

Stowmarket Gospel Hall

Safeguarding Policy



Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership

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Date Reviewed	Signed by DSL	Signed by Elder

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SECTION A

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation:

The Gospel Hall, Stowmarket

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Deputy DSL contact Telephone/ Email:

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Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (to report a concern/incident): www.suffolksp.org.uk

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) consultation line: 0345 606 1499.

Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) (To report an allegation of abuse by a volunteer/ person in a position of trust)

LADO@suffolk.gov.uk 0300 123 2044

Elders:

Alastair Rogers

Andrew Rogers

Peter Glenn

Youth work Leaders:

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Hannah Rogers

Peter Glenn

Caroline Glenn

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Sian Bustard

Introduction

This policy will enable Stowmarket Gospel Hall to demonstrate its commitment to keeping both adults at risk and children with whom we work, safe. Stowmarket Gospel Hall acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. These procedures aim to provide leaders with a clear and simple framework as to how safeguarding is promoted and how concerns should be handled. They are not provided for training purposes and will not be used as a substitute for training.

Scope

The policy and procedures apply to all members of Stowmarket Gospel Hall and any visiting leaders. It applies in particular to those who work with vulnerable people (children, young people, their parents / carers, adults at risk of abuse or adults with care and support needs) and to those who have leadership and oversight of the church's activities.

Stowmarket Gospel Hall will ensure that it has made visitors aware of its safeguarding policy using posters to advertise it and placing it on Stowmarket Gospel Hall website.

Included in this policy is the explanation of the reporting process should anyone be concerned about a fellow visitor or member of Stowmarket Gospel Hall.

SECTION B

Stowmarket Gospel Hall Church Mission

The Church is formed of a group of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who seek to meet in accordance with principles laid out in the New Testament. This includes meeting to worship and remember the Lord Jesus in the Breaking of Bread, meeting for prayer and bible teaching and engaging in activities to spread the message of the Gospel. An important part of the work of evangelisation is work with young people. The Church Elders, on behalf of the Church, take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults entrusted to the Church's care.

Our commitment (from the Elders):

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

We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Church Elders are committed to:

- working alongside the DSL to enable; listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within church activities
- encouraging and supporting parents/carers
- ensuring that children's/youth workers are given support and training
- having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities

Policy Statement

The policy and it's procedures are in place in order for volunteers to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable Stowmarket Gospel Hall to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring, with the aim of striving to protect every member of our Church community.
- Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and that any person experiencing abuse is supported
- Ensure that when supporting people who have experienced harm:
 - We treat with dignity, respect, and compassion
 - That their views and wishes are given full consideration
 - That we act in their best interest
 - That we ensure they are appropriately involved in and informed of decisions that affect them
- Ensure accurate and appropriate records of concerns of risk and abuse are made with confidentiality maintained (see data recording policy for how these are kept securely)
- Ensure that all church members have a basic understanding of safeguarding and that they understand their responsibility to raise and challenge any abusive behaviours
- Ensure that our youth work leaders are clear about their responsibilities and duties and are supported to fulfil them competently and confidently
- Provide leadership and accountability for every member of our church community, including our most senior leaders in relation to safeguarding

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the template provided from Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership alongside the Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS).

Related Policies & Documents

This policy is in conjunction with the following Stowmarket Gospel Hall policies and documents:

- Data Protection
- Code of Conduct
- Volunteer youth worker application form
- Safeguarding information poster
- Reporting concerns or disclosures flowchart
- Recognising child abuse poster
- Reporting a Safeguarding concern/ incident form
- Youth worker appointment agreement

SECTION C

Activities for Children and Young People

Trailblazers – for children aged 4 to 16 years old normally held once a month. Activities include singing, games, crafts, memory verses and Bible stories.

At least one youth leader should be present during group activities for every eight children. Parents who may remain with their children during group activities are not reckoned as leaders in this respect. Youthleaders will usually be present before and after these times, but cannot undertake official supervision of the children before the start of the sessions. Children are free to leave at the end of the activity and may either be collected by a parent or their designate. During the group sessions, at least one fully trained leader will be present at all times.

Tea and Play – a group for infants up to about 4 years old accompanied by their carers. This is a stay and play group where the child must not be left in the sole care of any youth leader and carers retain primary responsibility for their child/children at all times.

Bible Explorers – a group for the children of the congregation run on Sunday mornings. At least one parent/ carer is present for the duration of the group and have the primary responsibility for their child/ children at all times

All normal activities of the above groups will take place at the Gospel Hall.

Other activities will be separately notified in appropriate detail, and specific permission for attendance will be required.

Other children's activities may be arranged from time to time. These will generally be organised by one or more of the team normally involved in the regular activities. Any additional helpers will be invited by the regular leaders and known to them. Most additional helpers will be experienced in working with children and young people in their own churches. Any less experienced will be given appropriate support and supervision.

Junior or assistant leaders of the groups remain formally under the supervision of the official youth leaders at all times, unless similarly qualified. No one should not be left in sole charge of children at any time.

Leaders of the groups should keep a register of all children attending the group that are left in our care. Before a child is left in our sole care formal permission to attend will be sought from, the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). This must occur before they are left in our sole care. The leaders should have rapid access to pertinent details (such as medical conditions, parental or other contact phone numbers) of the children attending the group, in case of incident. Ideally, the forms with such details, returned by the parents with their permission for the child to attend, should be available during group sessions irrespective of location.

Should individual supervision of children be required at any time (e.g., for toileting, counselling), appropriate privacy must be maintained, but the leader so involved must inform another leader of the location and nature of the supervision and should ideally be within sight of another youth leader. The exception to this is where parental consent has been provided for a specific purpose, most likely help with toileting.

Leaders should not invite children from these groups into their homes without the knowledge *and consent* of the parent(s) or guardian(s), or without the knowledge of the other leaders of the group. Such activities would also require the presence of more than a single leader, and should not be engaged in with a single child.

If transport is provided to or from any activity, qualified and insured drivers, and properly maintained vehicles must be used. Seat-belt rules must be adhered to. Consent should be gained from the parent/ carer for each journey (see separate transport policy for further information)

The church recognises the necessity to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the premises and any equipment conform to all current safety requirements. A properly stocked First Aid box should always be accessible to any groups meeting at the Gospel Hall. Any accidents/ injuries must be recorded in an accident book.

Residential camps

The Gospel Hall does not normally organise residential camps. Children and Young People may be encouraged to attend camps organised by other groups. These will only be recommended where the organisers are known to the youth leaders and where an appropriate Safeguarding Policy is already in place.

Other activities at which vulnerable adults may be present

- A weekly communion service on Sunday mornings
- A weekly service on Sunday afternoons for Bible Teaching or Gospel Preaching

SECTION D

Definitions

The policy and procedures relate to both the safeguarding of adults at risk and to children.

Adults : Adults at risk are defined in the Care Act 2014 as individuals aged over 18 who:

- “Have needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs).
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.” as a result of care and support needs

Adult with care and / or support needs: refers to an adult who requires help with day-to-day tasks that most people would be able to perform for themselves.

Children: A child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as: “anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.”

Child in Need: A child in need is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services. The child’s health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of additional services; or the child is disabled (Local Authority children’s services are always responsible for children with disabilities, no matter how well the disability is being provided for).

Child Protection: Child protection concerns are where there is reason to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm because of abuse or neglect. The need to help the child is immediate.

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.

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

Volunteer(s)/ Leader: refers to anyone who is appointed by the church to a role or who performs identified tasks on behalf of the church for which they receive no payment (other than out-of-pocket expenses that are appropriately authorised).

Vulnerable people: In the context of this policy, the term is used in a generic sense to include anyone who has a support or care need or whose ability to protect themselves against abuse is limited. This includes children and adults with support needs and adults at risk of abuse. It also includes those who, due to specific individual circumstances find themselves, either for a short time or over a more extended time, requiring additional care, support, or protection, but who would not otherwise be regarded as needing support.

SECTION E

Responsibilities of Stowmarket Gospel Hall

Stowmarket Gospel Hall will work to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs and children.
- Promote the wellbeing of any adults and children at risk in safeguarding arrangements.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults and children concerned.
- Raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.

- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult or child.
- Address what caused any abuse or neglect where appropriate if it occurred on the property of Stowmarket Gospel Hall.

Stowmarket Gospel Hall will:

- Ensure that all members are familiar with this policy and associated procedures.
- Work with other agencies within the framework of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
- Act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adults before sharing information about them with another agency. The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent (If a child has disclosed or if a Stowmarket Gospel Hall member has concerns about a child, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead judges that a referral to Social Care is needed, they will inform the child that they need to tell someone else but will not need to gain consent).
- Make a safeguarding referral to Customer First as appropriate. i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
- Ensure that leaders are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and support staff in accessing training.
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults and children.
- Stowmarket Gospel Hall has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead understands her/his responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Social Care). The contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be posted on the Hall's notice boards.
- Respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- Understand how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use services may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that all workers/ leaders who come into contact with vulnerable adults and any children, have a DBS check in line with the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority Vetting and Barring Scheme.
- Make sure that any external contractors visit outside of normal activity hours

Responsibilities of Stowmarket Gospel Hall Children and Youth work leaders

- To follow the safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, particularly if concerns arise about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk or a child.
- To participate in safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge of safeguarding.
 - Always discuss any concerns about the welfare of any visitor or child with the DSL or the deputy if the DSL is unavailable.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of people who visit Stowmarket Gospel Hall.
- Remain alert at all times to the possibility of abuse.
- Recognise the impact that diversity, beliefs and values of people who visit can have.

Responsibilities of Elders

- In addition to the above elders have a duty of care to prevent risks to Stowmarket Gospel Hall's reputation as well as the people it helps.

Governance of safeguarding

The elders of Stowmarket Gospel Hall will ensure that they provide leadership of safeguarding by:

- Ensuring that legally compliant policies, procedures, codes of conduct and systems are implemented and reviewed annually.
- Ensuring that a suitably skilled and knowledgeable Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy is appointed, supported, and resourced.
- Providing accountability to those responsible for various aspects of safeguarding
- Reviewing the safeguarding arrangements, alongside the DSL to ensure that an effective and proportionate approach is thoroughly implemented and consistently enacted across the church.
- Ensuring that the DSL and deputy provide regular updates to the elders.
- Ensuring that safer recruitment best practice is carried out in selecting volunteers who will be working closely with children, young people and vulnerable adults, i.e DBS checks carried out and maintained.

Responsibilities of Visitors

Visitors to Stowmarket Gospel Hall have a responsibility to act in accordance with the SGH Code of Conduct when on the premises and to be aware that they have a duty to report any abuse, neglect or risk to other visitors seen on Stowmarket Gospel Hall premises.

SECTION F

Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Stowmarket Gospel Hall is committed to ensuring that all elders and youth work leaders undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Stowmarket Gospel Hall will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the deputy will have access to higher levels of safeguarding training. Abuse and neglect can take many forms and Stowmarket Gospel Hall will always consider the circumstances of an individual case.

Understanding abuse and neglect

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

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

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

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

Abuse in adults includes:

Discriminatory: Including forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion or because someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or any other form of hate incident or crime.

Domestic Abuse or Violence: Including an incident or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This includes psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse; so, called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Financial or Material: Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern Slavery: Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Neglect and acts of Omission: Includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Organisational (sometimes referred to as Institutional) : Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example in relation to care provided in a person's own home. This may range from one off

incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Physical: Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Psychological (sometimes referred to as emotional): Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Sexual: Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual acts, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It also includes sexual exploitation which is exploitative, situations, contexts and relationships where the person receives 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, cigarettes, gifts, money) or perceived friendship/relationship as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing sexual acts.

Self-neglect: Includes a person neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings or an ability to provide essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Abuse in children includes:

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

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse and exploitation that fall within these categories. They are child exploitation, cyberbullying and online abuse, criminal exploitation, County Lines, trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, FGM, honour based abuse, grooming, missing. Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly.. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all

backgrounds and walks of life. They may be people in positions of trust; they may also be relatives, friends, neighbours, or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse

SECTION G

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Stowmarket Gospel Hall has an appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for leading safeguarding in the organisation. In their absence, a deputy will be available for members of the church to consult with.

The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are to:

- Ensure that all leaders are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult or child at risk may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed, updated and any changes signed off.
- Ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to Customer First and/or the allocated social worker where necessary.
- Follow up any safeguarding referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- Manage and have oversight over individual complex cases involving allegations against a member of Stowmarket Gospel Hall church, leader of children/ youth work or volunteer working at the Stowmarket Gospel Hall
- Consider any recommendations from the safeguarding process.
- Reinforce the need for confidentiality and to ensure that elders, leaders and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.
- Ensure that youth leaders working directly with children/ adults who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- Ensure elders, youth leaders and volunteers are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.

Training

All elders, youth work leaders and volunteers should receive a basic safeguarding training at a level according to their role. This should be refreshed as a minimum every three years.

SECTION H

Responding to People who have Experienced or are Experiencing Abuse

Stowmarket Gospel Hall recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of adult abuse is never easy.

Responding if a member of Stowmarket Gospel Hall Receives an Allegation:

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

How to respond:

- Reassure the person concerned.
- Listen to what they are saying.
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- Use the vulnerable adult/child's own words where possible.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Tell the child or vulnerable adult what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.

If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be:

- To call an ambulance if required.
- To call the Police if a crime has been committed.
- To preserve evidence.
- To keep yourself and others safe.
- To inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- To record what happened using the concern/ incident form

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than the DSL or deputy. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL the absence of the DSL or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from MASH or CSS. The Elders will support the DSL and Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies via Suffolk Safeguarding Partners or seek advice from MASH or CSS. If the individual with the concern feels that the DSL or Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. This ensures effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the DSL/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the DSL who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or,

if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the deputy.

Making a Referral

Usually this will be the job of the DSL

Please dial 999 if the person is in immediate danger. To discuss whether or not a referral is required, you can call the Professional Consultation Line on 0345 6061499 to speak with a MASH social worker.

For Concerns about a Child

If you have a concern about a child or a young person, you will need to complete and submit a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) using the new secure Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal. Found at www.suffolksp.org

For Concerns about an Adult

If you have a concern about an adult and wish to make a safeguarding referral you will need to use the new Suffolk County Council Adult Care Portal. Found at www.suffolksp.org. The first time you complete a form you will be asked to create a new portal account. It's quick and easy to register for an account and means the information you send to them is secure.

Allegations made against a Leader or worker

If a church member has information which suggests another worker/ member of the church has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a vulnerable adult/child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a vulnerable adult/child.
- Behaved towards a vulnerable adult/child in a way that has indicated she/he is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults/children

The Church member should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is about child abuse the DSL should Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker. If the allegation relates to a vulnerable adult the DSL should liaise with adult social services. The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

If appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) will consult with/make a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and follow the procedures for LADO referrals on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website. LADOs can be contacted by e-mail on LADO@suffolk.gov.uk or by using the LADO central telephone number: 0300 123 2044. The DSL should also make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or

adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

If the allegation is made about the Designated Safeguarding Lead (s), then the allegation should be reported to the Deputy or elders who then have a responsibility to contact the LADO.

Recording and Managing Confidential Information

Stowmarket Gospel Hall is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see Stowmarket Gospel Hall's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. All allegations/concerns should be recorded in the agreed place/file/log where safeguarding concerns are recorded. The information should be factual and not based on opinions. Record what the person tells you, what you have seen and names of witnesses if appropriate. The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with Stowmarket Gospel Hall's Data Protection Policy.

SECTION I

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment and ongoing support of volunteers and leaders

The recruitment / appointment and support of workers is of critical importance to Stowmarket Gospel Hall and to our work and ministry. To fulfil our legal duties all volunteers will be subject to appropriate recruitment processes.

Management of recruitment processes

- At least one person who is involved in the process of appointment of volunteers will be trained in Safe Recruitment
- volunteers will be provided with written Job / role descriptions and person specifications prior to deciding whether to take up the position / role
- Any qualifications where relevant will be verified
- Roles that involve regulated activity and which consequently are subject to a DBS check will be clearly identified as exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- Appropriate records will be kept of all recruitment processes and decisions
- A "Single Central Record" of recruitment checks and a training log will be maintained

Leader positions

- Those applying for a youth leader position will have completed an application form and a self declaration form.
- Prior to appointment, all volunteers will be required to attend a formal discussion which will include the DSL to ensure their suitability and clarity of

understanding of the role and its requirements. Safeguarding will be discussed at this interview.

- Prior to appointment, references will be sought (internal references are acceptable).
- Following appointment and prior to commencement of the role, volunteers will be required to complete a formal induction process.
- As part of the probationary period the applicant will have been given a copy of SGH's Safeguarding policy and know how to report concerns.
- The Single Central Record, training log and Personnel file will be updated as appropriate throughout the process

DBS Checks

- Following appointment and prior to commencement of the role, volunteers involved in regulated activity will be required to complete a DBS check
- Under normal circumstances, the individual will not commence their role until the result of the DBS check has been received
- 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 . In this case 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 a Church elder.
- Once formal notification of a clear DBS check has been received, the Single Central Record will be updated with the relevant information

Blemished DBS Checks

- The applicant will be asked to present the DBS certificate to the Lead Recruiter
- The applicant may, if they wish to, withdraw their application
- 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
- If the applicant did not self-disclose, an open conversation about the circumstances of the blemish will be discussed with the applicant
- 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 and the outcome will be recorded
- Advice can be sought from CSS if required
- The applicant will be given every opportunity to provide input to the assessment and the outcome will be explained to them
- A blemished DBS check does not necessarily prevent the individual from engaging in regulated activity. The risk assessment may conclude:
 - That the individual is unsuitable for the role
 - That further investigation is required
 - That the person is suitable for the role with restrictions
 - That the blemish does not indicate unsuitability

- 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

Working with ex-offenders

From the governments website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-sample-policy-on-the-recruitment-of-ex-offenders/sample-policy-on-the-recruitment-of-ex-offenders

“On the 29 May 2013, legislation came into force that allows certain old and minor cautions and convictions to no longer be subject to disclosure. In addition, employers will no longer be able to take an individual’s old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making decisions. All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, will remain subject to disclosure. In addition, all convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will remain subject to disclosure, as will all convictions where an individual has more than one conviction recorded”

As an organisation assessing applicants’ suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Stowmarket Gospel Hall complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

Stowmarket Gospel Hall undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. Stowmarket Gospel Hall can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Stowmarket Gospel Hall are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended). Stowmarket Gosepl Hall can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

Stowmarket Gospel Hall is committed to the fair treatment of its leaders, potential members or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. Stowmarket Gospel Hall has this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process. Stowmarket Gospel Hall actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Stowmarket Gospel Hall ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. Stowmarket Gospel Hall also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

At interview, or in a separate discussion, Stowmarket Gospel Hall ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of leadership work. Stowmarket Gospel Hall makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request. Stowmarket Gospel Hall undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of leadership.

Probationary periods

The precise nature and expectations of probationary periods will vary from role-to role as described in the role description, however, they are intended to be supportive of the volunteer and to provide a framework that provides accountability to both the individual and the organisation. Probationary periods will not be used for punitive purposes. All volunteers will be subject to a formal probationary period. Prior to commencement of the role, a clear statement of the criteria for successful completion of the probationary period will be provided. Regular support, guidance and review will be provided throughout the probationary period and the outcome (passed, extended, failed) will be communicated to the volunteer prior to the end of the probationary period and records will be retained of all discussions

Ongoing support and supervision

All volunteers will receive proportionate supervision and pastoral care. Supervision will include both personal wellbeing and performance management. Where DBS checks are required, these will be updated at least every three years

Training

All volunteers in roles that involve regulated activity or those who manage such, will be required to attend regular safeguarding training

- Youth leaders and elders will refresh their training at least every three years
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy DSL are required to attend formal update training at least every two years
- All volunteers will undergo some informal update activity annually. This training should include themes on domestic abuse and trauma and the impact on victims including children.
- A log of training and DBS checks will be maintained by the church

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

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

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

Disseminating/Reviewing Policy and Procedures

This safeguarding policy and procedures will be clearly communicated to all youth workers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) will be responsible for ensuring that this is done. 11 The safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the elders of Stowmarket Gospel Hall. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) will be involved in this process and can recommend changes The Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to staff. It may be appropriate to involve all members of the congregation.