Community Church Longton

Safeguarding Policy

2026 update

Built on the Thirtyone:eight model safeguarding policy (January 2025).
Approved and signed by the trustees of Community Church Longton on 26 July 2026.

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Section 1: Details of the organisation

Name of Organisation: Community Church Longton

Address: Caroline Street, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 1DE

Tel: 07 867 541 092

General Email address: andy.king@longtoncc.org.uk

Senior Leader Name: Andy King

Senior Leader Contact: 07 867 541 092 / andy.king@longtoncc.org.uk

Safeguarding Lead Name: Angie King

Safeguarding Lead Contact: 07469 251001 / angie.king@longtoncc.org.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead Name: [to be appointed by trustees]

Deputy Safeguarding Lead Contact: [telephone / email to follow appointment]

Safeguarding Trustee: Judy Roebuck

Safeguarding Trustee Contact: judy.roebuck@longtoncc.org.uk

Charity Number: 1 098 345

Regulator: The Charity Commission for England and Wales

Insurance Company: Congregational

Insurance Broker: Edwards Insurance Brokers, Stonebridge House, Kenilworth Road, Meriden, CV7 7LJ — 01 564 730 900

The following is a brief description of our church and the type of work and activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

We proclaim the good news that Jesus came to give us life in all its fullness. We believe an authentic church recognises God's plan to bring wholeness to the hurting and to restore people physically, emotionally and spiritually. We provide a safe environment for children and adults with care and support needs, where they are accepted as part of the church family and encouraged to grow in their faith and worship of God.

We help people find and follow Jesus, and we build a church where they can belong and grow. Our regular activity includes Sunday morning gatherings (worship, communion every other week, children's ministry, and teaching), midweek meetings, and seasonal services including Christmas, Easter and a New Year's Eve Crossover service. Our work is led by a team of paid staff and volunteers, all of whom work within this policy.

Section 2: Governance and leadership

Our commitment

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 of neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on 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 building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

A model safeguarding statement for display is included at Appendix 1.

This policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the Ten Safeguarding Standards published by Thirtyone:eight (thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards).

Governance

The board of trustees of Community Church Longton is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for the church. This includes a critical role in decision-making and compliance, and in setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation — "the way we do things around here." Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

"The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object." (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017)

The board of trustees has overarching responsibility for safeguarding within Community Church Longton, including reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission for England and Wales where required. The board appoints a Safeguarding Trustee who carries lead responsibility on the board for safeguarding matters.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims not only to meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our church, but also to build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- all are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs,

- those who work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles,
- there are clear accountability structures,
- there are codes of conduct,
- the values of the church are embedded in its day-to-day actions and the behaviours of its people,
- and there is open communication.

Section 3: Prevention

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 by failing to prevent harm. Children and adults with care and support needs 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.

For the purposes of this policy:

- A "child" is any person under 18 years old.
- An "adult at risk of harm" is any adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs), who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and who, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it (Care Act 2014, section 42).

To safeguard those in our church we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and take as our starting point 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."

This policy is in line with the following legislation: the Children Act 1989 and 2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023; Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable to partner activity); the Care Act 2014; the Equality Act 2010; the Mental Capacity Act 2005; the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 in respect of Positions of Trust); the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005; and the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Detailed definitions, signs and indicators of abuse, and how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are set out at Appendix 2.

Positions of trust

All adults working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they carry as a result of that relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

Since June 2022, it has been illegal in England and Wales (and in Northern Ireland) for those in positions of trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

Safer recruitment

The leadership will ensure that all workers are appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description and person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form.
- Those shortlisted have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate.
- A self-declaration form and the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS, England and Wales) has been completed where eligible. We will comply with the DBS Code of Practice concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information.
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified.
- A suitable induction and training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of this safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, building a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Specifically:

- All staff and volunteers will undertake basic safeguarding training, renewed every three years.
- The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will undertake advanced safeguarding training, renewed every two years.
- Trustees will undertake specialist safeguarding training appropriate to their governance role, renewed every three years.
- Where the role requires it (for example, working with adults at risk, or in a designated safeguarding role within a partner organisation), additional specialist training will be provided.

The leadership 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.

Practice guidelines

As a church working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships, and minimise the risk of potential harm or abuse and of false or unfounded accusations.

Management of workers — codes of conduct

As a leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers and volunteers will be issued with a code of conduct for working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and outside of their role. They will also receive further training as necessary. The code of conduct will be held by the Safeguarding Lead and reviewed alongside this policy.

Section 4: Partnership working

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be wide variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief, religious practice or differences in understanding of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement, will have its own policy that meets the Thirtyone:eight Ten Safeguarding Standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding — to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults with care and support needs, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 5: Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation, disclosure or concern of abuse. The procedures below are to be followed.

Reporting a concern

A worker or volunteer in receipt of a disclosure, allegation or concern of abuse should report it as soon as possible to:

Safeguarding Lead: Angie King

Tel: 07469 251001

Email: angie.king@longtoncc.org.uk

The Safeguarding Lead is nominated by the leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the disclosure, allegation or concern, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or where the concerns in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, the report should be made to:

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: [Name to be appointed]

Tel: [to be confirmed]

Email: [to be confirmed]

If the concerns implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, the report should be made in the first instance to:

Safeguarding Trustee: Judy Roebuck

Email: judy.roebuck@longtoncc.org.uk

A worker or volunteer can also contact Thirtyone:eight directly for further advice if required: 0303 003 1111 (option 2), PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

The worker or volunteer should record the disclosure, allegation or concern on the cause-for-concern form and share this with the Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible. A copy of the cause-for-concern form is held by the Safeguarding Lead and is available on request.

Statutory contacts — Stoke-on-Trent

The Safeguarding Lead may first ring the Thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. Depending on the nature of the concern they will then contact the relevant statutory services for the area in which the child or adult lives. For most of those connected with Community Church Longton, the contacts are:

Children's Social Care — Stoke-on-Trent (Front Door): 01 782 235 100, 8:30am–6:00pm Mon–Fri

Children's Out-of-hours: 01 782 234 234

Adult Social Care — Stoke-on-Trent: 0800 561 0015

Adult Out-of-hours: 01 782 234 234

Police: 101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency) / Staffordshire Police Public Protection

When others may need to be informed

The Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and nature of the concern, including:

- The Chair of Trustees or the Safeguarding Trustee, who may need to liaise with the insurance company or report a serious incident to the Charity Commission.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- The relevant Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with care and support needs.

Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns will be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to the statutory services, the police, or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

The leadership will support the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead 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 the right of any individual to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or to seek advice from Thirtyone:eight. The leadership hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, an individual feels that the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they disagree with the Safeguarding Lead about the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope that by making this statement the leadership demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and to the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead and 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.

Concern about a child

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse: where a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect, or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will:

- If the child requires immediate medical attention, contact the relevant medical services and inform the doctor of any safeguarding concerns.
- Contact Children's Social Care (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, where there are concerns about a child's safety, or if a child is afraid to return home.
- If the disclosure, allegation or concern is directly about the parents, do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having first contacted Children's Social Care.
- For lower-level concerns (for example, poor parenting), encourage the parent or carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of harm.
- Where the parent or carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Care direct for advice.

- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Children's Social Care.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or concerns of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Care for children and families and the Police on 101.
- Depending on the circumstances, consider whether it is appropriate to speak to the parents of the child. Where there is doubt, contact Thirtyone:eight first.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Children's Social Care or the Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Allegations of financial abuse of a child

In the event of allegations or concerns of financial abuse of a child, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will contact Children's Social Care to report the concerns and the Police.

Concern about an adult at risk

Concerns or allegations of abuse or harm — including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery and domestic abuse. If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services on 999, informing them of any safeguarding concerns.
- Contact Adult Social Care, who will be able to advise whether this reaches the safeguarding threshold and what action is required. Alternatively, Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

Spiritual abuse

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Identify support services for the survivor (for example counselling or other pastoral support).
- Contact Thirtyone:eight and, in discussion with them, consider appropriate action with regard to the scale of the concern.

Allegations against a worker with children or young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff), and following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Care and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the LADO, whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.
- Share information about the concern with the Police.

Allegations against a worker with adults at risk

The Safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Care to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes, and regarding any suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service following the advice of Adult Social Care.
- Share information about the concern with the Police.

The Care Act 2014 places the duty upon Adult Social Care 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 adult chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. This is a decision for Adult Social Care to make, not the church.

Allegations of non-recent (historical) sexual abuse

If a child discloses non-recent sexual abuse, the procedure for sexual abuse above is followed.

If an adult discloses non-recent sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Give the adult the option to report this to the Police. If the adult does not wish to report it, the Safeguarding Lead may pass on information about the alleged perpetrator to relevant authorities, but must not share details of the survivor without their consent.
- If the alleged perpetrator is in a role working or volunteering with children or young people, make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- If the alleged perpetrator is in a role working with adults at risk, liaise with Adult Social Care to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- If the alleged perpetrator is in a role within Community Church Longton, contact Thirtyone:eight and, in discussion with them, consider appropriate action with regard to the scale of the concern.
- Offer the survivor pastoral and wellbeing support, signposting to specialist services as appropriate.

Section 6: Wellbeing support and pastoral care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The leadership is committed to offering wellbeing support and pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and supporting all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of Community Church Longton.

Person responsible for wellbeing support and pastoral care: Andy King (Pastor)

Tel: 07 867 541 092

Email: andy.king@longtoncc.org.uk

Working with those who may pose a risk

When someone attending Community Church Longton is known to pose a potential risk to children, or to adults with care and support needs, the leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer wellbeing support and pastoral care. In our safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, we will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate external parties (such as Thirtyone:eight, probation, Police, or the relevant statutory service).

A written safeguarding agreement will be drawn up where appropriate, signed by the individual and held by the Safeguarding Lead.

Section 7: Online and digital safeguarding

Safeguarding does not stop at the church door. The same care we take in person — boundaries, accountability, and a second pair of eyes — applies online: in messaging groups, on social media, on video calls, and on the livestream.

Specifically:

- Workers and volunteers should not have unmediated one-to-one direct messaging contact with a child or young person; communication is via the parent or carer, or via a group with at least one other approved adult included.
- Photographs and video of children and young people will not be shared online without written parental consent. Names will not be tagged.
- Livestreaming of services will avoid identifiable close-up footage of children. A clear notice that the service is being recorded and streamed will be displayed.
- Pastoral conversations of a sensitive nature should not, where possible, be carried out by text message; phone or in-person conversations are preferred and a contemporaneous record kept.
- Concerns arising online (for example, disclosures by direct message, concerning posts, or grooming behaviour) follow the same reporting routes as any other safeguarding concern.

Section 8: Complaints, records and confidentiality

A complaint that does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral will still be taken seriously. Complaints should normally be made to the Senior Leader, or, if the Senior Leader is the subject of the complaint, to the Chair of Trustees.

Records of safeguarding concerns, referrals, decisions and actions taken will be held securely by the Safeguarding Lead. They will be retained in line with Thirtyone:eight guidance and the requirements of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information will be shared on a strict need-to-know basis. The Safeguarding Lead will keep the Safeguarding Trustee informed of any active concerns, and the trustees as a whole informed of safeguarding activity through the Safeguarding Trustee's report at each trustee meeting.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership of Community Church Longton and will be reviewed annually on:

Annual review date: July 2027

Signed:

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 26 July 2026

A current copy of this policy is available on the Community Church Longton website and from the church office on request.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding statement

To be displayed in a prominent place at Community Church Longton.

Protection of children and adults — policy statement

Name of place of worship: Community Church Longton

The following statement was agreed by the leadership and trustees on: 26 July 2026

- Community Church Longton is committed to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their wellbeing.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and adults with care and support needs in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and children, and we will ensure that all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have equal access to and can fully participate in every aspect of the life of Community Church Longton.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in appointing and selecting those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe every child and adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that all those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults, and ensuring that all workers in our church work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, the Equality Act 2010, and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by Community Church Longton.
- Supporting all in Community Church Longton affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the Police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, please speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding leads for Community Church Longton:

Safeguarding Lead: Angie King

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: [to be appointed by trustees]

Safeguarding Trustee: Judy Roebuck

The full safeguarding policy is available on the Community Church Longton website and from the church office on request.

Signed by leadership:

Date: 26 July 2026

Appendix 2: Definitions of abuse — signs and indicators

This appendix references the Thirtyone:eight published guidance on definitions of abuse together with signs and indicators — children, and definitions of abuse together with signs and indicators — adults. The current guidance is available at: thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/types-of-abuse

A summary covering each of the following will be circulated alongside the policy and held by the Safeguarding Lead:

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse, including child sexual exploitation.
- Emotional abuse.
- Neglect.
- Domestic abuse.
- Spiritual abuse.
- Discriminatory abuse.
- Financial or material abuse.
- Modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Online and technology-facilitated abuse.
- Self-neglect.
- Organisational abuse.
- Bullying.

How to respond to a disclosure: receive (listen calmly, take it seriously, do not promise confidentiality), reassure (commend the courage of the person disclosing, do not promise to keep it secret), respond (do not investigate or interrogate; ask only what is necessary to be clear about the concern), record (write down what was said as soon as possible, in the person's own words where possible, with date, time, place and who was present), refer (pass the information promptly to the Safeguarding Lead).