

# St Peters IPC, Liss, Safeguarding Policy

June 2023

## SECTION 1 Details of the place of worship

Name of Place of Worship:	<b>St Peters International Presbyterian Church</b>
Address:	<b>St Peters Church, Church Street West Liss GU33 6JY</b>
Email:	<b>pastor@ipc-liss.com</b>
Tel No:	<b>01730 858722</b>
Membership of Denomination:	<b>International Presbyterian Church (IPC)</b>
Charity Number:	<b>287481</b>
Insurance Company:	<b>Access Insurance Services   Selsdon House   212-220 Addington Road   South Croydon   London   CR2 8LD</b>

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

We meet at St Peters Church West Liss - a medieval church building. During our services, there are creche areas at the back of the building, and in an adjoining belltower, where parents/carers supervise their own children. We run a Sunday School before church in the building, usually twice a month. We also run occasional events for children and young people, including a Summer holiday club. We have a toddler group that meets at The Triangle Centre, Liss.

We may also interact with vulnerable adults through the services and pastoral care of the church.

### 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.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safeguarding Standards** published by the independent safeguarding organization, thirtyone:eight, and in line with our denominational standards. For further details on best practice in individual situations, we will have regard for the up to date guidance from thirtyone:eight, in particular the online safeguarding manual.

The *IPC Safeguarding Statement* is attached in Appendix 2.

The International Presbyterian Church has a Christian care for the welfare of each individual and seeks to make the Church a safe place for all. In particular the Church seeks to protect and safeguard all those who are especially vulnerable, both children and vulnerable adults, with whom it comes into contact through its activities and services.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church, including those working with vulnerable groups, to seek to prevent neglect or abuse.

The Church seeks to safeguard these vulnerable groups through its congregations, through its committees and, where appropriate, in cooperation with the statutory agencies, police and social services.

To this end, the Church is committed to inform those who work on its behalf, both paid workers and volunteers, with children and vulnerable adults how to recognise and report harm or abuse. The Church is also committed to operate safe recruitment and working practices and procedures with respect to all such workers and to offer them appropriate support, supervision and training.

Ordinarily, this will mean all office bearers (elders and deacons), and those who work with children and young people in an unsupervised capacity, will be required to have a DBS check. These checks should be repeated every three years. There may be other roles that arise where the elders and safeguarding officer deem a DBS is appropriate.

The Church also undertakes to offer pastoral support to individuals in the Church who have been affected by harm or abuse.

The Leadership 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.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

## **SECTION 2**

### **Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse**

#### **2.1 Understanding abuse and neglect**

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be

abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

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

*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 which states:

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

**Definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse; as well as guidelines for effective listening to disclosures of abuse are found in Appendix 3.**

## **2.2 Safeguarding awareness**

The Leadership 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. We will take advantage of safeguarding training through thirtyone:eight for all our workers.

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.

## **2.3 Responding to Allegations of Abuse**

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to **Sarah Liechty (hereafter the “Safeguarding Co-ordinator”) 07530 701352** who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to **James Buchanan, 07828 845084**. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to thirtyone:eight PO Box 133,

Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from thirtyone:eight as above.
  - The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours 8.30am to 5pm) is 0300 555 1384. The out of hours emergency number is 0300 555 1373.
  - The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours 8.30am to 5pm) is 0300 555 1386. There is no out of hours emergency number so contact the Police on 101. In an emergency and if someone is in immediate danger phone 999.
  - The Police Protection Team telephone number is 0845 123 33 33.
- Where required the Safeguarding Co-ordinator **may** need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, such as the church's insurance company. Alternatively, if the allegation is against a person who is in a position of trust (ie – works with children whether on a paid or voluntary basis), then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01962 876364. See also Hampshire County Council's website.
- 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 Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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 the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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 direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ 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.

#### **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 Co-ordinator/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.

**Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of 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 Co-ordinator/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.
- **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people or with adults with care and support needs.**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children’s Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – see above

## SECTION 3

### Prevention

#### 3.1 Safer recruitment

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

- There is guidance and orientation to the position
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- Suitable training is provided
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The volunteer has been given a copy of the church's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

#### 3.2 Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision.

For each group or activity we run, there will be at least two adults who have been safely recruited and DBS checked. To safeguard both the children and the helpers, children should not be left with just one adult for any extended period of time. We recognise there may be instances where this is unavoidable (eg if one adult needs to care for an injured child, or take someone to the toilet).

Occasionally, helpers without a DBS may attend a group. For example, to give a personal testimony or help with a specialised activity. In such cases, the non DBS adult is never to be left alone with any children.

We will follow the legal guidelines for adult:child ratios as follows:

- 0-2 years 1 adult to 3 children
- 2-3 years 1 adult to 4 children
- 3-8 years 1 adult to 8 children
- 8-18 years 1 adult to 12 children (NB there is no legal ratio requirement for over 8s)

The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Pastoral Care**

#### **4.1 Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership 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.

#### **4.2 Working with offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, and with regard to the police and other authorities, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

## **SECTION 5**

### **Practice Guidelines**

As a church working with children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in. These are formulated and reviewed in consultation with the workers involved. These include registration forms for activities, consent for photographs and others as appropriate.

#### **Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings 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 in 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. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets the thirtyone:eight safeguarding standards.

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.

**Signed by:**    \_\_\_J E Buchanan\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**        \_\_\_20<sup>th</sup> June 2023\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Leadership Safeguarding Statement**

The Elders of St Peters IPC (hereafter referred to as the Leadership) recognise the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership:

This place of worship is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.



**We are committed to:**

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- As required, consulting the online safeguarding manual developed by the thirtyone:eight for up-to-date information and guidelines for specific situations.

**We recognise:**

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) 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 then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

**We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.**

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs then speak to Sarah Liechty who has been approved as safeguarding co-ordinator for this place of worship.

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from Sarah Liechty or James Buchanan and can also be downloaded from our website.

### **Signed on Behalf of St Peters IPC**

Signed \_\_\_J E Buchanan\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_20<sup>th</sup> June 2023\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **IPC Statement on Care and Protection**

The IPC is committed to the creation of a caring environment for children (and indeed for vulnerable adults). We recognize the need to safeguard children from all forms of abuse and neglect, be they passive or active. We recognize that child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families, regardless of whether that work brings them into direct contact with children.

Specifically:

1. IPC churches will incorporate into church practice the civil legal requirements in respect of child protection in so far as they remain compatible with the teaching of the Bible.
2. IPC churches will ensure that those working with children are appointed through a clear process established under authority of the Session which includes the checks required by civil authorities appropriate to such roles.
3. Each IPC church Session shall agree a child protection policy and nominate a designated team (including at least one elder) to be responsible for monitoring its implementation.
4. Each IPC church Session shall make every effort to minimize the opportunity for temptation to sin in respect of child protection. There should never be occasion for children to go unsupervised, nor should there be occasion for one adult to be left alone with children for a significant period.
5. It is part of the Christian duty of every member of our churches to be aware of the child protection policy and to make whatever contribution they can to create a safe and caring environment for children (and vulnerable adults).
6. Each IPC church shall pay due attention to the confidentiality of its members (including children) whilst recognising the absolute need to share information when concerns are raised or disclosed that identify a child's wellbeing is or has been at risk.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### ***Definitions of Abuse (children)***

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'.

#### **What are abuse and neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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 for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

- **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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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 maltreatment 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 a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving

children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### ***Definitions of Abuse (Adults)***

The following definition of abuse is laid down in 'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (Department of Health 2000):

'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors:

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it'.

- **Physical Abuse**

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

- **Sexual Abuse**

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

- **Psychological or Emotional Abuse**

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

- **Financial or Material Abuse**

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions

- **Neglect/Self Neglect**

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general well being or development is impaired

- **Discriminatory Abuse**

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

- **Organisational Abuse**

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

### ***Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)***

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

#### **Physical**

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation\*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

#### **Sexual**

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate 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**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- 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

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc

\*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

### ***Additional Signs of Possible Abuse (vulnerable adults)***

#### **Physical**

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

#### **Sexual**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming

#### **Psychological**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia

#### **Financial or Material**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

## **Neglect or Omission**

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

## **Discriminatory**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care

## **Institutional**

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans
- Public discussion of private matter
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity

## ***Effective Listening for Disclosures of Abuse***

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

## **Helpful Responses**

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

## **Unhelpful Responses**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else