



Facing the Unthinkable

Safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm

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Safeguarding Policy and Guidance

Introduction

TFM is delighted to work in partnership with churches and communities to share the gospel. Within this partnership everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm irrespective of individual roles.

It is vital that all those who work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm – including local authorities, the police, the health service, the courts, professionals, the voluntary sector and individual members of local communities – are aware of, and appreciate, the role that each plays in this area.

TFM staff and volunteers must similarly play their part in this process.

Everyone involved in TFM must agree to the 'Spiritual Rule of life and Holiness' which has been used as a 'common standard' since the first Walk mission in 1991. This is intended to ensure that everyone on a team has a common spiritual approach to the task, rooted in the example of Jesus regardless of our own home church affiliation or background.

It is hoped that this standard will, apart from any legal requirements for safeguarding, guide us by God's grace to be above reproach in all circumstances.

Our Commitment

The purpose of this safeguarding policy and subsequent procedures is to demonstrate that TFM is capable of dealing quickly and effectively with any concerns of abuse and is committed to safeguarding.

TFMs acknowledge that everyone has the right to a safe and secure environment and respect for their dignity, privacy, independence and individuality.

This safeguarding policy has been developed to protect all those with whom TFM has contact and to ensure any concerns about physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Anyone connected with TFM who feels that they are being abused in any manner should immediately contact the charity, its officers or agent. The charity will, where appropriate, work with other agencies, to resolve matters. The designated person will undertake an initial investigation to establish the facts.

TFM undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures
- support the Safeguarding Officer in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk of harm.

TFM notes that everyone has a three-fold responsibility;

- Not to be the cause of harm
- To be observant for harm caused by others
- To report as soon as possible any concerns to the appropriate authority.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Chair of the Board of Trustees acts on behalf of the Board as the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) on behalf of TFM and has responsibility for ensuring that this Safeguarding Policy is maintained and adhered to.

They may be contacted via the office on 07434 661697.

Contact the Child Protection Team

To contact the local Child Protection Team anywhere in mainland Britain telephone '101' and ask for this service.

Policy

Everyone working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm is in a position of trust, influence and responsibility by virtue of their position as staff or team member. We must always act in the best interest of those children and adults.

It is recognised that some people use their position within organisations and the wider community to gain access to children or adults at risk of harm, win their trust and then abuse it for inappropriate or illegal purposes. We are all responsible for policing the environment and ensuring that anyone seeking to abuse their position of trust is deterred and referred to the appropriate authorities.

This policy sets out how TFM, other organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm in accordance with the principles, legislation and statutory guidance as set out in the following two documents;

- Working together to safeguard children (2018) in England
- Care Act 2014: statutory guidance for implementation in England

It is important that everyone fully understand their responsibilities.

It attempts to achieve a balance between establishing sufficient control to minimise the risk of abuse to children and adults at risk of harm, while not over burdening the willing volunteer. It includes the mandatory legal requirements and also highlights signs which should raise suspicions of abuse as well as practices which should be avoided, in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk of harm and those responsible for their wellbeing.

The key principles on which this policy statement are based:

- The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm is paramount
- All participants, regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm
- All allegations and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and adults at risk of harm
- The interests of those who work or volunteer for TFM its beneficiaries.

Defining Children

Children are defined as people under the age of 18 years. Abuse may be considered under the four headings of physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

Defining Adults at Risk of Harm

Adults are defined as someone 18 years or older who has:

- a dependency upon others, or a requirement for assistance from others, in the performance of basic physical functions
- severe impairment in their ability to communicate with others
- an impairment in their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect
- has been detained in lawful custody or is being supervised as a result of a court order.

Abuse may be considered under the headings of physical, domestic, sexual, financial or material, modern slavery, discrimination, organisational, neglect and acts of omission, and self-neglect.

Safe Recruitment and Working Practices

TFM will endeavour at all times to vet both staff and volunteers by the use of safe recruiting and working practices such as:

- Taking up of references
- Seeking a self-declaration from the staff member or volunteer that there is no reason why they should not work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm
- Observation of conduct
- Seeking local advice where appropriate about situations in which we are required to work.

Inappropriate Relationships with Children or Adults at Risk of Harm

An adult must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a child over 16 years of age or an adult at risk of harm is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position.

TFM has a legal duty to report inappropriate actions to the authorities. Any such behaviour will be treated very seriously, reported to the authorities and may result in dismissal.

An adult in a position of trust involved in a consensual sexual relationship with a child over 16 years of age, or a vulnerable adult, may also be referred. This could result in the adult being barred from working with children or adults at risk of harm in all areas.

No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child or vulnerable adult in their care; this is often referred to as grooming. Adults must never send children or adults at risk of harm inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.

Safeguarding Disabled Children & Adults at Risk of Harm

Disabled children, adults and their families may need additional information, help and support.

Some children and adults may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- require higher degrees of physical care and support
- have limited communication skills
- find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser
- have a history of having limited or no choice or
- have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

How to react to concerns about the welfare and safety of children and adults

Harm, in the context of this policy, is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child or vulnerable adult's physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying.

In the case of adults at risk of harm there is an additional category of abuse relating to financial matters, this includes: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Suspicious of harm must never be ignored. Whether physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect, suspicions of harm should always be reported, and victims supported throughout.

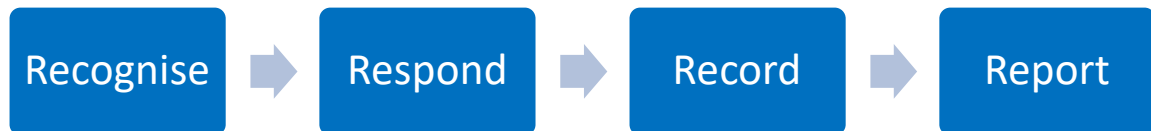
Signs of harm:

- Changing their usual routine
- Beginning to be disruptive, aggressive or unreasonable
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Having possessions going missing
- Starting to stammer or stop communicating
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Starting to bully others
- Being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately or inappropriately dressed
- Displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Seeming afraid of parents or carers
- Stopping eating
- Being frightened to say what's wrong

There may be a number of reasons why someone displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. The contact that staff and volunteers have with anyone is limited and therefore it may be difficult to make a true assessment of a situation.

Responding to Concerns

If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a child or adult, or if you spot something that worries you, use 'the 4 Rs' to help you know what to do next:



1. Recognise

- Does it look right?
- Does it sound right?
- Does it feel right?

Trust your gut instinct; if it feels wrong, then it probably is wrong.

Remember that abuse can take many forms and sometimes it's hard to know what to look out for. We often hear about physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, however, there are many other ways that abuse can happen.

2. Respond

If you become aware of something that causes you concern, or if a concern is disclosed to you, please don't ignore it - RESPOND.

Always pass on any concerns you have to your Team Leader (TL) and the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) at the Church where you are based. It is their job to listen and decide whether or not further action is needed. They are best placed to decide how the situation needs to proceed and whether or not anyone else needs to be involved.

It is important to recognise that adults have the right to refuse help. You may only report concerns against their wishes if:

- The adult lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
- There is a risk of harm to others
- In order to prevent a crime

In the light of these exceptions, you are encouraged to always refer concerns about adults at risk to your TL and the DPS to make a further assessment.

It is not your job to investigate. Nor to tell anyone apart from your TL and the DPS but you need to speak to them promptly, without delay. Any investigation will be carried out by appropriately trained professionals and inappropriate searching for more information by us could hamper these investigations.

3. Record

Write down what concerns you have or what was disclosed to you without delay, using the person's own words where possible.

The four W's are a useful tool: What? When? Where? Who?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Who was involved? | names of the key people |
| 2. What happened? | facts not opinions |
| 3. Where did it happen? | |
| 4. When did it happen | date and time |

Make sure you record everything. Although it is not our role to investigate it is perfectly acceptable to gather a little bit more information if clarification is needed; whether we have a correct understanding of what is happening. In this case make sure you ask open questions such as 'Tell me more'; 'Explain to me' and or 'Describe to me'. This is sometimes referred to as the TED approach.

You must also make a clear record of what you did and who did you tell and when.

What to do when there is no local DPS to report to.

TFM work in the community and often we are not attached to any specific Church. If something of concern occurs, then it is TFM's DPS responsibility via the office. The person reporting the issue should not tell the office staff what the problem is, simply that they need to speak with our DPS who will then make the assessment of the next steps.

In the absence of any DPS then contact the authorities directly via the national phone number 101, asking for the Child Protection Team. You can always discuss a 'hypothetical' case with them without giving names if needed and they are very good at deciding whether this is something to report fully or just give 'hypothetical' advice.

Most importantly, always do something. Never sit on it and do nothing.

Roles and Responsibilities

TFM Board of Trustees

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting all TFM staff and volunteers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within TFM
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training.

Designated Person for Safeguarding

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters

Team Leader

In the local situation a Team Leader has similar roles and responsibilities as the DPS.

- Receives all reports of concerns
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately
- Acts as the initial link between TFM, the local Church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters as required.

Team Members

- Be Safeguarding aware. Know the policy: Know what to do if.... (see 'Mission Situations – Risk Mitigation' below)
- Take responsibilities for one's own action
- Not be the source of a safeguarding concern
- Always work in pairs to mitigate any potential problem or indeed protect oneself from a false claim.

TFM Office or other staff and the Board

If the office and or other staff are not directly involved in a particular situation, their only role is to pass on information as appropriate. For example, a TL phones the office who will then make contact with TFM's DPS to put them in contact with the TL. They do not have a right to know any details and should not seek any.

Similarly, although it is expected that the DPS will inform the Board that a Safeguarding issue has occurred, no details should be shared unless there is a clear pressing reason for this.

Mission Situations – Risk Mitigation

Team members and staff should ask themselves, *'Am I putting myself in a position where it would be possible for someone to accuse me of contravening or actually doing something that could result in an actual safeguarding allegation against ME'? If so, I might be putting them at risk in some way too.'*

Consider:

- Are there 2 team members within sight of each other, OR another 'safe' person all the time (unless you are truly in a very visible and public place)?
- If you are at a school, children's event, nursing home or church event for instance and you are there by yourself (no team support) for any reason? Is there ALWAYS a staff member (etc) within sight? If not, why not? Watch out for staff leaving you in a room or class with someone while they 'just' go and do something! Insist if you are by yourself that you must go with them. Also, take particular care if you need to use a loo for example or transfer to a staff room or another classroom.
- There will always be times when team members need to go by themselves to meet with the next activity, could anyone accuse you a safeguarding issue en route?
- Always stay in public view and out of hidden corners if at all possible.
- Do not stop to talk to anyone on the way if there is the slightest possibility that they could be vulnerable - unless it is an emergency, use your head.
- If you find yourself in a situation where something could have happened, even if nothing has or is likely to happen, record and report the event to TFM in brief detail as to why, what, who and how.

Don't be obsessive in this. However, do have it at the back of your mind. It's very easy for someone or the parent/ guardian of someone to accuse.

Mission is about 'Taking risks for God, but we need to manage them.

Appendix 1 - TFM Safeguarding Statement

TFM recognises the importance of its work with children and adults at risk of harm and its responsibility to protect everyone with whom we come into contact.

TFM is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults at risk of harm and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe everyone should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and adults at risk of harm have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults at risk of harm.

TFM is committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm 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 denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.
- Supporting our partners (organisations with whom we work), in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk of harm.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations.

The Board recognises that:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent), has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult at risk of harm.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

TFM will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

This statement was agreed by the Board on: Date: _____

Signed by Chair of the Board _____