**Leadership Safeguarding Statement**

The Leadership and Trustees of Chapel House Christian Fellowship recognise the importance of its ministry/work with children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the Trustees and Leadership on 25th April 2016.

Chapel House Christian Fellowship is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

**Specifically**

* We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
* We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that the children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
* All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
* We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
* We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
* We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of Chapel House Christian Fellowship unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
* We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

**We are committed to:**

* Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
* Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
* Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
* Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
* Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
* Following any organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
* Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
* Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by the recommendations and the guidelines established by Chapel House Christian Fellowship.
* Supporting parents and families.
* Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people.
* Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
* Supporting all in Chapel House Christian Fellowship affected by abuse.
* Adopting and following the ‘Safe and Secure’ safeguarding standards developed by the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service, now known as “thirtyone:eight” as of 4th July 2018.

**We recognise:**

* Children’s Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
* Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
* Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency’s headquarters.
* Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

**We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.**

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for Chapel House Christian Fellowship:

Ian Moulton (Child Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

Alan Durham (Deputy Child Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

Ian Moulton (Adult Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

Alan Durham (Deputy Adult Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from Ian Moulton and is kept in the church office.

A copy of our safeguarding policy has been lodged with CCPAS (“thirtyone:eight”) and with Lancashire County Council Social Services.

Signed on behalf of Chapel House Christian Fellowship

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTENTS**

**Section One - Chapel House Christian Fellowship**………..……………… **page 4**

* The Safeguarding Policy ……………………………………………….………... **page 5**

**Section Two - Recognising and responding appropriately to an**

 **allegation or suspicion of abuse**……………………………..  **page 7**

* Understanding Abuse & Neglect…………………………………….………….. **page 8**
* Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)…………………………………………. **page 8**
* Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults)…………………………………………… **page 10**
* Responding to Allegations of Abuse…………………………………………… **page 11**
* Contact Telephone Numbers for the Reporting of Allegations of Abuse…... **page 12**
* Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional Abuse ……….……….. **page 13**
* Allegations of Sexual Abuse……… ………… ………………………………… **page 14**
* Suspicions or Allegations of Physical, Sexual, Organizational, Financial,

or Discriminatory Abuse, or Neglect, Self Neglect, Domestic Abuse,

Forced Marriage,Trafficking or Modern Slavery…………………………….. **page 14**

* Flow Chart for Action (children & young people) ……………………………. **page 15**
* Flow Chart for Action (vulnerable adults)……………………………………... **page 16**
* Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works With Children………… **page 17**

**Section Three - Prevention**………..………………………………………………. **page 18**

* Safe Recruitment…………………………………………………………………**. page 19**
* Practice Guidance on the Appointment of Workers …………………………….. **page 24**
* Code of Conduct for those Working with Children & Vulnerable Adults…. **page 31**
* Practice Guidance on Training and Awareness………………………………. **page 32**
* Communicating Safely………………………………………………………...... **page 33**

**Section Four - Pastoral Care**………………………………………………………. **page 38**

* Supporting those affected by abuse…………………………………………….. **page 39**
* Working with offenders…………………………………………………………. **page 39**

**Section Five - Practice Guidelines**……………………………………………… **page 41**

* Wednesday Club…………………………………………………………………. **page 42**
* Sunday School……………………………………………………………………. **page 43**
* Crèche …………………………………………………………………………….. **page 43**
* Working in Partnership………………………………………………………….. **page 44**
* Equal Opportunities Statement…………………………………………………. **page 45**

**Section One**

**Chapel House Christian Fellowship**

**The Safeguarding Policy**

**Chapel House Christian Fellowship**

**Chapel House,**

**3a Moor Road, Chorley,**

**Lancashire PR7 2LW**

**Telephone:** 01257 232427/231697 **email :**ian.moulton@chorleychapelhouse.org.uk **Mobile:** 07754 830949

**Registered Charity Number:** 1051877

Church Insurance including Public Liability Insurance is with Congregational Insurers.

Chapel House Christian Fellowship is an independent Christian Fellowship. Most of our meetings are held at Chapel House – an old Methodist Chapel at 3a Moor Road, Chorley, recently modernised inside with a new section to the back of the building, with an upstairs comprising two rooms both with window doors. We have a Children’s Club on Wednesday evenings for boys and girls aged 5-11 years and a Sunday school which operates during our Sunday Morning Service. There are currently no activities specifically for vulnerable adults but we have agreed with a local Day Care Centre for them to use our building as an “emergency venue” should the need ever arise.

**Our commitment**

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), now known as “thirtyone:eight”.

The Leadership undertakes to:

* Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
* Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
* Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
* Support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
* File a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with “thirtyone:eight” and any amendments subsequently published. The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

**Section Two**

**Recognising and responding appropriately to**

**an allegation or suspicion of abuse**

**UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those who attend Chapel House Christian Fellowship and any of our groups and activities, we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. *Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
2. *Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

 *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy:

**Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

**ENGLAND**

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance ‘Working together to Safeguard Children (2015)’.

**What is abuse and neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse 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.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children 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 the 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 cyberbullying), 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.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**

Neglect is 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 material 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 care-givers); or
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

 Updated on : 02 July 2015

**Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults)**

The following definition of abuse is laid down in ‘No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (Department of Health 2000)’:

‘Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors:

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it’.

**Physical Abuse**

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

**Sexual Abuse**

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

**Psychological or Emotional Abuse**

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult’s emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

**Financial or Material Abuse**

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.

**Neglect/Self Neglect**

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general wellbeing or development is impaired.

**Discriminatory Abuse**

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

**Organisational Abuse**

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

 Updated on : 2 July 2015

**Safeguarding Awareness**

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis within the church and from time to time attending courses provided by “thirtyone:eight”.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

**RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

**Effective Listening**

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult 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 back 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 language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

**HELPFUL RESPONSES**

* “You have done the right thing in telling”
* “I am glad you have told me”
* “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”

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

* The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Ian Moulton (hereafter the “Safeguarding Co-ordinator”) tel. no. 01257 231697/07754 830949 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
* In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to Alan Durham (hereafter the “Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator”) tel. no. 01204 411322/07787 171404. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to “thirtyone:eight”.
* Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children’s Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from “thirtyone:eight” as above.

**The local Children’s Social Services** office telephone number (24 hours) is Lancashire County Council 0300 123 6720.

**The local Adult Social Services** office telephone number (24 hours) is Lancashire County Council 0300 123 6721.

**The Police Child Protection Team** telephone number is 01772 209 122 (or 101 or 999).

**Lancashire Police** : 0845 125 3545.

**“Thirtyone:eight”.**

Telephone : 0845 120 45 50 Web : [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk) (thirtyoneeight.org)

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, e.g. the Chair of the Trustees to log that a safeguarding issue is being dealt with; or Insurance Company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning safeguarding; or a Designated Officer (LADO) if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18’s elsewhere.

* Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
* Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from “thirtyone:eight”.
* The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
* It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from “thirtyone:eight”, although the Leadership hope that members of Chapel House Christian Fellowship will follow the guidelines outlined in this Policy. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

**Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:**

**ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

* Contact Children’s Social Services (or “thirtyone:eight”) for advice in cases of deliberate injury; if concerned about a child’s safety; or if a child is afraid to return home.
* Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children’s Social Services.
* Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
* For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
* Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children’s Social Services direct for advice.
* Seek and follow advice given by “thirtyone:eight” (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children’s Social Services.

**ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

* Contact the Children’s Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. The Co-ordinator(s) will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
* Seek and follow the advice given by “thirtyone:eight” if, for any reason the Co-ordinator(s) are unsure whether or not to contact Children’s Social Services/Police. “Thirtyone:eight” will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

**The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

**SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, FINANCIAL, OR DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE, OR NEGLECT, SELF NEGLECT, DOMESTIC ABUSE, FORCED MARRIAGE, TRAFFICKING OR MODERN SLAVERY.**

If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

* Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively “thirtyone:eight” can be contacted for advice.
* If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

**Flow Chart for Action (children & young people)**

This flow chart provides an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of a child. It is to be used in conjunction with written procedures.

Emergency situation if concern for a child’s safety or they are afraid to return home.

An allegation is made or there are concerns regarding the wellbeing/abuse of a child.

Inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or Deputy).

Contact Police or Children’s Social Care (Emergency Duty team out of office hours). Don’t discuss with parents/carers as could jeopardise an investigation.

If unsure whether concern warrants an official referral, Safeguarding Co-ordinator should:

* Contact Children’s Social Care to discuss concerns and seek advice.
* Alternatively, contact “thirtyone:eight” for advice. 0845 120 40 50

Child not at risk of significant harm

Child at risk of significant harm

Safeguarding Co-ordinator to consider:

* Alternative forms of support and help child/family access these.
* These could include GP, CAMHS, Counselling Health Visitor and Children’s Services.

Contact Children’s Social Care to make a referral.

* If by phone, follow up with written confirmation within 48 hours.

NO FURTHER ACTION AGREED EED

* Continue to observe and review concerns where possible. Re-activate process if concerns remain.
* Ensure accurate records have been maintained relating to the safeguarding concern.

**Working Together Online defines significant harm as:**

“…any Physical, Sexual, or Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Accident or Injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.”

**Flow Chart for Action (vulnerable adults)**

This flow chart provides an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of a vulnerable adult. It is to be used in conjunction with written procedures.

An allegation is made or there are concerns regarding the wellbeing/abuse of a vulnerable adult.

Emergency situation.

Inform the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator (or Deputy).

Contact Police or Adult Social Care (Emergency Duty team out of office hours).

If unsure whether concern warrants an official referral, Safeguarding Co-ordinator should:

* Contact Adult Social Care to discuss concerns and seek advice.
* Alternatively, contact “thirtyone:eight” for advice. 0845 120 40 50

Adult does not have capacity

Adult has capacity

* Adult to be supported to make a referral to Adult Social Care or to the police.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator to consider:

* A referral to adult services for multi-agency consideration.
* Does the church need to develop a strategy/seek advice to address the concerns?

NO FURTHER ACTION AGREED

* Continue to observe and review concerns where possible.
* Ensure accurate records have been maintained relating to the adult safeguarding concern.

The legal definition says that someone who lacks capacity cannot, due to an illness or disability such as a mental health problem, dementia or a learning disability, do the following:

* Understand information given to them to make a particular decision.
* Retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision.
* Use or weigh up the information to make the decision.
* Communicate their decision.

**ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will need to liaise with Children’s Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults.

**Section Three**

**Prevention**

**SAFE RECRUITMENT**

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

* There is a written job description/person specification for the post.
* Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
* Those short listed have been interviewed.
* Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
* Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate.
* A Disclosure and Barring check has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
* Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
* A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
* The applicant has completed a probationary period.
* The applicant has been given a copy of the Church’s Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns.

**RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE**

**Introduction – why do we need this standard?**

In recent years there has been a great deal of public concern expressed about the way in which unsuitable people, including sex offenders, have gained both voluntary and paid employment with children, young people and vulnerable adults in places of worship, voluntary and other organisations.

Safer recruitment is vital because it minimises the likelihood of vulnerable people being harmed by those in positions of trust. It follows therefore that leaders, workers and those holding a variety of other positions should undergo a thorough recruitment process.

This includes the completion of a standardised application form and self-declaration form, a face-to-face interview, supply of at least two references (plus a criminal records check for all eligible posts), all of which have a part to play in the assessment of a candidate’s suitability for a position.

Safer recruitment should be followed irrespective of the level of responsibility or the duration of the appointment. It is also inextricably linked to the other standards in developing a culture of safety.

In terms of recruitment there is no difference between a paid or voluntary position. The same process will be applied to both, particularly in relation to Disclosure checks.

**Faith Fact**: *Some places of worship have a haphazard approach to appointing workers, including invitations to anyone in the congregation to help in the Sunday school, for fear of the work ceasing and because they think that the person’s faith will mean they can be trusted. People have been recruited without any background checks and no training due to the needs at the time. Government guidance (England) in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children – A Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2015) ‘states:*

*‘Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These include:*

* *A designated professional lead for safeguarding.*
* *Safe recruitment practices for individuals permitted to work regularly with children.*
* *Appropriate support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training.*
* *A robust safeguarding policy in place.’*

**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

Our policy includes a range of measures that TOGETHER put Chapel House Christian Fellowship in a safer position to create safer places for vulnerable people. Any single part of the process that is used in isolation reduces the effectiveness of the process and potentially increases risk to vulnerable people and the church.

Certain bodies, such as the Charity Commission also place clear expectations upon charities regarding the implementation of safer recruitment measures as a part of the charity’s wider safeguarding arrangements as follows:

*Safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect (e.g. helpline, email) contact with children. In the case of trustees, because of their position within the charity, we take the view that whenever there is a legal entitlement to obtain a DBS check in respect of such a trustee, a check should be carried out.*

Safeguarding Children & Young People, Charity Commission, July 2014

An organisation that experiences safeguarding difficulties and cannot demonstrate when asked that it has policies, procedures and training in place for workers (including safer recruitment) may be at risk of intervention and sanctions by the statutory authorities, regulators and insurers.

A mistake that is often made by churches and other organisations is that an over-reliance on DBS checks (or other criminal records checking systems) is developed. DBS checks are only able to reveal information that is known to the law enforcement agencies (such as cautions, convictions, warning, bind-overs). Certain non-conviction data can also be revealed in some circumstances, but again, only when it is known. The DBS check is therefore a check of what is known about a person’s criminal history – it cannot supply information that may be known by others relating to conduct, motivation, belief or attitude that could be supplied by a referee for example.

Despite this, there are some roles and some settings for which DBS checks (or their equivalent) are a legal requirement. Each role must therefore be assessed on its own merits based upon the details contained within the job description to understand whether such checks are required.

**PROCEDURAL IMPLICATIONS**

In order to implement a safer recruitment process for workers, we have four key stages in our recruitment process:

* Stage One: The things we do before we advertise
* Stage Two: The things we do before we interview
* Stage Three: The things we do before we make a decision
* Stage Four: The things we do before we make an offer

***Stage One* – The things we do before we advertise**

**Job Description and Advertisement**

Foundational to safer recruitment is having a clear and up to date job description (duties and responsibilities) and person specification (experience and/or qualifications required). This is because the role of a crèche worker is going to be different from a youth worker or that of a trustee, or someone providing care for a vulnerable adult.

When advertising a post, as well as giving a description of the duties and responsibilities, we will also state:

* The recruitment timetable (closing date for applications and interview date) where possible;
* The Church’s commitment to safeguarding; and
* That the successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure check prior to commencement of the role.

***Stage Two* – The things we do before we interview**

**Standard Application Form**

All applicants for voluntary or paid positions will be asked to complete a standard application form that includes:

* Name, address and telephone number(s)
* Qualifications and experience
* Employment history
* Contact details of named referees
* Information (based on the job description and person specification) in support of the application for the role

Chapel House Christian Fellowship reserves the right to make any character checks it feels are necessary.

The application form includes a declaration that all the information contained in it is true and that the applicant agrees to a Disclosure check being carried out should the Church wish to appoint them. The form should be signed and dated by the applicant.

When giving out information to prospective applicants, the following will be included in a ‘Candidate Information Pack’ where possible:

* Covering letter providing the recruitment timetable (essential)
* Job Description and Person Specification (essential)
* Application/Information Form (essential)
* Safeguarding Policy or Commitment Statement (essential)
* Information about the organisation (desirable)

**Self-Declaration Forms**

Ordinarily the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become ‘spent’, or ignored, after a ‘rehabilitation period’. A rehabilitation period is a set length of time from the date of conviction. After this period, with certain exceptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention their conviction when applying for a job, obtaining insurance, or if involved in other criminal or civil proceedings.

However, under the Police Act 1997, work with children and vulnerable adults is now exempt. If a Disclosure check is carried out on someone applying for such work, details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings and formal convictions will be on the certificate sent to the applicant by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

All job applicants should therefore complete a Self-Declaration Form detailing any and ALL cautions, reprimands, final warnings and convictions (except those specified within the DBS Filtering Rules). The form should also request applicants to supply other information that may not have led to a criminal record, but that may be relevant to the post for which they have applied (e.g. disciplinary action taken by a former employer relating to safeguarding or childcare concerns). The form should be signed and then returned in a separate, sealed envelope to the person in the Church who processes Disclosure checks.

Issues of confidentiality will be sensitively managed throughout the recruitment process. If the applicant reveals information that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children, the appointment process will be halted.

The Self-Declaration Form can be read as soon as a decision to invite a candidate to interview has been reached. This allows the panel to identify questions that may need to be asked about the information supplied and to determine whether there are legal reasons why the process cannot continue or if an appointment cannot legally be made.

Chapel House Christian Fellowship has a policy regarding the employment of those with a criminal record.

**References**

Obtaining references is an essential part of gathering information about the applicant. Ideally at least one reference should be from the current employer or a previous employer if they are not currently working/volunteering. The reference request will normally include requests for the following information:

* Comments about the applicants’ ability to perform the duties of the role (the job description and person specification/volunteer role profile should accompany the reference request);
* Comments about the applicants’ attitude towards children/vulnerable adults and towards safeguarding generally; and
* Any further information that might give rise to concern, either about the applicants’ attitudes, values or known practices.

Information given by the referee can then be compared with information provided by the applicant.

References may be followed up with a telephone call in order to verify their identity and it provides an opportunity to clarify any queries we may have.

At least two references will normally be sought.

We reserve the right to make any further character enquiries we consider necessary. For example, we might want to seek a reference from a previous place of worship even though details are not supplied by the applicant. In such cases, the applicant will be consulted.

***Stage Three* – The things we do before we make a decision**

**Face-to-Face Interviews**

Interviews will be undertaken for ALL candidates and always face-to-face.

The interview panel will comprise of at least two individuals; ideally one male and one female. One of the interviewers should have experience and understanding of working with children or vulnerable adults and have had safeguarding training.

All applicants will be asked at some stage whether there has ever been any concern regarding their conduct with children or vulnerable adults or allegations made against them that have been reported to and/or investigated by Children ‘s or Adult Social Services and/or the Police. This information can then be cross-referenced to the information supplied on the Self-Declaration Form.

The organisation’s policy on safeguarding, abuse of trust and expectations in relation to good practice will also be explained to the applicant at the interview.

***Stage Four* – The things we do before we make an offer**

**Disclosure Checks**

Employers and voluntary agencies, including places of worship, are able to make enquiries to assist with determining the suitability of an individual to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults through a Disclosure check. Along with an application form, interview and gathering references, a criminal records check is a vital part of the recruitment process.

***A DBS check is also known as a Disclosure.***

Disclosures enable organisations to check information about individuals held on national and local police records and confidential lists held by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) on those unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults. The DBS covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Scheme) has been in operation since late 2010.

**Disability legislation regarding employment**

All our recruitment decisions will be made in a fair and equitable way. The Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) sets out the employment rights of disabled people within the paid or voluntary sector and also provides guidance for employers.

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS**

**Making Confident Appointments**

Appointments will be made on the basis of a person’s experience, ability and/or suitability to perform the tasks and roles of the post (as described in the Job Description and Person Specification). Our recruitment process assists us in determining the person’s attitude towards, and motives for wanting to work with, children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, and therefore helps in the recruitment decision. All appointments will be based on these criteria and not on the urgency of need or the availability of the applicant at the time, or any other factor.

No-one has an automatic right to work with children or vulnerable adults.

All applicants will be notified in writing of a decision not to appoint. If an unsuccessful candidate asks for the reasons why they have not been appointed and/or are seeking honest feedback about their application and interview, it will be given.

The reasons for non-appointment are particularly important where past offences have come to light which were not disclosed on their application form.

Consideration not to appoint should also be given where:

* Non-conviction information provided by the police or information given by referees raises concerns about an individual’s suitability.
* The applicant has had a child removed from their care by the courts.
* Social services have been involved because of a child protection inquiry, or adult protection concern.

Good practice requires the successful applicant (as well as all existing workers) have a written agreement/contract explaining what their job entails and in addition the support, supervision and resources the worker can expect from the organisation.

**Blemished Disclosures**

In order to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, an organisation must ensure that all those applying to work whether in a paid or voluntary position are treated fairly. This means that having a criminal record should not necessarily mean an individual cannot work for the organisation.

As part of the DBS/SCRO and Access NI code of practice, it is expected organisations will have suitable procedures in place to assess blemished disclosures. “Thirtyone:eight” will assist organisations and places of worship when they receive a blemished disclosure.

**Faith Fact**: *Ordinarily where a candidate is unsuccessful in obtaining a position in an organisation that is the end of the involvement between the two parties. Where places of worship are concerned the individual may remain part of it. Occasionally, this can create a dilemma where information revealed on a Disclosure check indicates an individual could be a danger to vulnerable people, which was not known about beforehand. A Disclosure check can only be used for the purpose of the suitability for appointment. It is illegal to reveal information obtained through a Disclosure check. A place of worship may then have concerns that the individual is coming into contact with vulnerable people but are unable to place any restrictions and boundaries on them, due to the source of the information. “Thirtyone:eight” can offer advice in such situations.*

**Probationary Periods**

A probationary period is a period of time where both the Church and the applicant can further assess suitability for the role. During this period any aspects of the skills, abilities or knowledge (that were required for the role within the person specification) that were absent or that were identified as requiring support at the point of interview can be addressed and necessary support offered through supervision, training and experience on the job.

A probationary period (say 6 months) can be written into the contract. At the end of the probationary period there should be a discussion between the worker and his/her supervisor to review the job specification and how they are fulfilling the role. This means any adjustments can be made early on to more suitably match worker and tasks. It is the responsibility of the organisation to arrange appropriate supervision and support to allow for this.

**Unsatisfactory Probationary Periods**

If serious concerns about the worker/volunteer’s suitability for the position come to light during the probationary period, such concerns will be addressed by the organisation and a remedy sought, including the provision of training where appropriate. This will be done before a decision is made to terminate the contract or extend the probationary period to give the worker/volunteer the opportunity to improve their performance.

**Young and Occasional Workers**

The minimum age for a worker in this Church is 16. The process of appointment of a 16 year old is the same as any other worker.

A position such as vehicle driver will be regarded as a worker with children and young people, and it follows therefore the same checks will be carried out.

Young people under 16 are frequently used as “helpers” in places such as churches and work experience at an infant school or nursery. All helpers, of whatever age, should be responsible to a named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. They should not be included when considering staff/child ratios. The full recruitment procedure need not be applied, though the Church would be expected to acquire basic information about the individual and take up personal references. Disclosure checks would not normally be required.

Care should be taken to ensure that this process is not used to avoid proper checks and not as a short cut to meeting the needs of the organisation.

**Workers from abroad**

When workers from abroad are involved in working with children/vulnerable adults, certificates of good conduct will be sought from the church or organisation where the person has come from. However, these may need to be treated with caution. As with a criminal conviction certificate, a good conduct certificate can only provide ‘known’ information. Some countries do not operate the same safeguarding standards when it comes to abuse issues. So, whilst UK checks involve gathering intelligence from other agencies, foreign checks may well be far more basic.

In this situation it is advisable that these workers do not have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults but they could work alongside another worker.

The DBS does provide a limited service to assist with checks on workers from overseas. This service is accessible throughout the UK. They will be able to help with general advice about countries providing services and information on any similar procedure.

*What constitutes an offence in the UK may not in other countries. References therefore need to be viewed with this in mind.*

**About the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)**

The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) was established by the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012 and supersedes the previous responsibilities of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The ISA was created as a result of the Bichard inquiry arising from the Soham murders in 2002, when the schoolgirls Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells were murdered by school caretaker, Ian Huntley.

The Inquiry questioned the way employers recruit people to work with vulnerable groups, and particularly the way background checks are carried out. Recommendation 19 of the Inquiry Report highlighted the need for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults and to bar unsuitable people from doing so.

The ISA was set up to fulfil this role across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In December 2012, the responsibilities of the ISA were merged with those of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to create one body now called the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) responsible for disclosures, referrals and barring. Scotland operates similar arrangements through Disclosure Scotland and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

***NB. The planned registration arrangements under the ISA for those working with vulnerable groups was repealed and will not form part of the DBS responsibilities.***

**Disclosure Checks across the UK**

Part V of the Police Act 1997 allowed for the formation of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for England and Wales, Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO) and Access NI as agencies to administer criminal record disclosures for those working with children and vulnerable adults in the four nations of the UK. Since that time, there have been some significant changes that follow:

**England & Wales**

Further changes were brought to the criminal records checking process by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006, which established the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Later in 2012, yet more changes were brought into effect by the Coalition Government with both the CRB and the ISA being dissolved and merged to form the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) under the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012. The ‘checking’ and ‘barring’ functions of the previous two agencies remain under the DBS (but exclude the ISA registration requirements proposed by the SVGA, 2006 that were never enacted).

**SCOTLAND**

Following Part V of the Police Act 1997, the Scottish Criminal Records Office was formed and was later changed to be known as Disclosure Scotland to operate the new Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (known as the PVG Scheme) under the provisions of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act, 2007.

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 state which positions satisfy the criteria for a disclosure in relation to children. It is a criminal offence to knowingly employ someone who is a banned individual under Schedule 4 of this Act.

**Registered Bodies and Umbrella Bodies**

Disclosure checks have to be carried out through an agency appointed by the DBS/Disclosure Scotland/Access NI. There are two types:

***Registered Body***– processes checks for its own employees/volunteers

***Umbrella Body*** – processes checks for its own and other organisations employees/volunteers. The CCPAS Disclosure Service is one of the largest of such bodies.

In the UK, larger organisations may wish to become a Registered Body in their own right so they can apply direct for criminal records checks. The alternative is to carry out a check via an Umbrella Body such as CCPAS who operate throughout the UK. Disclosures on volunteers in Scotland are managed through Disclosure Scotland under the provisions of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act, 2007.

Disclosures can provide information to help assess the suitability of a potential worker, paid or voluntary.

**Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) – Code of Practice.**

Organisations using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) are required to comply with its Code of Practice. Failure to follow it could result in an individual or organisation not fulfilling their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 1998, and they may even be breaking the law. This includes operating an equal opportunities policy.

The Code of Practice is intended to guarantee that any information released by the DBS is used fairly. The Code also seeks to ensure that sensitive, personal information is handled and stored appropriately, and is kept only for as long as is necessary. In order to comply with DBS conditions, organisations are required to adopt a Rehabilitation of Offenders policy and a policy on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information. The DBS suggests that the Rehabilitation of Offenders policy could be contained within a general Equal Opportunities policy.

Both a policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders and the handling of information should be regarded as part of the Church’s Safeguarding Policy.

**Applying for Enhanced Disclosures (with Barring Data)**

An Enhanced Disclosure (with Barring Data) should be applied for where the appointment is defined as ‘Regulated Activity’ (as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012) involving a substantial degree of contact with children including unsupervised activities such as teaching, supervising, training or providing advice/guidance on wellbeing (this applies to most people working with, or responsible for, children in a church situation, including the Pastor).

The definition of ‘Regulated Activity’ for adults identifies the activities provided to any adult which, if any adult requires them, will mean that the adult will be considered vulnerable at that particular time. Adults are not labelled as ‘vulnerable’ because of the setting in which the activity is received, nor because of the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult receiving the activities. This means, for example, anyone providing personal care to an adult is in regulated activity irrespective of whether that occurs in, say, a hospital, a care home, a day care centre, a prison or in sheltered housing. In a very small number of cases the police may choose to use common law powers to provide information directly to employers in cases where this is necessary, for example, to prevent crime or harm to others.

If an applicant is involved in ‘Regulated Activity’ the DBS check must include a check of the barred lists. The Disclosure and Barring Service is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), sponsored by the Home Office. The DBS is responsible for maintaining the two barred lists, the ‘Children’s and Vulnerable Adults’ lists. Using information from a number of sources including the Police, Local Authorities and employers, the DBS case workers assess the risk of harm that an individual might pose if they were to work with vulnerable groups. Where an individual has been referred to the DBS due to harming; causing harm; putting at risk of harm; attempting to harm; or inciting another to harm a child or vulnerable adult, the DBS will consider all available relevant information in deciding if it is appropriate to add that person to one or both of the barred lists.

**Applying for Enhanced Disclosure (without Barring Data)**

There remains provision for an employer (if they wish to do so) to request an enhanced disclosure without barring list data where the candidate is working in a role that involves substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults which does not meet the 2012 definition of ‘Regulated Activity’, but where it previously met the definition. In such circumstances, the check against the barred list must not be requested and a disclosure will then be issued containing all criminal records data excluding the barred list status of the applicant.

***Phishing*** – This does not involve a rod and line! ‘Phishing’ is where an organisation seeks information via a disclosure certificate which it is not entitled to know. The DBS Code of Practice insists that the Disclosure Application must always be the **final stage** of the recruitment procedure. This means that the Church will have already gone through the safer recruitment procedure and have decided that the Trustees are minded to appoint the applicant – providing the disclosure certificate does not contain any information of concern.

So, if an applicant self-discloses certain offences and as a result you decide that they should not work with children and/or vulnerable adults, it is unlawful to proceed with the Disclosure just to check that what they have told you is correct. In addition, the Church may not process a disclosure for anyone who wants to know what information is held about them if they are not applying to work through you with children or vulnerable adults. Neither can the Church request a disclosure if they are aware that the person has been barred from working with the group that they want to work with – this is a very serious matter indeed as they cannot, by law, even ‘seek to work’ with children and/or vulnerable adults if they have been barred from working with them. In such cases the DBS **will** contact the police who will have immediate powers of arrest.

**DBS Recruitment Process Expectations**

A DBS requirement for obtaining Disclosure Certificates is that prior to appointment, all prospective workers should have undergone a safer recruitment process following ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ or ‘Recruiting Safely: Helping Keep Children and Young People Safe’ (for the Wider Children’s Workforce), which are both available through the Department for Education.

This means that all prospective workers are expected to comply with the procedures for appointment laid out in the relevant guidance, including checks being carried out on professional status e.g. certificates confirming qualifications, registration documents for professional bodies such as teaching and social work, as well as medical fitness, UK residency or permission to work in the UK.

In completing an application form for a position based on the “thirtyone:eight” model, the recruiting organisation can be assured that any discrepancies between the information provided by the applicant and the Disclosure check will come to light on the Disclosure Certificate received from the DBS.

**Checking Identities and Information**

Even if the organisation does not register in its own right, it must appoint someone who is able to confirm the identity of the individual(s) applying for a Disclosure check, “thirtyone:eight” uses the term ‘recruiter’ to describe this person though they can be known by other titles such as ‘verifier’. Every recruiter must have undergone a Disclosure check themselves.

The organisation will also need to make sure the recruiter has the appropriate expertise because the DBS/SCRO/AccessNI requires recruiters to be suitably trained to assess the relevance of past offences that might come to light. It is the responsibility of the organisation initiating the checks to make sure that all the requirements of the DBS/SCRO/AccessNI are complied with.

***The “thirtyone:eight”***  ***Disclosure Service offers recruiter training as well as consultancy and professional advice in individual situations through staff assigned specifically for this purpose.***

**New Arrangements for ID Verification**

As from September 2012, the ID checking procedure has been revised as part of an ongoing improvement process. In particular, the changes will make it more difficult for individuals to conceal previous criminal records by changing their name.

The new process that the “thirtyone:eight” Disclosure Service is able to facilitate operates as follows:

* The ID checker within the organisation obtains consent from the applicant to undergo an ID Verification Check.
* The ID checker follows the link to an online form in a secure area of the “thirtyone:eight” website.
* The ID checker enters their name, the organisation’s name and reference number along with the applicant’s full name, date of birth, previous name (if applicable), title, address (including postcode) and email address – all of this information is essential and you will be unable to progress without it.
* The applicant will be sent an email from “thirtyone:eight” confirming that the ID checker from your organisation has requested a check. The check will appear on the applicant’s credit file as an ID check but will not affect their ability to obtain credit in any way.
* Once the result is received “thirtyone:eight” will email the ID checker with either a ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ result and the ID Check reference number.

**Charity Commission Requirements**

The Charity Commission for England and Wales requires that where an organisation working with children or vulnerable adults applies to register as a charity, they confirm that any employees (paid or voluntary) who are either legally required or allowed to apply for a DBS disclosure have done so. This will need to be carried out before the Charity Commission will register the organisation.

The Charity Commission believe that DBS checks are currently the best way for trustees to check whether employees are regarded as unsuitable to work with vulnerable beneficiaries.

**The Charity Commission states:**

*“All charity trustees have a duty of care, and a duty to act solely in the interests of the charity. The Commission believes that charity trustees risk being in breach of these duties if they fail, without good reason, to carry out appropriate DBS checks when they are entitled to do so. In some circumstances such failures may be viewed as evidence of misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.”*

The Charity Commission also recommends that charities should obtain a Disclosure check on workers every three years.

It is now a requirement for trustees to report what are known as ‘Serious Incidents’ to the Charity Commission. A ‘Serious Incident’ would include an allegation of abuse suffered by a beneficiary as a result of the actions of employees or others in connection with the charity.

**Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS**

**Introduction – why do we need this standard?**

The word ‘disciple’ means ‘one who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another’ (The Free Dictionary). Therefore, as Christians we believe that safeguarding is fundamental to God’s teaching as seen in scripture.

***Safeguarding is everyone’s business*.** This applies to working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Therefore everyone in the Church needs to understand the importance of keeping everyone safe – the leaders, the workers and those using the services.

The Church can only do this effectively if we are aware of the issues and have workers with the right skills and expertise. It follows, therefore that we have to provide training and development opportunities for all.

**Good Awareness and Training assists the development of safer cultures**

Developing a culture of awareness will help everyone. This will be done by providing training and development for all workers including leaders and safeguarding co-ordinators on all aspects of safeguarding. Leading by example is one of the most powerful ways of setting and maintaining safer cultures. For this reason, regardless of the size or varied work undertaken, it is essential that all leaders are appropriately trained and this will be made clear within the recruitment process.

It is also important to inform children, young people and vulnerable adults about how to ask for help if they are worried about anything.

**The Leadership**

The Leadership needs to understand the importance of the key principles of safeguarding so that they can:

* Support the workers including the safeguarding co-ordinators.
* Promote good practice and training.
* Be a role model for safe practice and lead by example.
* Facilitate and nurture a safer culture across the activities of the Church.

**The Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s)**

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) need to:

* Make sure they are known to everyone especially all those working with vulnerable people within the church community.
* Display their names on posters, notice boards and magazines etc.
* Organise training and policy development.
* Make sure the policy is accessed and reviewed.

**The Workers**

All workers need to:

* Be willing to attend training.
* Make sure they know the contact details for the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
* Ensure they follow safe practice guidelines

**The Church**

The whole Church needs to:

* Accept the guidance of the leaders and Safeguarding Co-ordinators about safeguarding.
* Support the work of safeguarding.
* Ensure that the vulnerable have access to information which can help them.

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON TRAINING AND AWARENESS**

**The Provision of Training**

In order to implement the policy and procedure in relation to training and awareness, the church will endeavour to:

* Ensure that relevant role specific training is available for those who work with the vulnerable and also for other activities of the church. This might include safeguarding training, health and safety, First Aid, Food hygiene, Equality and Inclusion, Safe Recruitment. (This is not an exhaustive list).
* The frequency of training needs to be such that workers are competent and knowledgeable in relevant legislation and practice (for safeguarding this will be every 3 years). Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB) and Adult Safeguarding Boards (SAB) often encourage voluntary agencies to attend their training courses. Level 1 training is particularly useful to organisations as it provides information about definitions of abuse, identifying abuse and how to refer. “Thirtyone:eight” also have training which can be found on their website. From early in 2015, “thirtyone:eight” training is being updated and will include some online options.
* Ensure that new workers are given induction training and supervision during the first 6 months so that the organisation is supportive of those who are new to any role.
* Ensure that workers are familiar with policies in place in respect of the role they have in the organisation e.g. Recruitment, safeguarding, safe practice, driving, pastoral visiting.

**Raising Awareness – Informing Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

Awareness is not just for workers. It is important that vulnerable groups know who to go to if they are frightened or worried. Children especially need to know the difference between secrets which can be kept and those which cannot. These are often referred to as ‘good and bad secrets’. They also need to understand the difference between ‘good and bad touching’.

*There is a common thread within many faiths concerning children obeying parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused. It can be made clear to the child or young person that if they feel uncomfortable or sense something is wrong they can always check things out with another adult. If this person does not respond, then the child can talk to another adult until something is done. This may need to be explained more fully to the child because there is obviously a big difference between, for example, an adult forcing a child to steal sweets from a shop and legitimate rules about bedtime! Children may need to make a mental note of people they can talk to if something is worrying them. Adults too, can be disempowered from seeking help when a person they perceive to be in authority is causing them upset or harm or when they feel that they would not be taken seriously if they talked about what is causing them upset.*

For all vulnerable groups, it is important that information displayed and given is in a user-friendly format e.g. simple language for the young, a readable font for those with limited sight, in pictures, Braille or Makaton, and for posters to be at a height where small children or those in wheelchairs can access them.

**COMMUNICATING SAFELY**

*We will ensure that all those involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults know how to communicate effectively and relate to those with whom they come in contact.*

**Introduction – Why do we need this Standard?**

All those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults need to be able to communicate effectively with them in order to build relationships, trust, self-esteem and an attitude of acceptance.

**Communicating within Teams**

Communications between workers and their leaders is also of critical importance; knowing who to speak with and when. Knowing when to communicate with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator also needs to be understood by all regardless of position.

**Communicating with Other Agencies and Partners**

Good communication with other agencies (voluntary and statutory) is also important so that confidence is established about the existence of Safeguarding Policies and good practice within our own Church.

**Articulating Our Understanding of Safer Communications**

In relation to safeguarding, communicating has three aspects: talking, listening and responding. We need to ask ourselves, ”how are we communicating the safeguarding message to all, both inside and outside the Church?”. The manner in which communications take place should be articulated within policies to contribute towards creating safer environments for vulnerable groups.

Things which need to be in place in relation to this standard:

1. Workers need to have skills in listening and responding.
2. There need to be clear lines of communication so that workers know how to refer concerns and to whom they should be referred.
3. The building needs to display posters/leaflets for all to be able to access help and information.
4. Each group needs to demonstrate willingness to accept comments and complaints with a clear procedure about how these will be responded to.
5. The Church needs to try to develop relationships with other organisations such as statutory bodies and know how to contact them.

The policy and procedure will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that workers are appointed who have listening and communicating skills
* A child or adult may want to talk about other matters than safeguarding but the way they are responded to will indicate how a more serious matter will be heard and listened to. Adults who can listen to children and are attentive to their needs can help prevent abuse from happening in the first place as well as ensuring that appropriate responses are made whenever it takes place. This also applies to vulnerable adults who need someone to listen and respond.
* We should offer privacy and give the person time to talk without ‘jumping in’ too soon.

**EFFECTIVE LISTENING**

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult 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 back 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.
* It they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
* Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

**HELPFUL RESPONSES**

* You have done the right thing in telling
* I am glad you have told me.
* 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.

**Taking Care of Touching**

* Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
* Touch should be related to the child, young person or vulnerable adults needs, not the worker’s.
* Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, rather than the worker.
* Avoid any physical activity that may be sexually stimulating.
* All children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency.
* When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc.), encourage the child, young person or vulnerable adult to do what they can themselves but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary.
* Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
* Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

**Three questions I ask myself**

If someone asks or tells me to do anything that I am not sure about:

* Do I have a “yes” feeling or a “no” feeling?
* If I do as the person asks, will an adult I trust know where I am?
* If I do as the person asks, can I be sure to get help if I need it?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no”, I can say “no!” and tell an adult I trust about it.

**Guidelines for discipline**

* Do not compare a child, young person or adult with another in the group; rather encourage and affirm and, if possible, give them responsibility for appropriate tasks.
* Build healthy relationships and be a good role model by setting an example. You can’t expect others to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
* Take care to give the quieter and/or well behaved attention and resist allowing the demanding individuals to take all your time and energy.
* Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
* If children and young people in particular are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
* NEVER smack or hit anyone and don’t shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
* Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.
* Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure everyone understands what action will be taken if not adhered to.
* Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore that each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

For those who are continuously disruptive:

* Have them sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
* Encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
* Challenge them to change their behaviour whilst encouraging their strengths.
* Warn them you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision), be banned from attending the group for a period of time.

A risk assessment should be carried out for activities and especially where it is:

* Outdoors.
* High risk or dangerous.
* When catering for people with disabilities or special needs.

**Special Needs and Disabilities**

Workers should be aware that any child, young person or vulnerable adult attending an activity who has a special need or disability may need extra help in areas such as communication and mobility (e.g. use of sign language and assistance in going to the toilet). They may behave in a non-age appropriate way. For example, a young person of 17 might behave more like a 2-3 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker’s lap. So it is important to set appropriate boundaries that take their needs into account, but also protect workers from false accusation.

The Church should:

* Ask the child, young person or vulnerable adult attending the activity, and parents or carers how their needs can be met, ensuring all workers involved with them are aware of their expectations. This includes the number of workers needed to assist for a specific activity to prevent injury. Some of these needs may be more easily met than others, so be realistic. A family may ask for changes to enable easier access to the building (ensure you meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010). Listen, and give feedback to the person, family or carer as to what can or can’t be achieved and the reasons why.
* Ideally ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if they need help with toileting, but again discuss with the person, their family or carer to discuss their preference and your ability to provide this. For example you may have a Sunday school with only female workers, so is a male child happy for a female to provide personal care and are the parents comfortable with this? Generally these issues once discussed can be agreed upon.
* Make buildings accessible (e.g. ramps, toilets for the disabled and hearing loop system) and encourage integration within the group.
* Developing appropriate disability awareness including the use of different forms of communication (e.g. sign language) and language etiquette.

**Intimate Care**

In places of worship and organisations intimate care may be provided for small children e.g. those attending crèche, and for children and adults with disabilities. Workers should therefore be operating clear guidelines in this area.

Workers involved with intimate care need to be sensitive to the individual needs of each person and that some care tasks could be open to misinterpretation. False allegations of sexual abuse are rare but guidelines will safeguard both the children and adults. People feel safer if expectations are clear and methods of working are, as far as possible, consistent.

**Section Four**

**Pastoral Care**

**Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse and who have contact with or are part of Chapel House Christian Fellowship.

**Working with offenders**

When someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

The individual will be required to enter into a written contract with the Church Council. This contract will involve the person’s family and partner. The contract will indicate specifically the pastoral support which is being offered and may include the following with which the individual may be required to comply:

* I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people.
* I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the church leadership
* I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people.
* I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where children’s activities are in progress.
* I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
* I accept that ‘x’ and ‘y’ will sit with me during church activities, accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a Schedule 1 offender/registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act.
* I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care.
* I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary (where appropriate).
* I accept that ‘z’ will provide me with pastoral care.
* I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation.
* I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.
* I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ months and will remain for an indefinite period.
* Other conditions may be included specific to the offender’s circumstances.

The document will be signed and dated by the offender and by the church representatives. In the event of someone not keeping to the boundaries set by the management body of the Church (Trustees), the Trustees are entitled by law to prohibit someone coming onto the premises. In circumstances where the Church Council have concerns and someone leaves to go elsewhere then the statutory authorities, social services as well as other churches and organisations will be informed.

**Section Five**

**Practice Guidelines**

WEDNESDAY CLUB

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Wednesday Club is a “Gospel” Club for Primary School children aged 5-11 years and runs from 7.00pm – 8.15pm every Wednesday evening during school term time in the Church building at 3a Moor Road.

The programme usually follows a similar pattern each week consisting of:

1. Preliminary activity in the Minor Hall 7.00 – 7.25.

 This usually involves the children completing activity sheets or colouring pictures that connect with the Bible Story or lesson which follows. Some of the Wednesday Club leaders sit with the children while they complete their activity sheets, while other leaders may be preparing the children’s refreshments in the kitchen.

1. Bible Story/Lesson in the Main Hall 7.25 – 7.40.

During the Bible Story/Lesson the children all sit together with the leaders.

1. Songs in the main Hall 7.40 – 7.45.
2. Quiz Game in the Main Hall 7.45 – 7.55.

The Quiz is usually based around the Bible Story/Lesson and takes the form of a team game. Children may receive sweets as rewards for correct answers.

1. Refreshments in the Minor Hall 7.55 -8.00.

The children are encouraged to sit at the table while refreshments are served to them by the Wednesday Club Leaders. Any points to be added to the charts for attendance or work completed are usually done during refreshments.

1. Lively Games in the Main Hall 8.00 – 8.15.

As can be seen from the sample programme all Wednesday Club activities in which the children are involved take place either in the Minor Hall or the Main Hall. The only other parts of the building the children may enter are the toilets. The Church has separate toilets for male and female users and one disabled toilet for male or female. All toilets are clearly signed. At Wednesday Club children are supervised at all times except when using the toilet facilities. Children are not allowed in the kitchen.

Each child is given a form on their first visit (or at the start of each new school year) to take home for their parent/guardian to fill in and return (see sample copy). The form provides the Wednesday Club Leaders with basic essential information such as contact numbers, parents approval for the child to attend and arrangements for dropping off and collecting children from Wednesday Club.

The number of children attending Wednesday Club has fluctuated greatly over the years but taking into account our programme and available space twenty children would be the maximum we could take at present.

There are currently five Leaders in Wednesday Club.

The safety of children is of paramount importance to all the Wednesday Club Leaders and we take great care to reduce the possibility of any accidents occurring. However in the event of accident, incident or injury occurring these will be recorded in the Accident/Injury Book, First-Aid administered and where necessary parents informed.

A register is kept of children attending each week and a log sheet is filled in after each session detailing which Leaders were present and any other relevant information (see sample).

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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Sunday School takes place in the Church building during the Morning Service every Sunday and currently caters for children aged three to eleven.

Currently we have two classes. Children aged three to five have their class upstairs in the Minor Hall, while children aged six to eleven have their class downstairs. We recognise these age-splits are not ideal but in view of the small numbers of children currently attending our Sunday School and the lack of people willing to take on the role of Sunday School Teacher at present it is the best we can do.

The children take part in the Morning Service with the adults until the preaching at which point the children leave for their own classes accompanied by their class teacher. Depending which children are present the younger group can be a mixture between teaching and activities for children closer to the five year old age group and looking after younger children who only want to play. Parents of smaller children are allowed to stay in to help with their own children.

The older class which currently meets in the room upstairs has Bible teaching and activities designed for their age group.

Both rooms are easily accessible and have closing doors with glass panels of unbreakable glass.

The children are supervised at all times and no unauthorised person is allowed in these rooms while Sunday School classes are taking place. Parents and carers are allowed in with their children but have responsibility only for their own children or the children in their care.

CRECHE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As a Church working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers, we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are included here, or will be developed as the need arises.

**Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets “thirtyone:eight’s” safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

For help or advice on all matters of child protection and/or safeguarding issues relating to children and vulnerable adults, contact “thirtyone:eight” on 08451 204550 . This number is permanently displayed on the internal church notice board.

Date : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Equal Opportunities Statement**

1. Chapel House Christian Fellowship is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and is resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person requiring service from Chapel House Christian Fellowship will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.
2. In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of Chapel House Christian Fellowship.
3. As a church seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of Chapel House Christian Fellowship, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented under Employment and Race directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.
4. As a church using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, Chapel House Christian Fellowship undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
5. A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
6. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter within Chapel House Christian Fellowship and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.
7. Unless the nature of the position allows Chapel House Christian Fellowship to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. We ensure that all those in Chapel House Christian Fellowship who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
10. We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
11. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.