

Connect Christian Fellowship Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies in respect of (1) children and (2) adults in need of protection

This policy is in addition to, and should be read in conjunction with, the Fellowship's Child Protection Policy

'An **'Adult in need of protection'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their: a) personal characteristics **and/or** b) life circumstances **and** c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; **and** d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed'¹ .

A **child** is a person under the age of 18 years.

Purpose and Goals

Everyone has a fundamental right to be safe. Whatever the cause, or wherever it occurs, harm caused to children and / or adults by abuse, exploitation or neglect is not acceptable. Safeguarding is 'everyone's business' and we should all strive to prevent harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Connect Christian Fellowship's meetings are open to the public and it is possible that people who are vulnerable may attend. The Fellowship may seek to give pastoral help in response to requests from vulnerable people seeking guidance. This will be provided by suitably experienced leaders or by referring such persons to another agency that is in agreement with the Christian approach of CCF. All such pastoral input is given from a Biblical and practical basis to encourage faith and Christian discipleship. Connect Christian Fellowship also facilit-

¹"Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership", jointly developed and published by the DOH and the DOJ in July 2015 (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf>)

ates acts of social concern and compassion in the Causeway area which benefit people facing hardship.

Commitment

Connect Christian Fellowship is committed to safe practice in those instances where children or vulnerable adults engage with its services. Direct involvement with such people will seek to maximise protection and a sense of safety for any vulnerable person. Connect Christian Fellowship is committed to developing this practice further in the light of experience and changes in the law and/or good practice guidelines. As a Christian organisation Connect Christian Fellowship respects the intrinsic worth of each person regardless of differentiating characteristics such as age, gender, race, colour, sexuality, social status, religion, politics or other, and will work with each to the best of our ability within the terms of reference of the organisation.

General Principles

- No direct one-to-one in-depth pastoral work will be undertaken with a person under 18 years of age without the expressed permission of one or both parents. A parent may be present if both parties so wish;
- Should a child or young person make a complaint/allegation of a serious nature against a parent, he/she will be listened to carefully and, subject to below, further action will be agreed with the child or young person. However, if mandatory reporting may be required, the child/young person will be advised of the action the adult may have to take and no in-depth pastoral work will be undertaken at this point. Any in-depth work subsequently considered will be decided on in the light of the facts and in consultation with appropriate significant others.
- Where persons have specific vulnerabilities they may, with their agreement, be referred to a doctor or other professional if this is thought to be necessary.

Specific Principles For Work With Children and Vulnerable People

- Children and vulnerable adults seeking help are advised that they should not share beyond that which they feel comfortable in sharing during any group meeting or pastoral session, because once shared an issue cannot be 'un-shared'. Similarly, any question asked of a person, which the person feels uncomfortable answering, may be refused or deferred;
- Where appropriate, children and vulnerable adults are advised that, if information is given indicating that another person may be at current risk of harm, no guarantee of confidentiality can be given, as this may be over-ridden by the duty to report in order to protect the other person. If reporting is deemed necessary the vulnerable person will be encouraged to do this personally (with support if requested). However Connect Christian Fellowship will report such issues against the wishes of the vulnerable person should the safety of a child or vulnerable adult be at stake, and he /she is unwilling to take this action;
- Should information be given by any person indicating that a child or vulnerable adult may be at current risk of harm, no guarantee of confidentiality will be given, as this may be over-ridden by the duty to report in order to protect the other person. If reporting is deemed necessary the informant will be encouraged to do this personally (with support if requested). However Connect Christian Fellowship will report such issues against the wishes of the informant should the safety of a child or vulnerable adult be at stake, and the informant is unwilling to take this action;
- Where an adult is seeking help in respect of historical abuse, the option of reporting to relevant statutory authorities will be raised and discussed.
- Prior to a pastoral session or the offering of assistance to a vulnerable person, he / she will be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a third party either from the commencement or at any time during the session;
- Pastoral care will be provided by two people unless this is not possible. At least one of the people providing pastoral care will be of the same sex as the child or vulnerable

adult. Should it be necessary to undertake one to one pastoral care this will only be conducted by an adult of the same sex as the child or vulnerable person.

- Pastoral care will only be provided to a transgender child or vulnerable adult by two people - one male and one female.

Allegations and Complaints

- Any person reporting a criminal act allegedly committed by any leader of or participator in the fellowship, will be asked to put this in writing.
- Any such allegation should be sent to the Elders at Connect Christian Fellowship, 6-10 Model School Road, Ballymoney.
- If the allegation is against an Elder, it should be sent to the Chairman of the Trustees at the address above.
- Allegations will be referred to the police and / or other statutory authorities for proper investigation, whether or not the person making the allegation has already done this. The Elders will make decisions regarding the on-going management of the one against whom an allegation has been made, in the light of immediate circumstances and the subsequent outcome of the police investigation. It may also be necessary to make an interim decision to suspend and/or monitor such a person as a precautionary measure before the outcome of the police investigation is known, without prejudice to the final outcome of that investigation.
- Serious allegations will be reported to the Charities Commission (NI) as required.
- Complaints of a non-criminal nature will also be taken seriously by the Elders who will take whatever disciplinary measures are deemed appropriate in the light of the outcome of an investigation.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at the Annual General Meeting of the Trustees having regard to any change to the law, good practice guidelines, circumstances, and further experience, as appropriate.

31 January 2019