HOPE
CHURCH RHONDDA

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Produced by Hope Church Rhondda in association with ThirtyOne:Eight

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1. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

1.1.Document Details

Document title	Safeguarding Policy	
Document Author	Simon Dalton	12 September 2024
Document Approval	Trustee – Safeguarding Lead	Ben Franks Greg Moss

1.2.Version Control

Date	Version	Author	Comments
12 September 2024	6.0	Simon Dalton	
12 February 2026	7.0	Simon Dalton	Changes made to include the 4 Rs, as well as clarifying that training with 31:8 will take place at the earliest opportunity for new workers. References to social media platforms updated to be current. Organisation details updated to reflect current leadership details. Safeguarding trustee details updated. A commitment to participating in safeguarding Sunday every November has been included.

2. ORGANISATION DETAILS

2.1.Contact details

Name of Place of Worship: **Hope Church Rhondda**

Addresses:

Tonypandy Congregation: **Unit 1& 2 Dunraven Street, Tonypandy, CF40 1LX**

Trebanog Congregation: **Waun Wen Centre, Trebanog, Porth CF39 9LX**

Upper Rhondda Congregation: **Hope church Rhondda, Parc busnes treorci, Abergorki Industrial Estate, Ynyswen, Treorchy, CF42 6DL**

Tel No: **01443 442635**

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Lead Pastor/Senior Leader Name: **Jonathan Burton, Simon Dalton, Daniel Rigg, Paul Harding**

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Safeguarding Coordinator: **Simon Dalton**

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Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators: **Katie Goldring, Daniel Rigg**

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators Contact Email: katie@hopechurchrhondda.org.uk dan@hopechurchrhondda.org.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation: **Advance Movement UK** www.advancemovement.com

Lead Trustee for Safeguarding: **Greg Moss**

Contact Details for Lead Trustee for Safeguarding: greg@hopechurchrhondda.org.uk

Charity Number: **1180123**

Local Authority: **Rhondda Cynon Taff**

Insurance Company: **Ansvar Insurance (Policy Number CHP2283278)**

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

2.2.Our Vision

Hope Church Rhondda is a church based in the Rhondda Valleys, South Wales and aims to advance the evangelical Christian faith and other charitable works in the Rhondda and the rest of the world. Our activities include weekly gatherings for worship as well as regular youth and children's activities in the local area. Occasionally youth and children will be taken away on day trips and over night activities. Additionally, we have weekly activities that benefit or are attended by vulnerable adults including toddlers, baby bank and foodbank.

2.3. Introduction

Good governance helps an organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this, are the Trustees.

The trustees are appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for how an organisation or charity operates and have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or "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)

2.4.Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults 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 have because of this 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.

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales) 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.

2.5. Culture

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

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- there are accountability structures

- with codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day to day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication

To ensure safeguarding is part of our culture we will take part in ‘Safeguarding Sunday’ each November using 31:8 resources.

2.6.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 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.
This policy and other relevant documents are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by ThirtyOne:Eight.

Hope Church Rhondda undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

3. PREVENTION

3.1. The 4Rs of safeguarding and child protection

The 4Rs of safeguarding and child protection can help volunteers in our organisation to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and keep children safe.

They are:

Recognise possible abuse, including knowing what abuse is, what to look out for, and how to be vigilant at all times.

Respond quickly and appropriately to possible concerns. Sometimes a concern is obvious, sometimes it is not.

Report your concerns to the appropriate person or organisation to ensure that the church does everything possible to keep children and young people safe and supported.

Record your observations and concerns, including the actions you and others have (or haven't) taken.

These 4 Rs will be visible to children and youth workers in the spaces they work, and will be part of mandatory safeguarding training.

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.

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.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy (see Appendices).

3.2.Safer recruitment

Hope Church Rhondda will ensure all workers (employed or volunteers) will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment.

This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview including the 4 Rs
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A relevant DBS check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information). Where workers are from outside the UK Hope Church Rhondda will obtain suitable ‘fit person’ or criminal record checks
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant including safeguarding training with 31:8 at the earliest opportunity
- The applicant receives and signs a copy of the ‘code of conduct’ form (signature recorded)
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation’s safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns

The above information in captured using a Google form and recorded securely.

3.3.Young helpers under 18

Young people under 18 will often be used as helpers and will not be left unsupervised. (Indeed, this happens outside the church with children from secondary schools having work experience in infant schools and nurseries).
In these circumstances, we advise that such helpers should be responsible to a named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. For example, they should not be counted as a ‘worker’ when considering staff/child ratios (See appendix 8).
The full recruitment procedure would not be applied, though we would expect to acquire basic information about the individual and take up personal references. Police checks would not normally be required. Care should be taken to ensure that this process is not used to avoid proper checks for recruitment. It is advisable for young helpers to work with children at the younger age groups, to avoid blurring of friendships with peers.

3.4.Recruitment of ex-offenders

No applicant for voluntary or employed service within the Church or any worker in the course of their service will be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of disclosure information including convictions. Interviews will provide the opportunity for open and measured discussion on the subject of offences. Failure to reveal information at interview that is directly relevant to the position being sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary service.
At interview or when receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, we will take into consideration: -

- The relevance of the conviction to the position being offered
- The seriousness of the offence
- The time since the offence took place
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Any change in the applicant’s circumstances since the offence took place.
  Everyone involved in the recruitment process will be made aware of this policy.

3.5. Safeguarding Training

Hope Church Rhondda is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing 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. All workers are required to complete the ThirtyOne:Eight training, either 'Safeguarding Children & Young People' or 'Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm,' depending on their role, at the earliest opportunity, with refreshers every three years. Trustees will likewise complete the 'Safeguarding for Trustees' training. The Safeguarding Lead is required to complete the ThirtyOne:Eight Safeguarding Lead's training for their role.

Hope Church Rhondda 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.

3.6. 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 false or unfounded accusation.

3.7.Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

Hope Church Rhondda is committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards 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 job role and out. They will also receive further training as necessary.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

4.1.Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings that Hope Church Rhondda may at times work with means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our 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, and ensure checks equivalent to DBS checks are carried out coming from outside the UK. Safeguarding training will also be included as part of partners induction prior to working with any children, young people or adults.

It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets ThirtyOne:Eight's safeguarding standards.

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

5. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below (contact details are at the front of this document):

- Documenting a concern
  The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the "Safeguarding Lead" and complete the Google Form accessible by this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRjj7qGW2ZQtTtwOInN8Chzi5J0e7phzd8INfa5nwkNGeF8A/viewform The Safeguarding Lead is nominated by Hope Church Rhondda 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 Lead or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to the "Deputy Safeguarding Lead". If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to: ThirtyOne:Eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel: 0303 003 1111.
  Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
- The Safeguarding lead should contact the appropriate agency, or they may first ring the ThirtyOne:Eight helpline for advice. They then may contact social services in the area the child or adult lives depending upon advice given.
- The Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, including the Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. 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 Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from ThirtyOne:Eight.
- Hope Church Rhondda will support the Safeguarding Lead/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 or seek advice from ThirtyOne:Eight, although Hope Church Rhondda hopes that those who attend the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co- ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that Hope Church Rhondda demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding Lead/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.

5.1.Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

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

- Contact Children's Social Services (or ThirtyOne:Eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.

- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/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 Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by ThirtyOne:Eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse
In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co- ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by ThirtyOne:Eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. ThirtyOne:Eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

5.2. Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, ThirtyOne:Eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
  If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Lead will:
- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact ThirtyOne:Eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people
If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (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 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.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs
The safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of 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.

6. PASTORAL CARE

6.1.Supporting those affected by abuse

Hope Church Rhondda is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

6.2.Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; Hope Church Rhondda will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, 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 parties.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY.

Definition of bullying

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

Objectives of this policy

- All children, workers, parents and carers should be aware of the anti-bullying policy within the organisation and what they should do if bullying arises
- All workers should have an understanding of what bullying is, be aware of possible signs if it is happening and follow the policy when it is reported
- Children and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

Prevention
Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

- Report the bullying incident to children's leaders
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken
- In all cases of bullying, the incidents should be recorded by the worker
- Consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of the bully, but this should only be done if workers are satisfied there is no bullying/abuse going on at home that might exacerbate the situation
- If it is thought that an offence has been committed, consideration should be given to contacting the police
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly
- Help should be offered to help the bully address his/her behaviour

Outcomes

The children's worker involved in dealing with the incident should issue a warning to the child concerned
An apology should be given by the child who has bullied another. If possible, those involved will be reconciled.

After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
After the incident(s) have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken.

All incidents must be recorded via the Google form

8. ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

ThirtyOne:Eight Online Safety definition:

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology. An online safety policy should be adopted and adapted to reflect all communications between church/organisation's workers and children (those under 18 years of age).

8.1 Policy guidelines for Church Workers/Volunteers

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.
- Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; don't abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.
- Only give personal contact details to children that are within the public domain of the church / organisation, including your mobile telephone number.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.
- Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of the church/organisation and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Where possible only use equipment provided by the church/organisation to communicate with children.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.
- Ensure your church/organisation domain name/logo appears with every Internet post made by a church computer user. Any user may thus be viewed as a representative of your church/organisation while conducting business on the Internet.
- Email should only be used to communicate specific information. (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- Email History should be kept and dated.
- When using email/internet for communication with children, it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. Where working with children outside normal office hours workers should seek advice from their leader but there should be no email communication after 9pm.
- Use of any web camera or visual communication via the internet is generally not permitted.
- Workers should refrain from using such methods on a one to one basis as they cannot be recorded. (It can be used for conference calls and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera/Skype in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use).

8.2 Social Media Policy

- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children under 18 shall be limited to monitored/administrated groups with other church staff in
- Text and any other media posted shall be subject to the acceptable use policy
- All interaction on social media groups shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes
- Any private messages shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred onto the safeguarding lead
- All users of social media must be above the minimum age limit i.e. 13 for Facebook
- Workers should ensure their privacy setting ensure the highest levels of security in order to restrict children being able to see any more than what is relevant to communication within the group
- All social media groups should provide links to statutory authorities such as CEOP, to enable children to report online abuse.

8.3 Consent for photographic images and videos online

- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will endeavour to prevent children from being easily identified.
- Children's full names will not be used on the website in association with their photographs.
- Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed and images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought for and how the image will be stored if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved permission should be sought in line with the photographic guidelines.

9. ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

The trustees of Hope Church Rhondda will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required.

Date of the most recent review:

Date of the next review:

Safeguarding Lead:

Name:
Signature:
Date:

Chair of Trustees:

Name:
Signature:
Date:

A copy of this policy is also available on our website www.hopechurchrhondda.org.uk

Appendix 1 - UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

What constitutes abuse?

In drawing up this policy, it is recognised that the term ‘abuse’ can be subject to wide interpretation. The starting point for a definition is the following statement: ‘Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons’.

The Policy outlines the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be abused, harmed or neglected.

There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Definitions of Abuse

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) are stated below.

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. This includes someone in a position of trust.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fabricated induced illness or factitious illness by proxy or *Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy**.
**Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy is defined as a form of child abuse in which the parents, or carers, give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children (The Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry)*

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as long as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is 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 involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse).

Other Safeguarding Issues

As a church, we are aware of the guidance that is available in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Private Fostering and the Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism.

We are vigilant to the risk of any of them being practised and alert to the signs of potential or actual abuse. We take this abuse very serious and will take timely and appropriate action in respect of concerns about any child suspected to be at risk of any of them.

Appendix 2 - RECOGNISING ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts / scratches / substance abuse
  Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse
- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia

Emotional Signs of Abuse

Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
Nervousness, frozen watchfulness

Obsessions or phobias
Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
Attention-seeking behaviour
Persistent tiredness
Running away/stealing/lying

Appendix 3 - RESPONDING TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General Points

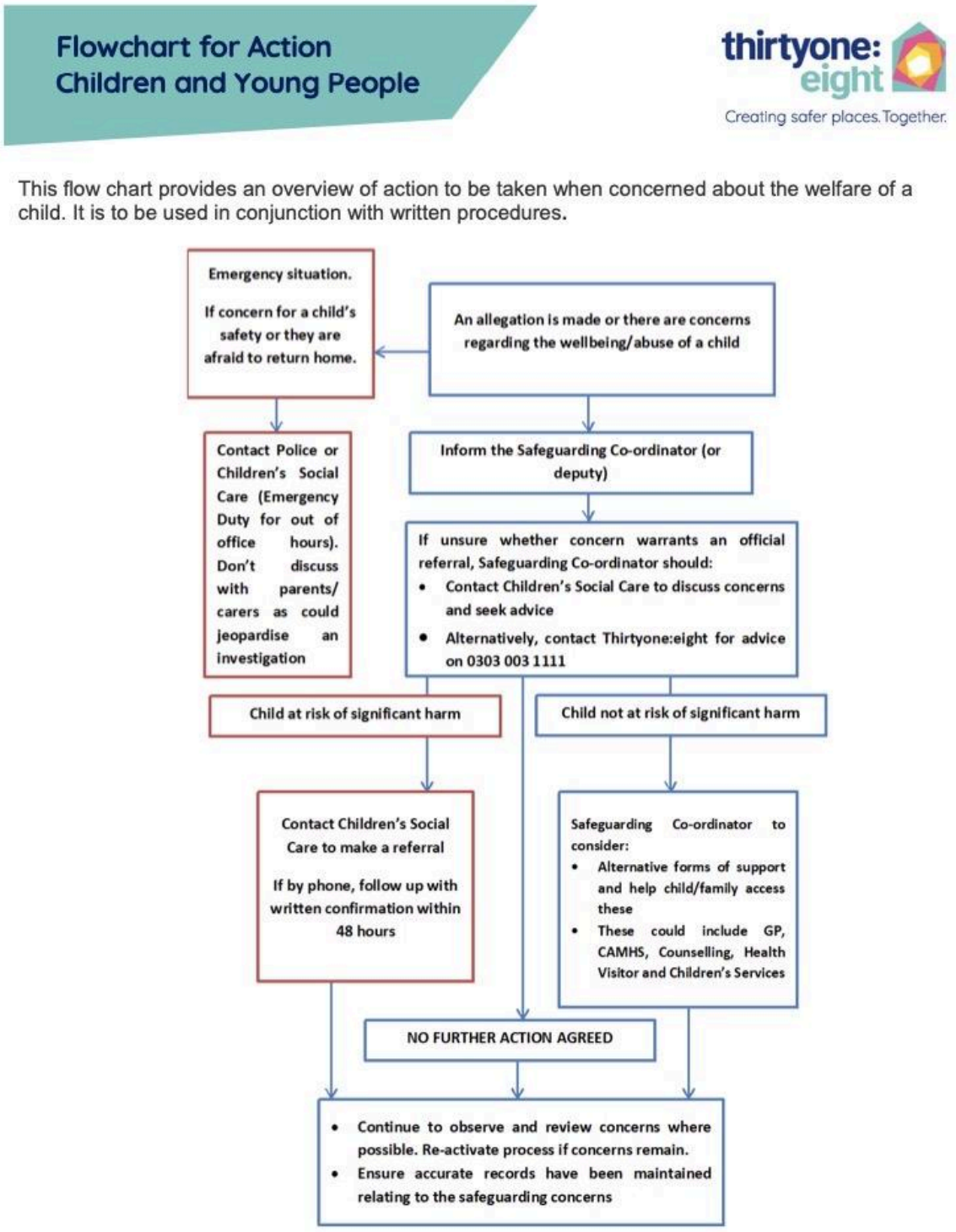
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
  Helpful Things You May Say or Show
- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you
  Don't Say
- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else" Concluding
- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (You might have to consider referring to Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator in the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or contact an agency such as ThirtyOne:Eight for advice or go directly to Local Authority Children's Social Care/Police/NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed. It is quite possible that hearing an allegation may affect you in some way and finding an appropriate person to talk to is important. Depending on the nature of the issue, and those involved, you may wish to speak to one of the leaders you relate to. However, you must be mindful of the need to respect privacy, and possibly confidentiality, of those involved/affected. Other sources of support include: the Safeguarding Coordinator or their deputy; ThirtyOne:Eight and Children's Social Care.

Report soon as possible (preferably within minutes of the child talking to you), use this form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRjj7qGW2ZQtTtwOInN8Chzi5J0e7phzd8INfa5nwkNGeF8A/viewform and record exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g., a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.

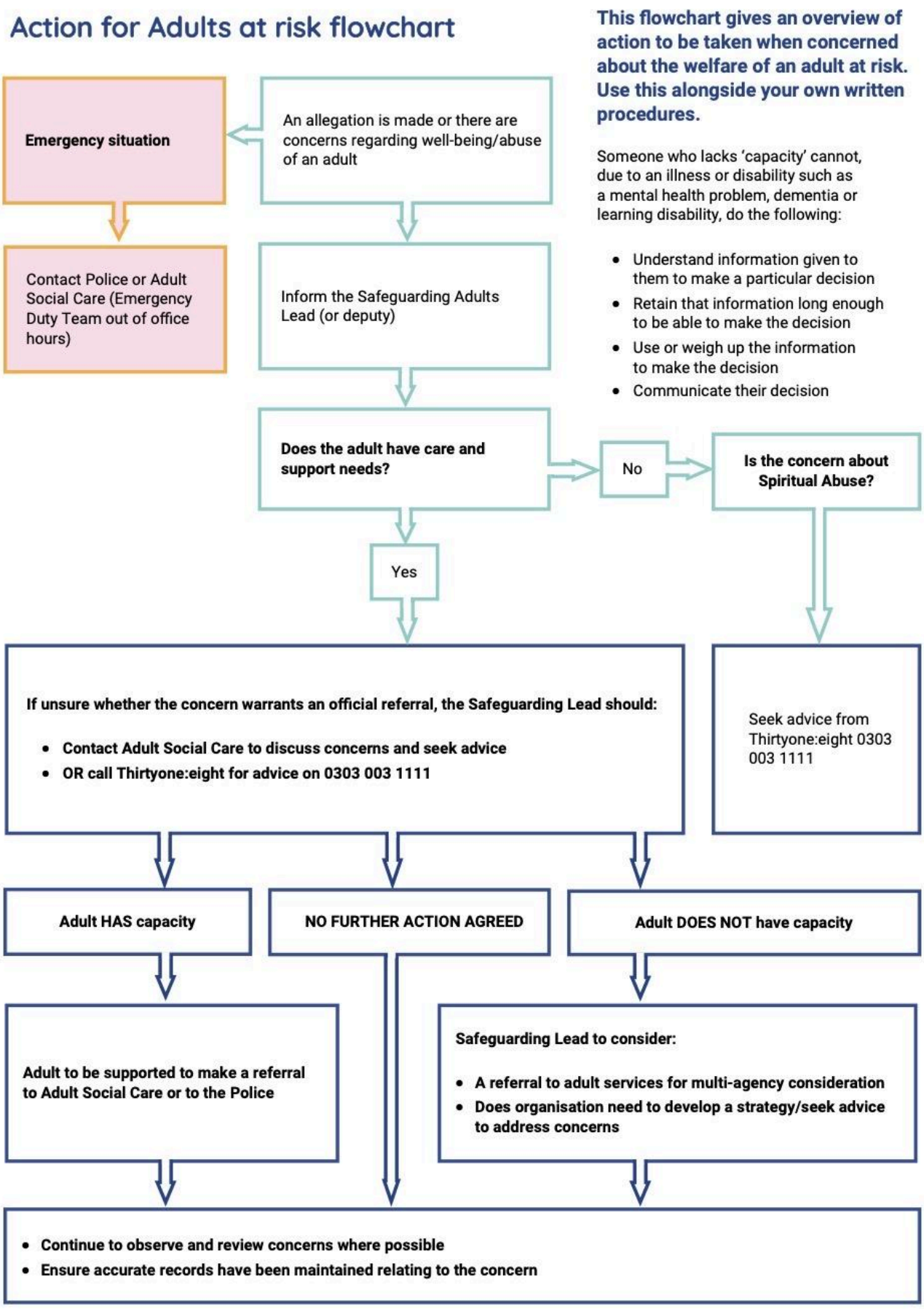
Appendix 4 – FLOWCHART FOR ACTION: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Flowchart for Action Children and Young People

This flow chart provides an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of a child. It is to be used in conjunction with written procedures.



Appendix 5 - FLOWCHART FOR ACTION: ADULTS AT RISK



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Appendix 6 – ONLINE SAFETY FLOWCHART

Online Safety Flowchart

thirtyone:eight
Creating safer places. Together.

Online Safety incident raised by a child or worker

Inform place of worship/organisation's Safeguarding Officer

You can always contact the Thirtyone:eight Safeguarding Helpline for advice 0303 003 11 11

Inappropriate but not illegal (bullying*), adult content i.e. jokes, violent action films etc.

If child is accountable, decide on appropriate course of action

If worker is accountable, leader to decide on appropriate course of action

Possible internal action
- Inform parents/carers
- Carry out risk assessment to prevent future incidents
- Counselling for child if necessary
- Disciplinary action for worker

Debrief on online-safety and lessons learnt

Review policies, procedures and monitoring methods

Illegal material or activity (grooming, sexually explicit material shared with child, child abuse images)

Illegal Activity

Report to police

Illegal content

Report to Internet Watch Foundation

Child at risk

Report to CEOP (or police if immediate risk)

Follow advice on securing and preserving evidence until the relevant agency (above) can review it

If material or activity found to be illegal, allow relevant agency to carry out their investigation

Possible internal action
- Inform parents/carers
- Carry out risk assessment to prevent future incidents
- Referral for counselling for child if necessary

Debrief on online-safety and lessons learnt

Review policies, procedures and monitoring methods

Useful Contacts

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
www.ceop.police.uk

(*) Some forms of bullying or content may be illegal – see Malicious Communications Act 1988, Obscene Publications Act. For extreme pornography – Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, etc.

Appendix 7 – CODE OF CONDUCT

Hope Church Rhondda's behaviour code for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).
The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for Hope Church Rhondda. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the Safeguarding Lead
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that Breaches Hope Church Rhondda's social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 8 - RATIOS

Christian Safeguarding Services' advice on ratios accessed here

https://thecss.co.uk/2020/05/24/guidance-on-staffing-ratios-for-your-childrens-work/ (12/09/24)

Below is a table indicating the best practice guidance in helping you to be able to work out how many adults will be needed to supervise children in your children's work safely.
The NSPCC (https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children/) recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. They recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers in helping to keep children safe:

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

Depending on the needs and the abilities of the children in your group, and also the nature of the activity you are running , you may need to have more adults than the minimum requires.
We do recommend you have at least two adults present, even when working with smaller groups. Also, some churches have young people who help to supervise younger children, only young people aged 18 and above should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.