



Safeguarding children, young people and adults at

The VILLAGE TEMPLE CONGREGATONAL CHURCH

January 2026

This policy is due for review in January 2027.

Table of Contents

Section A: Safeguarding Statement	4
Section B: Church Context	5
Regulatory oversight	5
Governance and membership	5
Section C: Definitions of Terms used in this Policy	6
Section D: Safeguarding Policy	8
Purpose	8
Scope	8
Our responsibilities and commitments	8
1.General duty of care	8
2.Those who are vulnerable	8
3.Dignity and respect	9
4.Sin and the fall	9
5.Governance and leadership	9
6.Safeguarding arrangements	10
7.Suitability and competence of staff and volunteers	10
8.Healthy culture	10
9.Partnership working	11
10.Supporting those who have experienced abuse or other trauma	11
Section E: Safeguarding Procedures	12
1. Governance and oversight	12
2. Recruitment and ongoing support of staff and volunteers – Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC	12
3. Management of recruitment processes – Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS Principles and EFCC	12
4. Recruitment process - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC	13
5. DBS Checks – Currently No regulated activity – policy to developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC	13
6. Blemished DBS Checks – As above	14
7. Probationary / settling in periods. As above	15
8. Ongoing support and supervision	15
9. Training - As above	15
10. Young Volunteers – Policy to be developed as required with reference to EFCC principles and EFCC	15
11. Ensuring a safe and healthy environment	16
a.Health and Safety	16

b.Awareness raising.....	16
c. Ministry to children and / or young people Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC	17
d.Visitors to children’s or youth groups - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC	17
e.All age group meetings	18
f.Ministry to Adults at Risk of Abuse or Adults with care and support needs	18
g.General provisions	18
12. Responding to safeguarding concerns or disclosures	19
a.Managing immediate risk	19
b.Reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead	19
c.Managing the risks: the role of the DSL	19
13. Sub-threshold concerns and Early Help	20
14. Disclosure of historic child abuse by an adult	20
15. Allegations against or concerns about staff and volunteers	20
16. Management of ex-offenders or those who pose an actual or potential risk to others, particularly to vulnerable people - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC21	
17. Complaints and concerns	22
Section F: Codes of Conduct	23
Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with children or young people.....	23
Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with Adults	24
Code of conduct for staff and volunteers providing pastoral care	25
Section G: Appendices.....	26
Appendix 1: Safeguarding responsibilities	27
Appendix 2: Key safeguarding contacts	28
Appendix 3 - Basis of the policies and procedures and the legal framework	29
Appendix 4- Low-level Concerns.....	31
Appendix 5 - Safeguarding guidelines for communicating with under 18s via electronic devices and livestreaming meetings where vulnerable people are present	32
Appendix 6 - Taking, Storing and using Images Policy	35

Section A: Safeguarding Statement

The Village Temple Congregational Church is committed to creating a safe, healthy and nurturing church environment. We want everyone who engages with us to feel safe, valued, and cared for. We believe that each person (including unborn children, the disabled, and the elderly) is made in the image of God, and as a result has an inherent dignity and worth. We believe in the sanctity of life.

We also recognise that we live in a sinful world, where human beings rebel against God and his ways for us, and harm one another in innumerable ways. We believe that the human heart is wicked and deceitful and that we are all capable of falling into sin.

We believe in the good news that God offers us forgiveness and new life if we will receive Jesus Christ as our saviour and Lord. We believe that when we submit to God and allow him to work in us by his Holy Spirit, we will grow in our faith and gradually become more like Jesus. Our greatest purpose and joy is to be in relationship with God, and to know his transforming work within us, giving us the power to change and become more Christlike and a living a life that glorifies God.

The church is a place where the love of God for each person is displayed and where we live, learn, and grow together in our faith. This involves supporting, encouraging, and even challenging and rebuking one another when we sin; all for the glory of God and for our individual and mutual good. We believe that God sees everything and that he knows even our secret and hidden sins and that one day each of us will stand before him as our judge.

Our understanding of biblical teaching is that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, not a worldly kingdom (John 18:36) and that the purposes of the kingdom of God cannot be achieved by force or violence, but rather by persuasion and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the individual. As such we believe that in pursuit of the church's aims by any form of violence, threat etc, is not compatible with the teachings of scripture.

As we journey and grow together in this life of faith, we recognise that we are not perfect and that at various times we will all have to both offer and seek forgiveness. We do, however recognise that within our church there is the opportunity for individuals or groups to harm, abuse, or exploit others. We as a church stand against any misuse of power, abuse, harassment exploitation or other forms of harm. We all have a responsibility to care for and protect each member of our church community, but particularly those who are weaker or more vulnerable.

To support this, we have implemented policies, procedures, codes of conduct and systems that support the positive culture that we seek to create by ensuring that those responsible for leading safeguarding in the church are competent and that our safeguarding arrangements are effective.

We actively seek to encourage a culture where concerns about the way that individuals or groups have been treated, or about anything that we do as a church, can be raised openly. When concerns are raised, we commit to examining them carefully and impartially, establishing truth and upholding justice for all involved. We strive to reflect, learn, and grow as we consider such concerns; particularly where we fail to meet the standards that we have set for ourselves. Any concerns can be raised with our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). Their details are listed on the church website and the DSL's details can also be found on the safeguarding posters on the notice boards in the church building. Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available on our website.

As a church we are committed to safeguarding everyone who participates in church life, regarding care for the vulnerable as a biblical imperative and not just as a legal requirement. We work with local and national partners, doing all we can to keep everyone safe. We will strive to fulfil all our legal duties to protect both children and Adults at Risk of Abuse, however, recognising that these outline the minimum legal standard, we aim to go above and beyond and to discharge our safeguarding duties in a way that is biblically faithful and pleasing to our loving heavenly father, who calls us to act with justice, love kindness and to walk humbly before him, and striving to achieve best practice in safeguarding.

Section B: Church Context

Regulatory oversight

The Village Temple Congregational Church is an excepted charity through its association with the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches (EFCC). It affirms oneness signifying its agreement with EFCC's theological understanding as described in their Statement of Faith and Position Papers which are available on the EFCC website.

The Church stands in a broad reformed protestant and theologically evangelical tradition. We believe that the Bible (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God and is our final authority in all matters to which it speaks.

We believe, in line with historical protestant reformed theology, that we are sinners before a holy God and that we are saved “by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone”.

We seek to be obedient to the command of Jesus, to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that he commanded us (Matthew 28:19-20). As such, we believe that the church's mission involves:

- **Evangelism:** making Jesus known to those who are not yet in relationship with him, making the offer of forgiveness and deliverance from God's righteous judgement, through the death and resurrection of Jesus as our saviour.
- **Discipleship:** encouraging Jesus' followers to live lives of increasing obedience to all that he has commanded us, growing in love for him, devotion to him, and being transformed incrementally to greater Christlikeness.
- **Public worship:** rising from our gratitude to, and love for God for his mighty work in our lives.

Jesus told us that the mark of believers, and the way that the world will know that we are his disciples is by the quality of our love for one-another (John 13:35). Jesus also commanded us to love our enemies, praying for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44) and that we should treat others as we ourselves want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Governance and membership

The Village Temple Congregational Church is an independent church meaning that it is not a part of a larger denomination with oversight of its affairs. The Church is led locally by those in leadership roles under the oversight of the Church Meeting. The EFCC Trust Corporation provides governance support by acting as a Corporate Trustee for the Church. Decision making procedures are set out in the church's governing documents Churches Constitution and Handbook.

The Church has a formal membership, consisting of those who are professing Christians, who are in agreement with our Statement of Faith, and who have been admitted to membership as prescribed in our governing documents. The members elect Elders, who lead the church and exercise spiritual authority, and Deacons, who serve the membership in the church's mission.

The Charitable Purposes of the church include “the advancement of the Christian religion”. The Village Temple Congregational Church fulfils its mission through a range of activities, including Sunday worship and teaching services (including groups for children) mid-week Bible study and prayer meetings, ladies prayer meetings and a range of other activities, some of which are social or outreach events.

Section C: Definitions of Terms used in this Policy

Adult at risk of abuse: An individual aged 18 years or above who has care and support needs (see below), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Adult with care and support needs: An individual aged 18 years or above who needs extra help to manage their lives and be independent - including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Care and support can be practical, financial or emotional support.

Adult Social Care: is provided by Local Authorities (councils) to adults aged 18 years and over who meet the criteria for either adult with care and support needs or adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

Allegation: a claim that a member of staff, volunteer, or anyone acting on behalf of the charity, has behaved in a way that may be harmful to a child or adult at risk.

Child: Anyone under the age of 18.

Children Social Care: is provided by Local Authorities (councils) to under 18s who require protection from risk of harm or require support because of additional needs.

Concern: refers to a situation where signs or indicators that an individual might be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect have been identified.

Deacon(s): refers to those appointed by the church to that office to support the Elders and serve the church in practical and legal matters.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): A local officer of the Church appointed by the Church Meeting providing an accessible point of contact with responsibility for receiving safeguarding complaints and following the processes and lines of reporting set out in this Policy for handling complaints.

Disclosure: when an individual communicates that they have been (or are worried they may be) abused or neglected.

Domestic Abuse: refers to a single incident or a course of behaviour where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other. Behaviour is defined as abusive if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, or emotional abuse.

Early Help: describes any service that supports children and their families as problems emerge. The aim of Early Help is to prevent escalating need or risk and improve children and young people's outcomes.

Elder(s): refers to those appointed by the church to that office to provide spiritual leadership and instruction. The Elders have the spiritual authority within the church.

Investigating Officer: An individual appointed by the Trustee, (in consultation with the Local Leadership and in accordance with the process set out in the Trustee's own Safeguarding Policy) to take the lead in an investigation into a complaint or allegation which does not come under the safeguarding remit of the DSL.

Local Leadership: The local elected leadership of the Church as formed by the Elders and Deacons.

LADO: The Local Authority Designated Officer is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness and fairness.

Low-level concern: is any concern that an adult working or volunteering may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

LSAB: Local Safeguarding Adults Board (in some areas known as Local Safeguarding Adults Partnership). Their main role is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs within their locality. They take the lead on adult safeguarding arrangements across its locality and oversee and coordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies.

LSCP: Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (in some areas are called Safeguarding Children's Board) are responsible for agreeing how services and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in their locality and ensuring that they do so effectively. Three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Police and Health) have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their local area.

Officers: refers to all those who hold formal office in the church including Elders, Deacons and Trustees.

Position of Trust: refers to an adult 'caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge' of a child under the age of 18. It is against the law for someone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent.

Regulated activity: refers to activity that a barred person must not engage in. In simple terms, it is an activity requiring a DBS check.

Safeguarding arrangements: is used in this policy, and our procedures and related documents as a generic term that includes all aspects of the church's approach to safeguarding, including matters related to policy, process, culture and practice.

Single Central Record: is the master record of all pre-appointment checks and processes that were completed prior to appointment to a role.

Sub-threshold (or consent based) safeguarding: matters or concerns which do not meet the criteria for mandatory referral to statutory authorities. These issues may still be serious and require a response from the church, and internal processes will be followed.

The Trustee: refers to the Corporate Charity Trustee for the Church as represented by its Directors and Employees.

The Safeguarding Team: Comprises the locals DSL and DDSL where applicable as well as EFCC Safeguarding representation drawn from EFCC Safeguarding team as appropriate.

Universal safeguarding: activity that is required to keep everyone safe. This includes those who have no additional needs and includes the interface with other aspects of safety such as Health and Safety and employer responsibilities.

Section D: Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines our moral and legal responsibilities and sets out our commitments in light of those responsibilities. It aims to establish a framework and appropriate standards that apply to the whole church and to support the trustees in their responsibilities to safeguard everyone who engages with our church community, with a specific focus on those who have identifiable vulnerabilities.

Scope

The requirements of this policy apply to everyone who acts for The Village Temple Congregational Church; whether volunteers, staff, officers, or anyone else acting on behalf of the church. It applies to all the official activities of the church.

Our responsibilities and commitments

1. General duty of care

We recognise that we have a general duty of care to everyone who is involved in the life of our church. We therefore commit to:

- a. Ensuring that we identify and manage risk appropriately through our policies and procedures.
- b. Developing, monitoring, and maintaining a church culture that is healthy and nurturing across all areas of church life. This includes promoting the spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing of those who engage with us.

We recognise there is an overlap between pastoral care and safeguarding and therefore information will be shared where appropriate between the safeguarding team and those providing pastoral support. Where necessary, records will be retained as sub-threshold levels concerns, in line with safeguarding best practice.

2. Those who are vulnerable

We recognise that we have a particular responsibility to those who are more vulnerable including children and young people (i.e. those who are under 18 years of age), adults with care and support needs, and adults at risk of abuse / in need of protection (As defined in the 2014 Care Act). This is a responsibility under God who commands us to protect and care for the weak and vulnerable. We therefore commit to:

- a. Establish proportionate safeguarding arrangements.
- b. Develop a culture that is protective and healthy.
- c. Ensure that our approach to safeguarding is shaped by our biblical values and that it is fully legally compliant and in line with safeguarding best practice.
- d. Monitor the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.

We recognise that there are some adults who do not meet the criteria for adult with care and support needs but may still be vulnerable in other ways. These vulnerabilities would be classed as sub-threshold, therefore any support offered would be on the same basis. However, we aim to care well for

all who come into contact with the church and as we are able, we will support and signpost to other organisations who may be able to support the individual.

3. Dignity and respect

The Bible teaches us that all human beings (including unborn children, those who are disabled, and the elderly) are made in God's image and therefore have intrinsic value to him. We therefore commit to:

- a. Treat everyone who engages with us as loved by God and precious in his sight.
- b. To treat everyone as equal in God's sight, showing neither fear nor favour.

4. Sin and the fall

The Bible teaches us that since Adam and Eve fell into sin, all human beings inherit a sinful nature, and the whole creation, including human life, has been corrupted. While the good news of forgiveness of sin and eternal life with God are at the heart of the gospel message, in this life, even Christians continue to sin, and we all have to live in the context of this fallen and broken world. We therefore recognise the need to be vigilant and to oppose all forms of abuse, exploitation or other injustice in our midst. We therefore commit to:

- a. Establishing clear expectations and standards for all who act on our behalf.
- b. Establishing clear processes for handling abuse that is discovered or disclosed; whether that abuse has occurred in the church or elsewhere.
- c. Ensuring that we have clear processes for handling complaints, allegations, grievances, whistleblowing or any other expression of dissatisfaction.
- d. Promoting across the whole church community, the importance of caring well for everyone who engages with us through the various activities.

5. Governance and leadership

Effective servant-hearted leadership that focuses on authenticity, integrity and effectiveness are key priorities for The Village Temple Congregational Church biblically. We also recognise our responsibilities under charity law and Charity Commission guidance. We therefore commit to:

- a. Modelling biblically grounded servant hearted leadership.
- b. Ensuring that we appoint a Safeguarding Trustee, who will champion safeguarding on behalf of the trustees, who share the final legal responsibility for safeguarding.
- c. Ensuring that we appoint a competent Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)-
- d. Visibly demonstrating our commitment to safeguarding throughout the church.
- e. Providing support, oversight and accountability to everyone who works (whether paid or voluntarily) on our behalf; including providing accountability and challenge to each other as leaders.
- f. Monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangements that we have implemented.
- g. Creating an environment of ongoing reflection, learning and improvement.
- h. Ensuring that delegated, safeguarding roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and that appropriate accountability and support are provided to those fulfilling the roles.

6. Safeguarding arrangements

We recognise that we have a responsibility to the state to ensure that we have compliant and effective safeguarding arrangements in place. We therefore commit to:

- a. Appointing a suitably trained, competent and experienced safeguarding lead and-
- b. Maintain a compliant safeguarding policy, procedures, and systems to ensure that we fully meet legal and best practice standards and ensure that they are regularly reviewed (at least annually).
- c. Ensure that relevant safeguarding information, including our safeguarding policy documents and contact details for our safeguarding leads is publicly available.
- d. Ensuring that a healthy culture is supported by processes for listening to expressions of dissatisfaction (complaints, allegations, whistleblowing, grievances etc.) and that such expressions are encouraged, taken seriously, and responded to positively.
- e. Ensuring that we keep records of safeguarding concerns in line with safeguarding expectations and that we share information appropriately with relevant statutory bodies as required.

7. Suitability and competence of staff and volunteers

We recognise that we have a responsibility to ensure that those who act on our behalf are competent in and suitable for the roles that they take. We therefore commit to:

- a. Implementing proportionate safe recruitment processes for new appointees with reference to Trustee and CSS Safer Recruitment template.
- b. Ensuring that our leaders are competent, fulfilling their responsibilities and leading the church with humility, clarity, and biblical faithfulness.
- c. Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are supported and that we provide appropriate guidance, oversight, and accountability.
- d. Providing appropriate training and skills development as required.
- e. Ensuring that as a church we are alert to the risks within society, including risks associated with grooming, online abuse, radicalisation, gender-based violence, exploitation, domestic abuse etc.
- f. Report safeguarding concerns that meet relevant thresholds appropriately and in a timely manner as required.

8. Healthy culture

We recognise that we have a responsibility to encourage a healthy environment that is transparent, accountable, and biblically faithful. We therefore commit to:

- a. Developing a ministry environment that reflects biblical principles; encouraging growth in obedience to God and his word with equity, transparency, and sensitivity, in accordance with our fundamental beliefs as laid out in our statement of faith, charitable aims, and governing documents.
- b. Value, respect and listen to the wishes and views of every member of our community, including children and young people, and others who are vulnerable or find it difficult to make their voice heard.
- c. We will develop a culture that challenges any form of bullying, harassment, abuse, exploitation, or any other harmful contact; both in the online and the physical environments.
- d. Ensuring that we set clear standards and expectations of those who participate in our church community and that we have clear processes to challenge and address failure to live up to the standards that we have set for ourselves.

9. Partnership working

We will ensure that we work appropriately with our safeguarding partners in both the statutory and other services; sharing information in accordance with legal requirements and involving parents, children and young people and adults with support needs or in need of protection in the decisions that affect them as far as they are able.

10. Supporting those who have experienced abuse or other trauma

When working with those who have experienced abuse or trauma, or those who are experiencing poor mental health etc, we will seek to do so with sensitivity and keeping them at the centre of the work we do. We will seek to give them a voice and allow them to progress at their own pace while recognising the limits of our own competence and signposting to specialist support where required.

Section E: Safeguarding Procedures

1. Governance and oversight

The Trustee and the Local leadership will provide effective oversight of safeguarding across the church by:

- a. Ensuring that they appoint from amongst their number a nominated Safeguarding Trustee who will act on their behalf to provide strategic leadership and guidance on matters related to safeguarding including compliance.
- b. Ensuring that the church leadership promote the importance of safeguarding and lead the development of a culture that is biblically faithful, healthy, transparent, and accountable and that safeguarding is appropriately prioritised, and its profile maintained.
- c. Ensuring that a suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained and skilled Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ~~and a deputy (DDSL)~~ are appointed and that they are adequately supported and resourced.
- d. Ensuring that a proportionate and legally compliant safeguarding policy is implemented and that it is reviewed by the trustees with input and support from the DSL ~~and Deputy DSL~~ at least annually.
- e. Ensuring that clearly defined safeguarding procedures and systems are in place, that they are understood and implemented by all staff, volunteers, and anyone else who acts on our behalf.
- f. Ensuring that the DSL provides a verbal update to all members and that a written annual report is provided to the members.
- g. Ensuring that the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements is monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually in line with the review of the policy and procedures.
- h. Ensuring that safeguarding roles and responsibilities are clearly defined ([see appendix 1](#)), and that appropriate accountability is provided.
- i. That a clear statement in relation to safeguarding is included in the annual Charity Commission submission.
- j. That any “Serious Incidents” (as defined in the Charity Commission Guidance – (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>)) are reported accurately and in a timely manner.

2. Recruitment and ongoing support of staff and volunteers – Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

The recruitment / appointment and support of staff and volunteers is of critical importance to The Village Temple Congregational Church and to our work and ministry. To fulfil our legal duties and to ensure we meet the still higher standards dictated by scripture, all staff and volunteers will be subject to appropriate recruitment processes as agreed with the trustees

3. Management of recruitment processes – Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS Principles and EFCC

- a. At least one person who is involved in the process of recruitment of staff or appointment of volunteers will be trained in Safe Recruitment.
- b. Staff and volunteers will be provided with written job / role descriptions and person specifications prior to deciding whether to take up the position / role.
- c. Roles that involve regulated activity and which consequently are subject to a [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) check](#) will be clearly identified as exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.
- d. Appropriate records will be kept of all recruitment processes and decisions.

- e. A “Single Central Record” of recruitment checks and a training log will be maintained by the DSL and / or their deputy. (Appendix 7j)

4. Recruitment process - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

- a. Prior to appointment, all staff and volunteers will be required to submit an application form, ([see appendix 7a](#)) which includes a self-declaration of fitness and suitability for the role. Where necessary and appropriate (e.g., lack of literacy skills, English as a second language etc) support can be provided to completion of the form.

Paid staff positions

Note: the appointment of staff is the responsibility of the trustees, who may delegate the lead responsibility for any given appointment to one of more of their number, or to other competent people.

- b. Prior to appointment all paid staff will be required to attend a formal interview, regardless of whether a competitive process is in operation.
- c. Prior to appointment of staff, references will be sought including, a reference from the current or previous employer.
- d. Prior to appointment the applicant’s identity and right to work in the UK must be verified.
- e. Upon commencement of their position, all staff will be required to complete a formal induction process as outlined in their role description and including any areas for development identified during the recruitment process.
- f. The Single Central Record, training Log, and Personnel file will be updated as appropriate throughout the process.

Volunteer positions

Note: the appointment of volunteers for teaching / ministry roles is the responsibility of the Elders, who may delegate the lead responsibility for any given appointment to one of more of their number or to other competent people. The appointment to practical roles is the responsibility of the deacons who may delegate the lead responsibility for any given appointment to one or more of their number or to other competent people.

- g. Prior to appointment, all volunteers will be required to attend a discussion to ensure their suitability and clarity of understanding of the role and its requirements.
- h. Prior to appointment, references will be sought. Where an appropriate reference was obtained at the time of application for formal church membership, this may be used, and internal references are acceptable.
- i. Following appointment, volunteers will be required to complete a formal induction process as defined in the role description.
- j. The Single Central Record, training Log, and Personal File will be updated as appropriate throughout the process.

5. DBS Checks – Currently No regulated activity – policy to developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

- a. Following appointment and prior to commencement of the role, staff and volunteers involved in regulated activity will be required to complete a DBS check.
- b. Under normal circumstances, the individual will not commence their role until the result of the DBS check has been received.

- c. Under exceptional circumstances and where it is necessary for the person to commence prior to receipt of the DBS check result, a formal risk assessment will be completed by the DSL or their deputy and signed off by the Safeguarding Trustee. The person will not be permitted to have unsupervised access to children and must be supervised by someone who is DBS checked. In this context, they will be treated as a “visitor” until the DBS check is received. (see section 11d)
- d. A formal agreement that outlines the duties that are permitted, and all measures implemented to prevent the individual having unsupervised access to vulnerable people will be drawn up and signed by the appointee and the DSL or the Safeguarding Trustee. A copy of the agreement will be provided to the individual’s Team Leader who is providing supervision.
- e. Once formal notification of a clear DBS check has been received, the Single Central Record will be updated with the relevant information.
- f. The staff member / volunteer will be encouraged to join the [DBS Update Service](#).

6. Blemished DBS Checks – As above

- a. The applicant will be asked to present the DBS certificate to the Lead Recruiter (the DSL).
- b. The applicant may, if they wish to, withdraw their application.
- c. If the application is withdrawn, consideration will be given to whether this requires the triggering of the procedure for the “Management of ex-offenders or those who pose an actual or potential risk to others; particularly to vulnerable people” (see Section E15).
- d. If the applicant self-declared the blemish and it has been discussed previously, the recruiter will check to ensure that the detail provided in the self-disclosure is consistent with the information on the DBS certificate.
- e. If the applicant did not self-disclose, an open conversation will explore the circumstances of the blemish, any implications or risks that need to be managed, the reason for the non-disclosure, and any other relevant factors that need to be considered.
 - i. The failure to disclose does not automatically either justify or contradict a negative inference. Negative inferences can be drawn if justifiable. Any such negative inference will be discussed as part of the open conversation.
- f. Whether the discussion arises from self-disclosure or examination of the certificate, a formal assessment will be conducted to ascertain the applicant’s suitability for the role by the DSL and / or the Safeguarding Trustee, and the outcome will be recorded in the personal file.
- g. Advice can be sought from Christian Safeguarding Services if required.
- h. The applicant will be given every opportunity to provide input to the assessment and the outcome will be explained to them.
- i. A blemished DBS check does not necessarily prevent the individual from engaging in regulated activity. The risk assessment may conclude:
 - i. That the individual is unsuitable for the role.
 - ii. That further investigation is required.
 - iii. That the person is suitable for the role with restrictions.
 - iv. That the blemish does not indicate unsuitability.
- j. If the risk assessment concludes that the individual is unsuitable for the role, consideration will be given to:
 - i. Whether there are other roles for which the individual would be suitable.
 - ii. Whether the “Management of ex-offenders or those who pose an actual or potential risk to others; particularly to vulnerable people” (see Section E15 of this policy) process needs to be triggered.
- k. Once the details of the certificate have been recorded in the Single Central Record, the certificate will be returned to the applicant, and no copies will be retained.

7. Probationary / settling in periods. As above

The precise nature and expectations of probationary / settling in periods will vary from role to role as described in the role description, however, they are intended to be supportive of the volunteer / employee and to provide a framework that provides accountability to both the individual and the organisation. Probationary periods will not be used for punitive purposes.

- a. All staff and volunteers will be subject to a probationary / settling in period.
- b. Prior to commencement of the role, a clear statement of the criteria for successful completion of the probationary period will be provided.
- c. Regular support, guidance and review will be provided throughout the probationary period and the outcome (passed, extended, failed) will be communicated to the employee or volunteer prior to the end of the probationary period. Records will be retained of all discussions.

8. Ongoing support and supervision

- a. All staff and volunteers will receive proportionate supervision and pastoral care. Supervision will include both personal wellbeing and performance management.
- b. Where DBS checks are required, these will be updated at least every three years.
- c. If the individual is on the Update Service, this will be used rather than requesting a new DBS.

9. Training - As above

- a. All staff and volunteers in roles that involve regulated activity or those who manage such staff will be required to attend regular safeguarding training.
- b. Trustees will receive initial training. While there is no legal requirement for formal update training, the trustees will ensure that they are competent in their roles and that their understanding of compliance with legislation and Charity Commission guidance up to date.
- c. Church leaders will refresh their training every three years.
- d. Volunteers and staff involved in working with children, young people, or adults at risk of abuse are required to update their training at least every three years.
- e. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and any the Deputy DSL are required to attend formal update training at least every two years.
- f. All staff, volunteers and trustees will undergo some informal update activity annually.
- g. Training should include themes on domestic abuse and trauma and their impact on victims including children and Prevent awareness.
- h. A training log will be maintained by the DSL.

10. Young Volunteers – Policy to be developed as required with reference to EFCC principles and EFCC

There may be occasions when a teenager (17 years and under) wants to volunteer at the church. Where this occurs, because they are legally defined as children, we have a responsibility to safeguard them. Therefore, we will implement the following procedures to safeguard any young volunteers:

- a. All young volunteers will go through the recruitment process and undertake training and induction. As part of this we will provide them with a young volunteer role description and person specification.
- b. If the role involves regulated activity, volunteers aged 16 and 17 years old will be required to have a DBS check. If a volunteer is under 16 years old, a DBS check cannot be conducted. In these situations, a risk assessment will be completed in lieu of a DBS check.
- c. For all young volunteers, a risk assessment will be conducted to identify any potential safeguarding issues that might occur with the tasks that young people are asked to undertake. These include:

- the potential risks for exploitation of the young volunteers
 - the possible emotional impact of tasks
- d. We will provide a young volunteer with a Code of Conduct to reflect their role and their age.
 - e. We will allocate an experienced adult leader to be their point of contact for support and supervision during the activity they are volunteering for.
 - f. We will never leave a young leader solely in charge of under 18s.
 - g. We will ensure all young volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities, know what it is we expect from them and what steps they should take if a safeguarding matter arises.
 - h. We will make it clear to young volunteers that by volunteering with under 18s they are in a position of leadership and a position of trust and the implications of this both in when they are volunteering at church and outside of church.
 - i. We require signed consent from the young volunteer's parent's / carers for the young person to volunteer. Their parents will be provided with a role description so they understand what will be asked of their child.
 - j. Young volunteers will not be placed in roles where they would be leading their peers (for example, a 17-year-old leader wouldn't be leading a group of 16-year-olds). We would endeavour to have a minimum of a 4-year age gap between any young leader and those they are leading.

11. Ensuring a safe and healthy environment

The Village Temple Congregational Church fully recognises that there are many factors that impact on and contribute to the safety of the environment for everyone; some of these being procedural and others cultural. Here we describe only the procedural aspects.

a. Health and Safety

The officers aim to ensure that the health and safety of everyone who encounters our church community is protected by:

- i. Regularly reviewing our health and safety policy to maximise effectiveness and ensure ongoing legal compliance.
- ii. Maintaining, communicating and implementing proportionate Risk Assessments for both the premises and the activities of the church.
- iii. Maintenance and analysis of Accident and Incident Reports on receipt to ensure appropriate lessons are learned and timely responses are implemented. We will also review, at least annually, all reports within the year to identify trends and recurring themes.
- iv. Ensuring that appropriate safety equipment such as First Aid kits, Fire Extinguishers etc are available and maintained on an ongoing basis.
- v. Key Health and Safety information will be prominent, and best practice will be promoted through announcements, effective signage etc.
- vi. Encourage a culture where all members are alert to dangers and risks; reporting them to the church offices so that they can be addressed.

b. Awareness raising

The Village Temple Congregational Church recognises that any member of our church community could discover or receive a disclosure of abuse, and therefore all members need a basic awareness and competence, regardless of whether they engage directly in ministry to children, young people, or vulnerable adults. We will raise awareness by ensuring that:

- i. Information about our policies, procedures and codes of conduct are publicly available and promoted by our leaders.
- ii. Details of our safeguarding team are prominently displayed.

- iii. We set clear expectations of conduct and that clear processes for identifying, challenging, investigating, and dealing with inappropriate conduct.
- iv. We implement and promoting clear and transparent processes for the raising of concerns or complaints, supported by a culture that encourages and welcomes these as opportunities to learn and improve.

c. Ministry to children and / or young people Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

When engaging in ministry to children and / or young people that involves those acting for the church to assume responsibility for minors we will:

- i. Ensure that registers of children attending, and leaders present are maintained and retained in line with our data retention policy.
- ii. Ensure that those involved in such ministries have been appointed in accordance with our Safe Recruitment procedures.
- iii. Ensure that consent is obtained for their attendance at the group and that contact details and information about any additional or specific needs are recorded.
- iv. Ensure that appropriate child: adult ratios are maintained in line with guidance from the NSPCC and as indicated within any activity risk assessment. A minimum of 2 adults must be present in any group. The minimum ratios are:

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children
 2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
 4 - 8 years - one adult to six children
 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
 13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

- v. In situations where an adult is present with a specific role to support a particular child, the additional “carer” can be counted as one of the minimum of 2 workers, if they will be present throughout the group, however, since their role is to support one child, they will not count towards the ratios listed above. *(For example, if a group consisted of 10-year-olds and there were 11 children present, if one volunteer is allocated to provide specific 1:1 support for a child, they cannot be counted as a second adult because they are focusing on the one child, and the number of children present requires 2 adults. Whereas if there were 9 children present the 1:1 worker would be supervising the 9th child and therefore the ratio of 1:8 would be met).*
- vi. Ensure that appropriate accident / incident reporting is in place and that any accidents or incidents are reported in line with the church’s Health and Safety Procedures. All accidents and incidents must also be reported to parents / carers in a timely manner.
- vii. Ensure that appropriate order and discipline are maintained.
- viii. Ensure that children are encouraged and empowered to raise any concerns that they may have with leaders or their parents as appropriate.

d. Visitors to children’s or youth groups - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

From time to time, adults who are not part of The Village Temple Congregational Church’s children or youth ministry teams may be present. For example, a parent may wish to stay with a child for a specific purpose, or a visiting speaker may attend the group.

- i. Visitors must be supervised at all times by someone who has a DBS check in place.
- ii. Visitors must be made aware of expected standards of conduct during the time they are visiting the group.
- iii. Visitors must be made aware of what they need to do if they become aware of a concern.

- iv. If visitors attend a group on behalf of another organisation (e.g. a worker from a youth organisation or someone who serves as a youth leader in another church etc.) the 'employing organisation' will be asked whether the visitor has a current DBS check, whether their safeguarding training is up to date and whether there are any safeguarding concerns or allegations against the individual. If written confirmation is provided and the visitor identity is confirmed, the visitor will be classed as a DBS checked worker rather than as a visitor.
- v. If a visitor notifies the church that they have a current DBS check which is registered with the update service, following a check of the original certificate and the update service, the individual will be classed as a DBS checked worker rather than as a visitor.

e. All age group meetings

When children or young people are present at meetings that are primarily aimed at adults and childcare is not provided and their parents are present.

- i. During these times, children remain the responsibility of their parents who are responsible for their safety and care.
- ii. Any concerns or support needs identified will be recorded and reported to the DSL in the usual way.

When young people are present at meetings that are primarily aimed at adults and participating in that meeting in their own right (and their parents are not present):

- iii. Although there are not specific procedures for such meetings, the normal principles of safeguarding will apply.
- iv. If the young person is not believed to be competent to consent to attendance, consent will be sought from their parents / carers.
- v. If the young person is believed to be competent to consent to attendance, they will be encouraged to be open and transparent with their parents / carers and consent will be sought for the church to contact the parents and establish open communication and transparency.
- vi. Leaders of the church or of the meeting in question will be vigilant to ensure that the young person is adequately protected.
- vii. Any concerns or support needs identified will be recorded and reported to the DSL in the usual way.

f. Ministry to Adults at Risk of Abuse or Adults with care and support needs

- i. If the individual is not believed to be competent to consent to attendance, consent will be sought from their carer.
- ii. If the individual is believed to be competent to consent to attendance, they will be encouraged to be open and transparent with their carer, and consent will be sought for the church to contact the carer with a view to establishing open communication and transparency.
- iii. Leaders of the church or of the meeting in question will be vigilant to ensure that the individual is adequately protected.
- iv. Any concerns or support needs identified will be recorded and reported to the DSL in the usual way.

g. General provisions

- i. The church will ensure that information relating to safeguarding, including contact details and other relevant information is prominently displayed in the building and online.
- ii. Leaders will promote the need for every member to be vigilant to safeguarding concerns through the processes, teaching, and culture of the church and by personal example.
- iii. A clear process for raising concerns will be available on the church website.

12. Responding to safeguarding concerns or disclosures

a. Managing immediate risk

- i. Upon identification of a concern or receipt of a disclosure, the church member involved should make an assessment as to whether any immediate action is necessary to protect the individual.
- ii. The worker may seek advice from the team leader or from the DSL, however, the seeking of advice should not unnecessarily delay or prevent the protective action or place the individual at risk of further or increased harm.
- iii. In such urgent situations and if the DSL cannot be immediately contacted, the worker should contact either the relevant emergency service on 999 or Social Care (see contact details in Appendix 2) to obtain support. Under such circumstances, the DSL should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

b. Reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- i. Once it has been established that the individual is not, or is no longer in imminent danger, the concern will be reported to the DSL using the Concerns Reporting Form (see Appendix 7d).
- ii. The concerns will be discussed with the DSL at the earliest opportunity, to ensure clarity of understanding.

c. Managing the risks: the role of the DSL

- i. In discussion with the worker reporting the concern, the DSL will review any immediate actions taken and will be responsible for follow-up or further action that may be required.
- ii. Upon receipt of the completed form, the DSL will establish a “Confidential File” in relation to the person at risk, or if there is an existing confidential file, it will be updated.
- iii. A Chronology (appendix 7e) will be established and inserted at the front of the confidential file.
- iv. The confidential file will be updated with any further discussions or actions, including any advice sought or referrals made and updating will continue on an ongoing basis.
- v. The DSL will confirm to the person raising the concern that the matter has been actioned. The DSL will not provide any unnecessary information. Information is only shared on a “need to know” basis.
- vi. Where the concern meets the statutory threshold, the DSL will notify the parent or carer of the individual concerned (or the individual themselves if they are a competent adult) that a referral is being made to Social Care. Advice can be sought from CSS or from the relevant social care service if the DSL is unsure if the statutory threshold has been met.

Information will not be shared with the parent / carer in situations where:

- To do so would place a child at increased risk of harm or abuse.
 - To do so would place an adult at increased risk of harm or abuse.
- vii. The referral will be made to the appropriate Social Care service ([See appendix 2 for contact details](#)).
 - viii. If the referral has not been acknowledged within 2 working days, the DSL will follow up with Social Care (or other agencies as required).
 - ix. The DSL will work with the Local Authority and other partners on behalf of the church to ensure that we fully participate in the safeguarding process.
 - x. All conversations, correspondence, and documentation etc will be placed into the confidential file and the “Record of action” and Chronology will be maintained on an ongoing basis.
 - xi. Confidential files will be stored in a secure folder, only accessible to the DSL, and the Safeguarding Trustee in a secure paper based form.

- xii. The DSL / Deputy DSL / Safeguarding Trustee will share information as necessary with other individuals in the church to facilitate effective safeguarding.

13. Sub-threshold concerns and Early Help

- a. Where concerns are sub-threshold and do not meet the requirements for a statutory referral, the DSL will keep a written record of the concerns.
- b. Staff and volunteers who work with under 18s will be alert to identifying those children who would benefit from the local Early Help process. We will work with our local safeguarding partners to put in place support to address identified or emerging problems and needs and improve a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the risk of escalation.
- c. If a child has a Team Around the Family in place through the Early Help process, if invited by the Lead Professional to do so, the DSL will join the Team Around the Family.

14. Disclosure of historic child abuse by an adult

- a. If an adult makes a disclosure of historic abuse during their childhood, it is the decision of the individual whether or not they wish to report the historic abuse.
- b. If the adult wants to report it, they must make their report to the Police. If they choose to report the abuse, we will offer support to the individual in doing this.
- c. If the adult does not want to report the abuse but the alleged perpetrator is currently in a position of trust, consideration of the potential risks will be assessed, and appropriate action will be taken. The DSL can take advice from [CSS](#) or statutory services in this situation.

15. Allegations against or concerns about staff and volunteers

The Village Temple Congregational Church will always take allegations against our staff or volunteers seriously; ensuring that they are investigated proportionately, via a transparent and accountable process that expedites the matter in a timely manner; recognising both our responsibility to keep vulnerable people safe, and our responsibility to support the person accused throughout the process.

- a. If an allegation is raised during a church activity, for example a youth group meeting, if appropriate, the team leader should take any immediate action to ensure the safety of others, for example, call the emergency services.
- b. Allegations against staff or volunteers within the church should be reported to the safeguarding trustee
- c. or by e-mailing
- d. If the allegation is against the safeguarding trustee, it should be reported to one of the other The Chair of EFCC Trust Corporation or the DSL.
- e. Full details of the allegation will be recorded.
- f. The Trustee will nominate an investigating officer (on a case-by-case basis) who will assess whether any additional immediate action is required to ensure the safety of everyone involved.
- g. Dependent upon circumstances and the immediate action required, notifying the individual that an allegation has been received may be unavoidable.
- h. If so, care will be taken not to compromise the gathering or preservation of evidence.
- i. If it is necessary to notify the individual at this stage, details of the allegation will not be divulged.
- j. Support must be offered to the subject of the allegation as well as any potential victims.
- k. At the earliest opportunity, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer – see Appendix 2 for contact details) should be consulted.
 - If the LADO cannot be contacted due to working hours, initial advice can be sought from [Christian Safeguarding Services](#) (CSS), however CSS can be contacted at any point for advice.

- l. If the allegation meets the threshold for LADO, the church's investigating officer will work with LADO to ensure that the allegation is thoroughly investigated, and all issues raised are addressed.
- m. If the allegation does not meet the threshold for LADO, the investigating officer will consult with CSS, who will provide independent support and advice to ensure transparency.
- n. Thorough records of all aspects of the handling of the allegation will be retained throughout the process.
- i. These records will be held confidentially in a secure paper based form held locally .
- o. The investigating officer will seek and follow specialist advice throughout the process as required.
- p. Where the concern is of a low-level nature, our Low-Level Concerns process will be followed (Appendix 4).

16. Management of ex-offenders or those who pose an actual or potential risk to others, particularly to vulnerable people - Policy to be developed as required with reference to CSS principles and EFCC

As a church, we believe in the power of God to forgive and transform individuals. We also believe that every individual is valuable to God and should be protected; particularly those who are vulnerable.

- a. Where the church becomes aware that an individual is an ex-offender or that they may pose a risk to vulnerable people, the church leaders will enter into an open and frank conversation with that individual to understand the context and the risks.
- b. If the individual has an allocated offending officer e.g. probation / police etc., the Local Leadership will seek to work in partnership with those statutory services supporting the individual where this is appropriate.
- c. The church leaders will assess the risk posed by the individual and a formal risk assessment will be formulated.
- d. A formal agreement with the individual will be drawn up and will be signed by both the Local Leadership and the individual concerned. The agreement will include:
 - i. The church's commitments to the individual who poses the risk.
 - ii. The steps the church will take to support the individual while simultaneously protecting everyone in the church community.
 - iii. The restrictions and conditions that will be applied to the individual's involvement in the life of the church.
 - iv. The consequences of failure to comply with the agreement.
 - v. When and how the risk assessment and formal agreement will be reviewed.
- e. All decisions and agreements will be formally recorded and securely stored.
- f. The individual who poses a risk will be fully involved in the planning process and information will only be shared with church members by the Local Leadership either:
 - i. With the agreement of the individual who poses a risk.
 - ii. Where information needs to be shared to protect vulnerable people and then, only the minimum information that is essential will be shared and the individual will be informed in advance what information will be shared.
- g. If the individual chooses to leave the church to avoid the management of the risk and starts to attend elsewhere, the church leaders will take specialist advice either from CSS or from statutory agencies as to whether this information should be passed on.
 - i. All records of risk assessments and formal agreements will be stored in a secure folder in paper form.

17. Complaints and concerns

- a. The Village Temple Congregational Church recognises the importance of listening to all members of our church community, including those who find it hard to make their voices heard and those who hold contrary views to the church leadership. The Local Leadership will proactively seek the views of all who engage with the church in a variety of ways; however, we also recognise the importance of responding well when concerns, criticisms or complaints are raised with us.
- b. Any complaints that have a safeguarding element or implication will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Trustee who will ensure that the safeguarding aspects are identified and managed in a proportionate way.
- c. The overall process will be as per the Complaints Procedures. (Appendix 7h)

Section F: Codes of Conduct

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with children or young people

Those working with children and young people will:

- Ensure that they understand the policies, procedures, systems, guidelines, and risk assessments etc that are provided and that they are implemented.
- Attend safeguarding training on the frequency stipulated in this policy.
- Work in a transparent and responsible manner that ensures that they are accountable to the church leaders and that they are open to discussion with and challenge from parents.
- Ensure as representatives of the church, their behaviour, speech and attitudes are consistent with biblical teachings and the church's statement of faith.
- Ensure health and safety procedures are followed.
- Ensure that their conduct embraces their responsibility for the safety of the children in their care.
- Maintain a state of vigilance to identify and report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns about adults who may pose a risk to children.
- Refrain from any misuse of their power or authority as adults and leaders within the group.
- Only take responsibility for children if they are physically and mentally fit and able to do so.
- Treat everybody including children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Treat them in an age-appropriate way that recognises their developmental stage and ability.
- Provide them with appropriate levels of choice.
- Treat them as individuals.
- Respect their views and wishes.
- Promote and ensure appropriate behaviour towards other children and leaders in the group.
- Ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.
- Refrain from inappropriate physical play (e.g. rough and tumble games that involve physical contact). Remain aware of risks due to differences in physical size or strength and the possible appearance of sexual motivation.
- Ensure that age-appropriate boundaries are clearly explained and consistently implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Ensure that any age-appropriate physical contact is child led.
- Ensure that physical intervention is only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of an individual child or the group.
- Refrain from any physical chastisement.
- Refrain from making any unofficial, private or one-to-one connections with under 18s on social media, at all times abiding by the church's safeguarding guidelines in this area.
- Not engage in any sexualised, aggressive, humiliating, demeaning or discriminatory (etc) language or behaviour with them.
- Act with fairness and treat children equitably, avoiding discrimination or favouritism.
- Seek to avoid any language or behaviour or adopting any attitude that could reasonably lead to misunderstanding or misrepresentation.
- Support the participation of the children and young people (and their parents / carers where appropriate) in the planning of support or other decisions that affect them.

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with Adults

Those working with vulnerable adults including adults at risk of abuse will:

- Ensure that they understand the policies, procedures, systems, guidelines, and risk assessments etc that are provided and that they are implemented.
- Attend safeguarding training on the frequency stipulated in this policy.
- Work in a transparent and responsible manner that ensures that they are accountable to the church leaders.
- Ensure as representatives of the church, their behaviour, speech and attitudes are consistent with biblical teachings and the church's statement of faith.
- Ensure that their conduct embraces their responsibility for the safety of those with whom they are working.
- Ensure health and safety procedures are followed.
- Maintain a state of vigilance to identify and report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns about people who may pose a risk to them.
- Refrain from any misuse of their power or position and will always seek to act in the best interest of the individual.
- Only engage in activity for which they are physically and mentally fit.
- Treat everybody with respect and dignity, particularly the vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that support is client led and that their views, wishes, and choices are respected.
- Treat them as individuals.
- Promote and seek to ensure appropriate behaviour towards group leaders and one another.
- Ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.
- If working in groups, seek to ensure that necessary behavioural and interpersonal boundaries are clearly explained and consistently implemented.
- Ensure that any physical contact is client led.
- Ensure that proportionate physical intervention is only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of an individual or the group.
- Will not engage in any sexualised, aggressive, humiliating, demeaning or discriminatory (etc) language or behaviour with them.
- Act with fairness and treat each person equitably, avoiding discrimination or favouritism.
- Seek to avoid any language or behaviour or adopting any attitude that could reasonably lead to misunderstanding or misrepresentation.
- Support the participation of the vulnerable person (and their carers where appropriate) in the planning of support or other decisions that affect them.

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers providing pastoral care

Those involved in providing pastoral care will:

- Ensure that support provided is led by the person receiving the support.
- Ensure that the dignity and wishes of the individual are always respected.
- Ensure as representatives of the church, their behaviour, speech and attitudes are consistent with biblical teachings and the church's statement of faith.
- When delivering challenge or difficult messages, will do so in a respectful, compassionate, and gentle way that is in line with their best interests (including their emotional and spiritual wellbeing).
- Will seek to ensure that the individual's right to question or ignore any advice or suggestions is fully understood.
- Attend safeguarding training on the frequency stipulated in this policy.
- Work in a transparent and responsible manner that ensures that they are accountable to the church leaders.
- Maintain a state of vigilance to identify and report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns about people who may pose a risk to them.
- Refrain from any misuse of their power or position and will always seek to act in the best interest of the individual.
- Only engage in activity for which they are physically and mentally fit.
- Ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.
- Ensure that any physical contact is client led.
- Ensure that proportionate physical intervention is only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of an individual or the group.
- Will not engage in any sexualised, aggressive, humiliating, demeaning or discriminatory (etc) language or behaviour with them, including behaviour that is initiated by the person receiving the support.
- Act with fairness and treat each person equitably, avoiding discrimination or favouritism.
- Seek to avoid any language or behaviour or adopting any attitude that could reasonably lead to misunderstanding or misrepresentation.

Section G: Appendices

Appendix 1: Safeguarding responsibilities

Governance of safeguarding

The trustees will ensure that they provide leadership of safeguarding across the organisation by:

- Ensuring that legally compliant policies, procedures, codes of conduct and systems are implemented.
- Ensuring that a safeguarding trustee is appointed to act as a link between the DSL / Deputy DSL and the trustees.
- Ensuring that a suitably skilled and knowledgeable Safeguarding Lead and that where possible at least one deputy is appointed, supported, and resourced.
- Providing accountability to those responsible for various aspects of safeguarding.
- Reviewing the safeguarding arrangements to ensure that an effective and proportionate approach is thoroughly implemented and consistently enacted across the church.
- Ensuring that the Safeguarding Lead and deputy provide regular updates to the Trustees.
- Ensuring that Charity commission requirements, including the responsibility to report any serious incidents are fully met.
- Ensuring that clear and transparent processes for raising complaints, concerns or allegations or other expressions of dissatisfaction are in place.

Leadership and management of safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy, will ensure that:

- The Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed, updated and any changes signed off by the trustees.
- Safeguarding concerns are managed in a timely and proportionate manner, including making referrals to statutory agencies as required, working with partner agencies such as the Local Authority and the Police and the maintenance of accurate records and systems.
- Lead on the implementation of the safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Those engaged in ministry on behalf of The Village Temple Congregational Church are provided with proportionate and appropriate training and that they are competent to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Regular reports are provided to the trustees and that any urgent issues are communicated to the chair of trustees in a timely manner.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding and promoting its importance across the church.

Individual responsibilities

Everyone working on behalf of The Village Temple Congregational Church is required to:

- Ensure they understand and act in accordance with the policies, procedures, risk assessments and codes of conduct provided.
- Adhere to local legislation, guidance, and procedures.
- Ensure that they remain vigilant to the risks of harm to under 18s and adults at risk of harm.

Appendix 2: Key safeguarding contacts

Key Safeguarding Contacts	
Organisational (Name of Church) The Village Temple Congregational Church Phone: 07507-392391 E-mail: vt@villagetemple.org.uk Leadership Safeguarding Trustee: EFCC Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Ann Humphries Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: n/a Our policies and other useful information about safeguarding can be found at: https://villagetemple.org.uk The roles and responsibilities of those involved in safeguarding can be found in appendix 1.	Statutory services Local Authority details Safeguarding children Office Hours number: 01352 701000 Emergency out-of-hours number: Duty Social Worker on: 0345 053 3116 Email SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk <i>(Please remember that e-mail is NOT secure so confidential or sensitive data should not be included)</i> Local interagency referral forms can be found here: https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/north-wales-referral-form-children-and-families/ Allegations against staff or volunteers should be reported to: E-mail: safe@villagetemple.org.uk <i>(Please remember that e-mail is NOT secure so confidential or sensitive data should not be included)</i> Safeguarding Children Partnership https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/ Phone: 01824 706054 Website: https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/ E-mail: regionalsafeguarding@denbighshire.gov.uk Safeguarding Adults Report concerns to Adult Social Care Phone: Office Hours number: 01352 702000 Emergency out-of-hours number: Duty Social Worker on: 0345 053 3116 E-mail: SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk <i>(Please remember that e-mail is NOT secure so confidential or sensitive data should not be included)</i> Safeguarding Adults Board

Appendix 3 - Basis of the policies and procedures and the legal framework

The Village Temple Congregational Church Internal framework

- Our statement of faith.
- This policy reflects the church's fundamental biblical beliefs and should be read in conjunction with the statement of faith.
- Our governing documents (e.g. Constitution / Memorandum and Articles of Association etc.)

National guidance

Safeguarding children

National legislation and guidance

- [Children Act \(1989 & 2004\)](#)
- [Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners \(Department for Education, 2015\)](#)
- [Protection of Children Act \(1999\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act \(2006\)](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act \(2012\)](#)
- [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 \(2018 amended\)](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act \(2019\)](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance \(2023\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)
- [Children's Social Care National Framework \(2023\)](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection Standards for the Voluntary and Community Sector \(2024\) NSPCC](#)
- [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act \(2022\)](#)

The policy also takes account of the principles outlined in:

- [After School Clubs, Community Activities and Tuition – Safeguarding Guidance for Providers \(2023\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)
- [Multi-agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation \(2020\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

Safeguarding adults

National legislation and guidance

- [The Care Act \(2014\)](#)
- [Human Rights Acts \(1998\)](#)
- [Care Standards Act \(2000\)](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Capacity \(Amendment\) Act \(2019\)](#)
- [Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards \(2007\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)
- [Police and Criminal Evidence Act \(1984\)](#) and [Fraud Act \(2006\)](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act \(1998\)](#)
- [Health and Social Care Act \(2008\)](#)

- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Guidance](#)
- [Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\)](#)
- [Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference \(MARAC\)](#)

Local guidance

- Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships
- Local Authority guidance (children & adult)
- Local Safeguarding Adults Board procedures (in some areas known as Safeguarding Adult's Partnerships)

Scottish Legislation and Guidance

- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act \(2014\)](#)
- [Children \(Scotland\) Act \(1995\) and \(2020\)](#)
- [Children's Rights Scheme under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act \(2024\)](#)
- [The Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2023\)](#)
- [Getting it right for every child \(2022\)](#)
- [Scottish Charity Regulator Safeguarding Vulnerable Beneficiaries \(2025\)](#)

Welsh Legislation and Guidance

- [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
- [Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard People \(2021\)](#)
- [Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2025](#)

Appendix 4- Low-level Concerns

As part of our whole church approach to safeguarding, we will ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working or volunteering with under 18s or adults at risk are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working or volunteering may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of church, and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or a volunteer.

Examples of such low-level behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to church policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door or via any form of technology
- humiliating children / adult

We recognise that such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working / volunteering at The Village Temple from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

Anyone is free to share a low-level concern with the DSL.

All low-level concerns will be recorded. Records will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The records of low-level concerns will be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the DSL will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO.

Appendix 5 - Safeguarding guidelines for communicating with under 18s via electronic devices and livestreaming meetings where vulnerable people are present

The purpose of our safeguarding guidelines in relation to these online activities is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when using online platforms related to our official church activities.

These guidelines apply to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in The Village Temple church activities.

We recognise that many under 18s have access to mobile devices and these present opportunities for easier communication. However, we also recognise the risks associated with online activity for under 18s including (but not limited to):

- unwanted contact
- pressure to respond to messages
- live location features
- inappropriate content
- cyber bullying
- forming inappropriate relationships
- grooming

We will keep under 18s safe by:

- Ensuring our DSL oversees all aspects of online safety for under 18s.
- Provide code of conducts to our staff and volunteers who work with under 18s outlining our expectations of how they behave online with under 18s.
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms, messaging apps and new technologies before they are used within our church.

WhatsApp (or other messaging apps) guidelines

We recognise that messaging apps present an opportunity for young people to be in communication with one another, for example, our Church youth group. Where a church group has a WhatsApp group, we will take steps to mitigate risk of harm.

The following steps will be put in place:

- Explicit signed parental consent will be sought before inviting any under 18s to join a WhatsApp group.
- We will develop a Code of Conduct for the young people within a Church WhatsApp group which will outline how we expect them to behave within the group and the consequences of not adhering to the Code of Conduct. Parents / carers will also be provided a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- We will also develop a Code of Conduct for the adult leaders within a WhatsApp group.
- There will be a minimum of two adult leaders on the WhatsApp group to oversee and moderate the group. These leaders must have a current DBS check in place.
- Parents who wish to be, can be added to the WhatsApp group.
- The youth leaders will continue to comply with GDPR and data protection standards.
- WhatsApp does not allow under 13s to use the App; we will never invite a child younger than 13 to join a group. If this means that younger members of the youth group are excluded, we will look at other communication options to ensure no young person is excluded.

- Whilst private messaging between leaders and young people is not encouraged, if private messages take place relating to official church activities, the leader must keep copies of all messages and be willing and ready to share when asked to do so.
- Youth leaders will make no direct, private contact with any child under the age of 13 years. If contact is necessary, the leader must communicate with the parent.
- If the youth leader needs to send a private message to a young person between 13-16 years old, a parent / carer must be included in messages.
- Where a member of the youth group is aged 17-18 years old (& the 18-year-old is still in full time education) explicit parental consent is required before the leader makes any direct contact with the young person.
- All volunteer / staff leaders will only make contact under 18s for the purposes of their church role.

Social Media Accounts

Where youth leaders have a personal social media account (such as Facebook, Instagram etc.) they must not request or accept a friend request from anyone under the age of 18 years.

If there is already a pre-existing relationship with the under 18, e.g. a family connection, the DSL must be informed of this and a record of this will be noted.

We advise our youth work leaders to have their personal account's privacy settings set as high as they can be so that a young person cannot access their photos, posts etc.

Online Video meetings (e.g. Zoom) with under 18s

If our youth work holds a meeting via a video call (for example Zoom) we will ensure there is a minimum of two adult leaders present throughout the call.

Those taking part in the video call will always wear appropriate clothing and be in appropriate locations for a video call.

We will develop Code of Conducts for participants (young people and leaders).

Explicit consent from parents will be sought before a young person is invited to attend a video meeting.

Our leaders will always use the church accounts, and not personal accounts, for video calling platforms.

Live Streaming of meetings

We recognise that live streaming and / or uploading videos of meetings (e.g. YouTube) presents unique safeguarding risks and considerations.

We recognise that by filming and / or posting video content online this may put individuals at risk. Examples include:

- A survivor of domestic abuse may need to be protected from another person and information about their location may be highly sensitive.
- Children may be present who are subject to legal child protection measures and who are potentially fleeing violence or are being 'searched for' by others.
- Children who are being fostered or adopted may be being 'searched' by birth families.

We will take the following steps to protect the identity of people who may be at risk when meetings are live streamed / recorded:

- Explicit and signed consent will be sought where possible from church members in relation to filming.

- Where we have visitors, we will always give a notice at the beginning of the meeting about filming. Signage will be clear in and around the entrance informing people the service is being livestreamed.
- We will be clear where is filmed and, on the whole, we will not film the congregation. If there are times when the congregation may be filmed, clear instruction will be given before filming, clarifying which seating will be exempt from filming.

Appendix 6 - Taking, Storing and using Images Policy

The Village Temple Congregational Church is aware of the safeguarding risks around taking photos and videos. The purpose of this policy is to protect children where photographs or video are taken at church. Sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the activities of the children and young people and provides a record of our activities.

We recognise that parents and carers have a right to decide whether images of their children are taken and how these will be used and stored. We also recognise that images and videos of children is classed as personal data and we comply with the [Information Commissioner's Office guidelines](#).

The Village Temple Congregational Church will:

- Always seek explicit written consent from parents/carers before taking a photo / video of a child and using the image. Parents / carers can withdraw their consent at any point.
- Always seek the explicit consent of the child where they are aged 11 years + (School Year 7 upwards) before taking a photo or video of them. The young person can withdraw their consent at any point.
- Always seek explicit consent from the parent / carer (and where age appropriate the child) if we wish to display an image in our church building where they feature on the photograph.
- Always outline how the images will be used and stored (and for how long) and if there are any possible risks associated with the sharing of an image.
- Never disclose any personal information about the child.
- Only use image of children in appropriate clothing, for example, not in swimwear at a swimming activity.
- Never take close up photographs of children.
- Only use church owned devices to take images of children for official purposes. The use of staff / volunteer's personal devices / cameras is prohibited.
- Only use images for a valid reason (referred to in data protection law as 'lawful bases')

We recognise that some children and / or their families may be more vulnerable, for example, a child who has come into the care of the Local Authority of a family fleeing domestic abuse. Extra care and precautions in relation to the use of images / video will be taken in these scenarios.

If anyone has a concern about the abuse or misuse of an image this must be reported to our DSL. (see contact details in Appendix 2)

We will never exclude a child from an activity because we do not have consent to take their photograph.

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with data protection law.

Images will only be retained when there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so. Images will be stored in a protected folder with restricted access and password protected. Images will be disposed of securely in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

We do not permit staff to use any personal devices to take photos and recordings of children. Only cameras or devices belonging to the church are used.

Photography / filming by parents / carers for personal use

When parents or carers take photographs or film at our meetings or events and the images are for personal use, we will remind them (before the event) that photos taken during the event are not to be shared on social media or shared elsewhere.

When parents take photos or videos at a church event they will be reminded that under Data Protection Law they need to consider whether individuals in the photos or videos would reasonably expect the images to be used in this way. Data protection law states that extra care must be taken when using images of children, to ensure their interests are protected.

If parents become aware that images of their child have been posted online, they can request that they are removed. If they refuse or don't reply, the parent can submit a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.