

## Turning Good Policy into Good Practice

Once you have written your church's safeguarding policy and procedures the next question is what this document looks like in practice. We want to encourage you to think about how safeguarding becomes embedded into the everyday culture and language of the church rather than just being a document that is read and ratified at the church meeting every year. Here are a few things to consider.

**1. Establish a Safeguarding Team which is experienced in safeguarding and shares a passion for safeguarding in the church.**

Each church should have a named Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS), as well as a Safeguarding Trustee. We encourage every church to think about who is best to take on these roles; is there someone in the church who has experience of managing safeguarding in a professional capacity (working in education, social care, youth work, the police or medical professions are good examples of when people will have experience of managing safeguarding situation)? There is more information on this in the [BUGB Guide to being a Designated Person for Safeguarding](#).

We strongly advise that the role of DPS is not taken on by the minister of the church, as this can produce a conflict when pastoral support is needed by those involved in a safeguarding situation and the minister is also the one liaising with the statutory services.

**2. Make sure it is clear who people should contact if they have a safeguarding concern.**

Consider how you communicate who the DPS is and how people can contact them. There are 2 aspects to this point.

Firstly, establish clear lines of communication by ensuring that the DPS has a dedicated Church email address. If this email address does not include someone's name but is simply 'safeguarding@...' then it can remain consistent even if a new DPS is appointed. You might also consider whether there can be a dedicated phone number set up by the church rather than giving out the DPS's personal number.

Secondly, think about how you share the details of the DPS – who they are and how they can be contacted. Some churches have chosen to do the following:

- Include a photograph of the DPS and their contact details on the church website
- Put posters up around the church (including in the toilets) with the DPS's photograph, name and contact details on it.

- Introduce the DPS in services several times a year so that their face becomes known, even to newcomers to the church.
- The DPS takes time to pop in and talk to each of the Sunday School groups and the Youth Group so the children and young people know who they should talk to, or who their concerns are being shared with by leaders.
- Include a notice about safeguarding in the notice sheets every week, which include a photo of and contact details for the DPS as well as the Policy Statement

### **3. Ensure all the Church trustees understand the importance of safeguarding to the church community and encourage them to commit to promoting it**

As charity trustees the trustees of the church have overall responsibility for safeguarding within the church family. As such it is really important that they all, regardless of any specific responsibilities complete both Level 2 and 3 Excellence in Safeguarding. They should also all be DBS checked at Enhanced Level. Beyond being trained and DBS check we encourage you to work with all of the trustees, so they are actively promoting safeguarding across the church community. The Charity Commission has produced [clear advice for trustees](#) of Charities (including Churches) which outlines their responsibilities.

### **4. Ensure that everyone is trained to the correct level in Excellence in Safeguarding**

The Baptist Union has produced training that is suitable for everyone in your church family.

**Level 1:** This is made up of 2 films – a short and a long version to be shown to the whole church, either in a service or at a church meeting. There are also materials to accompany it which can be used with children and young people of all ages to promote the idea that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and that the church wants to make sure everyone is safe. We recommend that this is shared on an annual basis.

**Level 2:** This is a half day course written specifically with Baptist Churches in mind. It is designed for everyone who volunteers with children, young people and adults at risk, including the pastoral care team. We know that there will be many people within the church who have done safeguarding training for different organisations or in their professional life but creating a culture of safeguarding within the church works when everyone has a shared understanding of what safeguarding looks like for them in their specific role.

**Level 3:** This is another half day course written by the Baptist Union of Great Britain which focuses on the leadership responsibilities for safeguarding and what these look like in practice. All trustees, the minister, Designated Person for Safeguarding and any specific group or activity leaders should attend this training in addition to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding.



We recommend that all leaders and volunteers complete Excellence in Safeguarding training every 4 years. This should be arranged through your regional Baptist Association. You can find more information about the [Excellence in Safeguarding training programme](#) and the Level 1 materials on the BUGB Website.

As an extra tool to support the Excellence in Safeguarding training package we have produced a Gateway to Level 2 booklet which can be used with new volunteers if there is no training session available immediately. Another way of using the Gateway to Level 2 booklet is to encourage each of your volunteer teams to work through it together on an annual basis to refresh their basic knowledge of safeguarding and how to report concerns.

**5. Commit to a process of safer recruitment for all staff and volunteers even if they are longstanding members of the church.**

Safer recruitment is an important aspect of turning good policy into good practice. Safer recruitment is more than just completing a DBS check and there is a section on the [Baptist Union website](#) to help you with this. By embedding safer recruitment into the practices of the church, even for those who you have known for many years, you are giving the message that safeguarding is so important that you will follow your procedures to the letter regardless of how familiar you are with the applicant. Safer recruitment means not just asking people to fill in an application form and providing the name of referees but checking the application form and taking up references. It is only when the procedure is followed to completion that it becomes embedded in good practice.

We know that there will be some resistance to filling in application forms and having to provide the name of referees for people who have been in the church for many years. However it is important that there is consistency in the approach taken with all volunteers to reinforce the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and you are a church that takes it seriously.

**6. Make sure that there are clear records of concerns and any actions taken**

It may seem obvious that we need to keep a record of safeguarding concerns that we have or others raise with us. However, we know that sometimes people are worried about writing things down and sharing information about others within the church family. This might be because they are worried about repercussions if the person finds out what has been said, or because they are worried that keeping a written record about someone else might breach rules around data protection and confidentiality. We want to reassure you that this is not the case. If we are to properly safeguard people in

our church, not just in the immediacy but in years to come then a written record of concerns that can be kept by the DPS and passed on to their successor is essential.

You will find more advice about this in the [BUGB Guide to Safeguarding Record Keeping](#).

## **7. Audit and Review**

It is a good idea to set a schedule to review your safeguarding policy and how it is put into practice on a regular basis. This is particularly helpful if you are a new DPS or Safeguarding Trustee. Alongside reviewing your policy and procedures it is a good idea to review your case records. This will refresh your memory of situations that might remain a concern so you are alert to changes that might be observed in church or where there might need to be a follow up on a Safeguarding Contract.

Conducting an Audit across the church of all activities and practice will give an opportunity for everyone who leads or volunteers in the church to think about what they are doing and how it fits with the church safeguarding policy and procedures. It will help to reiterate that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Baptist Union of Great Britain have produced an [Audit tool for churches](#) to use and this may be a helpful place to start.

## **8. Embed a narrative of care, support and safeguarding into church life**

We hope that the Level 1 film has helped to start a narrative across the church about the importance of everyone feeling safe and looking out for each other. This could be developed further by including safeguarding as a topic for discussion in home groups or for sermons.

## **9. And finally... seek support when you are not sure**

We recognise that people for responsibility for safeguarding churches have very different levels of experience and expertise. We also recognise that safeguarding situations can often be complex and sometimes we need help. Good safeguarding practice means recognising when you are not sure about how to manage a concern and seeking support when required. Remember that as well support from your local statutory agencies each Regional Association has a Safeguarding Contact. You can find their details and [contact them](#) through the BUGB Website.

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