identified on the displayed policy statement.

Digital Media Policy

- We do not have internet access at our Church and do not encourage access as part of the normal activities of the Church. Mobile phones are turned off or put away during normal Church activities.
- We strongly discourage the use of Social Media or any other Electronic Communication means for communicating directly with Children or Young people. If it becomes necessary to do so any communication will be copied to their parents or to another Church Officer.
- The Church operates a Facebook page on it's Website. No photographs or personal information is presented on the Facebook page without the permission of each person included in any material.

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.3.1 Appoint a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and two “Link” people

A Safeguarding Coordinator should be appointed as the person to take the lead on Safeguarding Matters. A “Link” person should be appointed who has responsibility for the implementation of the Child Protection policy and procedures.

- The appointments of the Safeguarding Coordinator and Link person(s) are made and ratified by the Elders of Warsash United Reformed Church.
- The Link person(s) is/are chosen taking into consideration experience of working with Children and Young people. They are selected also on being sympathetic to young people and children but objective in the pursuance of their task. They are also able to act confidentially, speedily, and decisively and relate well to statutory authorities, parents and carers etc.

4.3.2 Appoint Persons to Coordinate First Aid, Fire and Safety Provision

A number of persons should be appointed who can administer First Aid. Others should be appointed to coordinate the Safety of the premises and Equipment used and / or matters relating to Fire Safety.

- The appointments to these positions are made and ratified by the Elders of Warsash United Reformed Church.
- First Aiders are to receive regular Training through the Church and are to be identified on the Policy Statement Document.
- The positions for Safety Coordinator and Fire Safety can be combined. Regular Training on relevant Safety Procedures should be made available.

4.4 Give all workers, staff and volunteers clear roles.

- All workers in Warsash United Reformed Church, working with Children and Young people are issued with guidelines governing their responsibilities and recommended behaviours as they lead their groups.
- Copies of these guidelines and a list of all those currently working with Children and Young People are available by contacting the Church Secretary.

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.5 Carry Out the full recruitment procedure for all workers – staff and volunteers.

- All workers who are involved with the Childrens and Young persons work in the Church will be subject to a mandatory DBS check. At the time of writing (2019) this check must now be updated every 3 years.(was 5) The DBS procedure includes an approved identity verification and the Church secretary together with one other approved Elder is the agreed signatory authority for this purpose. The Church Safeguarding Coordinator is also responsible to see each person involved with Children's and Young person's work has a current DBS check in place.
- All workers who are involved with the Children's and Young persons work will be approved by the Elders of Warsash United Reformed Church. New candidates proposed for this work should have a character reference prepared by the proposer and presented to the elders. This reference should be in writing and contain at least two referees who can verify the applicants character and suitability for this type of work.
- Upon appointment the applicant will be provided with copies of this policy and a written Job specification. They will be asked to sign this document to signify their agreement to abide by the policy.
- Where necessary, training will be provided to cover any aspect of the work where it is mutually agreed with the applicant and the elders that this is in the interest and safety of the Children and Young people or to the Applicant.

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.6 Use Supervision and Support as a means of protecting young people and children.

- Regular Team meetings of the Youth and Childrens work groups are held with at least one of the Elders. These meetings provide opportunities for workers to meet together and review and plan their work, to share experiences, receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people.

4.7 Establish a system whereby young people and children know they may talk with an independent person.

- Within the Church Children will be able to approach the Link person(s) identified and displayed on the Notice board. Also the children or Young person can talk to any of the serving elders of the Church or the Safeguarding Coordinator. Additionally the contact number for Childline will be prominently displayed on the notice-board if contact outside the Church is the preference.

4.8 Implement and issue guidelines to all workers with children and young people on how to deal with abuse. Ensure training is available on the use of these guidelines.

- All staff receive a copy of this policy document as part of their induction. Additionally training is given on the policy and its implementation. From time to time training by a third party can be organised by way of refreshing and updating the knowledge to take account of changes in legislation. The Church actively encourages and supports attendance at these training opportunities.
- An incident report is made on the report form shown on Appendix 3. Blank forms are available from the Church Secretary. There is also an accident book kept in the Church kitchen close to the First Aid box.
- The flowchart on Appendix 4 demonstrates the procedure to be followed where abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered.

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Recommended Procedures

4.9 Confirm with group / organisations who work with children or young people and who wish to use United Reformed Church premises, that they undertake to follow the Home Office code of practice “Safe from harm”

- We require all organisations who work with Children and Young people and who use our premises to either read our policy document and agree to implement it, or to demonstrate they already have a similar policy drawn up under the guidelines in the Home Office document “Safe from Harm”
The leader of the organisation must complete and sign a form for this purpose – see Appendix 5

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5.0 How to Deal with abuse

5.1 Duty both to prevent abuse and to report abuse

It is the United Reformed Church's duty both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. The normal rule of client confidentiality cannot be observed when abuse is discovered or suspected. When workers suspect, discover or are told / learn about abuse occurring in or outside the United Reformed Church setting, they should follow the reporting procedures outlined in the paragraph 5.4 entitled "Reporting Abuse – suspected, disclosed or discovered.

5.2 Types of abuse

The definitions of child abuse given by the Department of Health, DfEE, the Home Office and Welsh Office 1991 are as follows:

Physical	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. [The term "Munchausen syndrome by proxy" (MSBP) was coined around twenty years ago. In most cases, a mother either claims that her child is sick, or she goes even further to actually make the child sick. This "devoted" parent then continually presents the child for medical treatment, all the while denying any knowledge of the origin of the problem--namely, herself. As a result, MSBP victims may undergo extraordinary numbers of lab tests, medication trials, and even surgical procedures that aren't really needed.]
Sexual.	Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.
Emotional.	Actual or likely severe adverse affect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment, This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.
Neglect	The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

The following may be **signs of abuse**

NB: Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important, therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

Physical	unexplained injuries or those which have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, shrinking away from unexpected arm movements.
Sexual	allegations made by the child or young person, pre-occupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.
Emotional	regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/ stealing / lying, looking uncared for.
Neglect	scavenging for food, unkempt clothing, listlessness, underweight, poor hygiene.

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Because of obvious physical damage or from a place of trust, a child may tell you of abuse.

In an emergency act at once.

If a child is clearly in distress from a physical injury seek medical attention immediately. Take the child to A&E or phone for an ambulance. Tell the medical services what the child has told you or of any suspicions you may have.

Remember anything the child says and record this as soon as possible.

You may suspect abuse, you may discover or witness abuse or someone may report abuse to you. However you become aware of abuse, it is important that you follow the following guidance.

- Do not delay but at the same time do not panic.
- Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse.
- Record any observations and keep an account of what you have been told by staff or the child or young person. These records must be accurate and factual. A sample report form is in Appendix 3
- It is not your role to investigate – concentrate on presenting information clearly.
- Pass on your information to the appropriate person – see flow chart appendix 4a and 4b.
- Do not discuss with anyone other than the person to whom you should report the matter.

If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly from time to time
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality even when a child or young person has broken a rule they are not to blame.
- Be aware that the child or young person may be being threatened
- Never push for information, avoid asking questions, let the child talk
- Reassure the child or young person, they were right to tell you.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next, who you need to tell.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand written record, even if these are subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period. See Incident Report Form. Appendix 3
- If it is considered that the person making the disclosure is likely to be at risk by returning home, immediate contact should be made with the Social Services or the Police.

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5.4 Reporting abuse – suspected, disclosed or discovered.

All workers should be aware of the appropriate reporting procedure – this process is illustrated by the flowchart in Appendix 4a and 4b

Workers should inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or a “link” person appointed within the Warsash United Reformed Church or another appropriate person.

It is the responsibility of the “link” person to ensure that cases of abuse are reported. It is normal procedure to contact the local Social Services team. If the child or young person is in immediate danger the police should be contacted. The number of your local Social Services Duty team should be readily available

The NSPCC can be contacted for advice – the helpline is open 24 hours a day, the number is 0880 800 500. Also available for advice is the CCPAS [Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service] – 01322 660011

Any worker, staff or volunteer, can bypass the procedures and share concerns with an outside agency – Social Services, NSPCC – if they feel that their line manager or management team / committee are not dealing with their concern or are implicated in some way.

In every area Social Services and police have procedures for investigating cases where a child may be at risk. Sometimes a child protection case conference will be convened. It may be appropriate for a United Reformed Church representative to attend. This person may be present to share information or in a support capacity. It is important to be clear which role is being undertaken.

Consideration should be given, on a case by case basis, to the support which can be given to an abused child or young person, recognising that the support needs to be non-judgemental, appropriate and long term. External help, available through Social Services or other Counselling agencies, may be advisable

If anything is likely to receive attention from the Media then the URC Press Office should also be informed and in such cases it is also appropriate to inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer. Your Church Secretary can provide these contact details.

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5.5 Dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse within the United Reformed Church.

Any allegation made against any volunteer, paid employee, minister or any other officer of the United Reformed Church must be taken seriously. It is recognised that this can be a distressing and stressful situation for all involved but it is vital that the Church acts responsibly with regard to children who have been entrusted into the care of Church workers.

When a report of an allegation or suspicion is received it is important to respond immediately by reporting it to a “link” person, and ensuring a detailed record is kept, dated and signed.

When the informant is an adult the “link” person should clarify the following:

- The nature of the allegation or suspicion
- Details of the child/children and family/families involved.
- Any relevant information relating to the person against whom the allegation is made
- Dates and times of the incident as appropriate
- Details of any others involved and / or any witnesses

This information should be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – (Social Services or Children’s Services) immediately. They will be able to advise about what will happen next.

When the allegation is made by a child, the process as described at 5.4 should be followed.

Additionally the following should also be considered when an allegation or suspicion of abuse involves a volunteer, an employee, a minister or any other officer of the United Reformed Church:

- Does the person against whom the allegation is made have ongoing contact with children? In most circumstances where LADO services become involved they can assist in offering advice about suspending any activity that involves contact with children.
- For a paid employee there will be a need to consider whether a period of suspension from active duties is appropriate while an investigation is ongoing. Depending on the type of post of the employee it should be clear in their contract who has responsibility for this level of decision making and which United Reformed Church bodies need to be consulted and advised.
- For any allegation against a Minister of the United Reformed Church there is clear guidance about suspension / disciplinary matters. Synod Moderators should be informed of any concern immediately. They will be able to advise which other URC Officers should be informed and how to proceed.
- Who can offer appropriate care and pastoral support to the person under suspicion? This should not be the same person offering support to any alleged victim or informant.

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It should be noted that in these circumstances the practice of a short term suspension pending the outcome of any investigation is a measure used to protect the volunteer, staff member, minister as well as the child. It is not a method of apportioning blame but should be regarded as a neutral way of protecting all involved until an investigation can be concluded.

There may be situations where an alleged offender and a victim and/or their family are in the same Church. If this is the case, support will need to be given to all parties. This should be offered by different people as it is only in this way that support can be offered impartially and effectively.

At the conclusion of an investigation opportunities should be created for all those who have been involved in any supporting capacity to debrief and obtain any support they may need themselves.

Appendix 1

**Safe From Harm
[Home office Publication 1993]**

Summary of Recommendations

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicants paid work or volunteering with children.
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

Appendix 2

Guidelines for Staff Working on their Own with Children / Young People

1. Always let your Line Manager know the time and place of meeting with child/young person.
2. Always meet at a “neutral place”, never in a home.
3. Let other people know that you are there and / or remain visible in a public place.
4. Establish mutually understood behaviour of both parties at the outset.
5. Keep a detailed record of the appointment.

Appendix 3

Incident Report Form

Name of Child.....

Name of Worker.....

Position of Worker.....

Date & Time of Report.....

Nature of Concern

.....

.....

.....

[If you have not already done so make a factual written record of your observations and any conversations. Sign and date it.]

Who have You Spoken to about Your Concerns?

Child	Yes/No	
Carer	Yes/No	
Senior Staff/ "link person "	Yes/No	Name.....

Social Services	Yes/No	Name.....
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Feedback.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature of Worker:.....

Date and Time.....

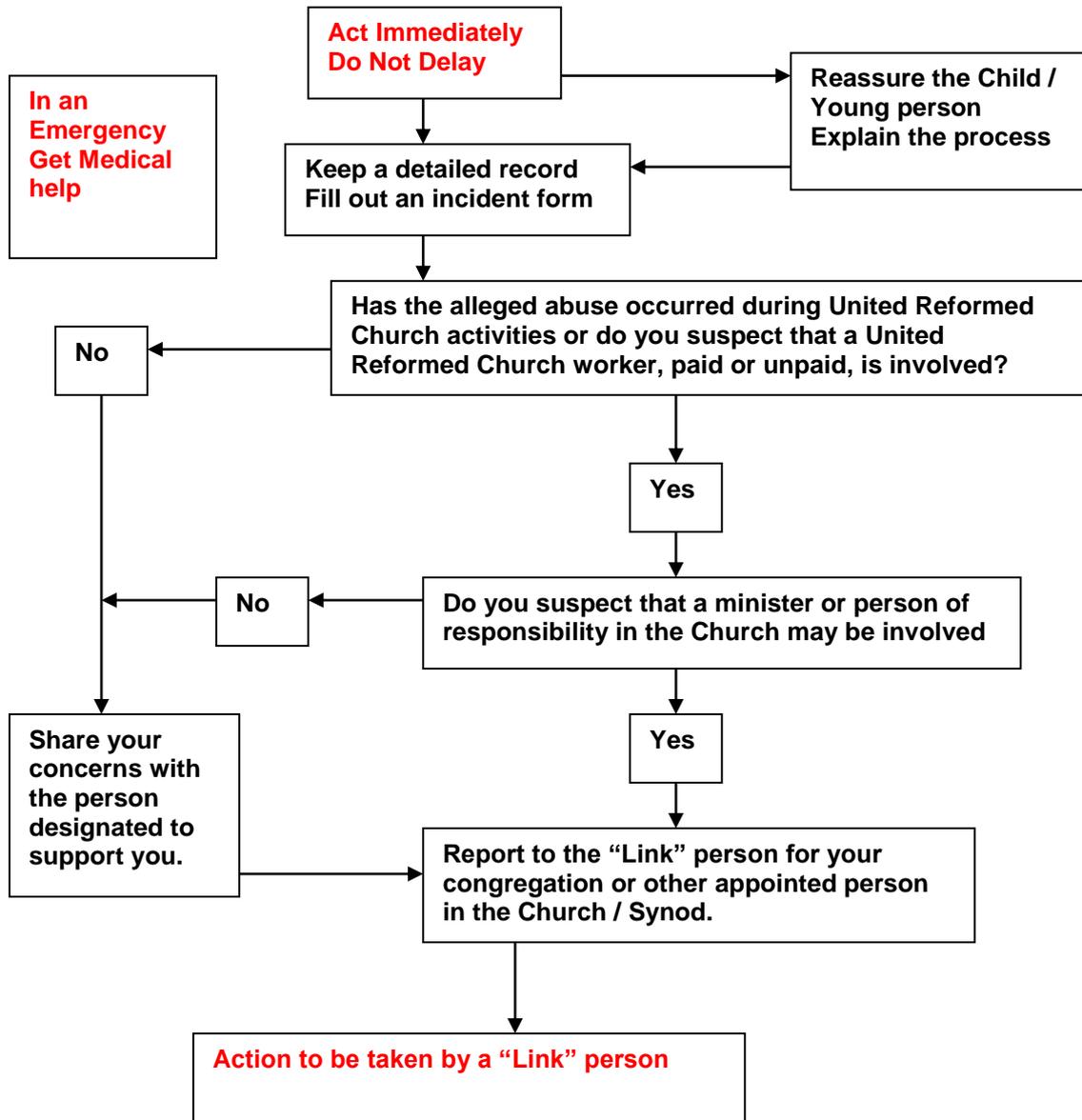
Signature of "Link Person" / Line Manager:.....

Date and Time.....

Appendix 4A

Flow Chart 1 of 2

Deal with a Disclosure of Abuse

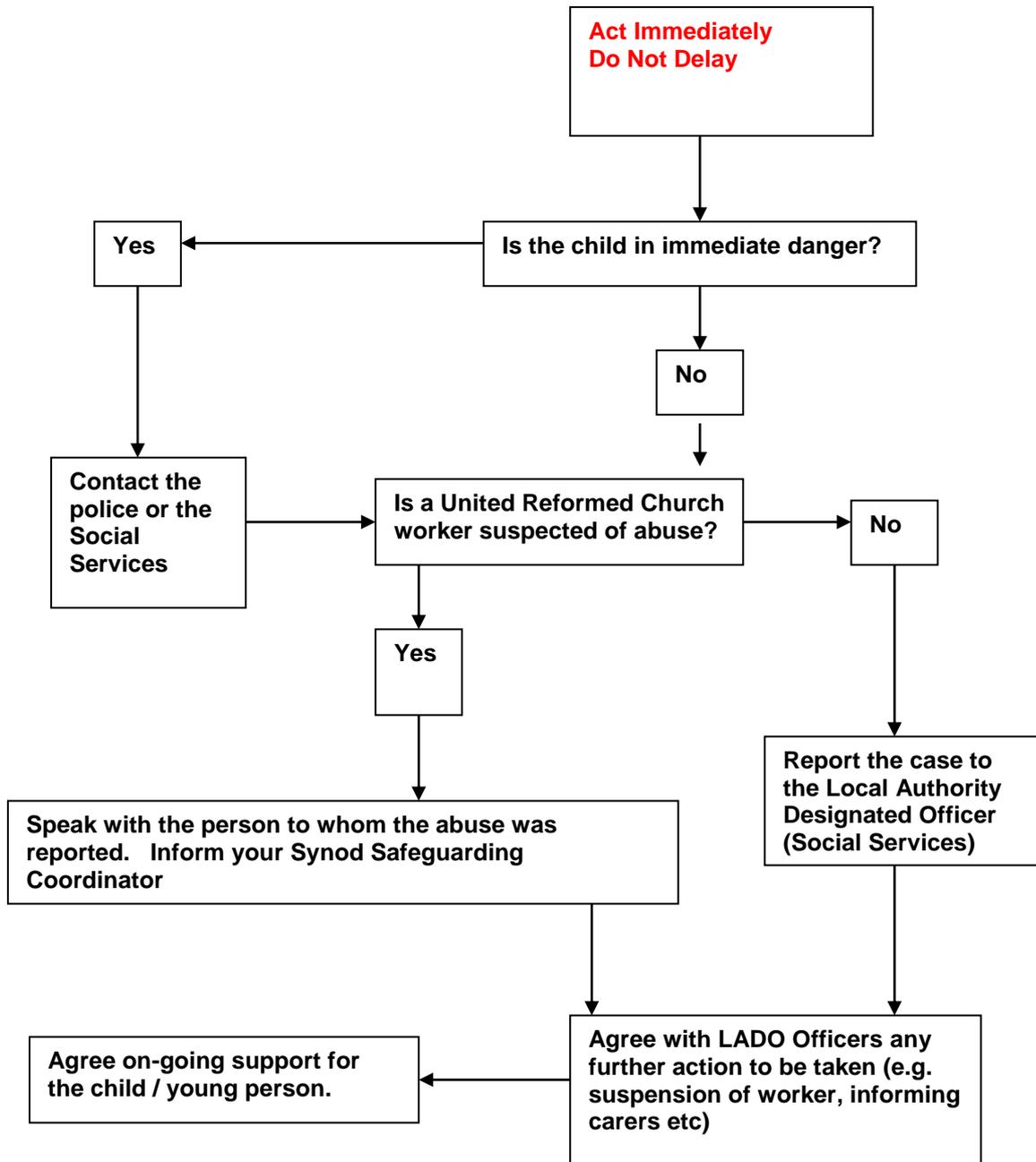


If you are not satisfied that the person to whom you have reported your observations is dealing with your concerns, it is open to you to contact the relevant authorities direct.

Appendix 4B

Flow Chart 2 of 2

Action By “Link” Person



If you are not satisfied that the person to whom you have reported your observations is dealing with your concerns, it is open to you to contact the relevant authorities direct.

Appendix 5 Letting Agreement – Third Parties

All groups working with children and young people under the age of 18 years and using these premises are required to agree to uphold the principles of the Home Office Document “SAFE FROM HARM”

Therefore, all such groups are required:-

Either

To comply with the principles outlined in the Warsash United Reformed Church Good practice Policy entitled “Safeguarding Children and Young people”. (If this option is selected, a copy of this policy is available and should be examined before signing this agreement)

Or

To implement a similar policy which has been drawn up under the guidelines in the Home Office Document “SAFE FROM HARM” or the HM Government Document “Working together to Safeguard Children”.

Please read and select one of the following alternatives:-

I have read and understand the policy of Warsash United Reformed Church Regarding safeguarding children and young people and will implement it.

Or

I have in place a similar policy drawn up under the guidelines in the Home Office Document “SAFE FROM HARM” and will implement it.

I agree that whilst using these premises the principles underlying “SAFE FROM HARM” will be upheld by this group.

Signed:.....Print (Full name).....

Position Held:.....

Address:.....

.....

Contact Telephone number:Date:.....

Your booking is accepted on the understanding that:-

*group

will operate in accordance with

a) the policies of Warsash United Reformed Church or

b) its own policy drawn up under the guidelines in the Home Office Document Safe from Harm.

[Delete a or b as appropriate]

Date/s of booking:

Facility Booked:

Time: Cost:

Other Information: