SAFEGUARDING RECORD KEEPING

BUGB guide to record keeping for local Baptist churches

Safeguarding Record Keeping V2.0
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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Good record keeping is a vital part of safeguarding best practice. This guide sets out to help advise local Baptist churches about all aspects of the record keeping process, from the initial records made to the appropriate storage and retention of such records. It applies to safeguarding records relating to both children and adults at risk.

Records should use clear, straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they are easily understood by a reader who is not familiar with the situation. They should clearly differentiate between facts and opinion. It is important that safeguarding records are stored safely and securely and are not kept for longer than is necessary.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, organisations are required to meet certain requirements and principles in relation to what information is recorded, how this information is shared and with whom, and the arrangements for the storage of the records. It should be noted that this guide is provided for guidance only and does not constitute legal advice.

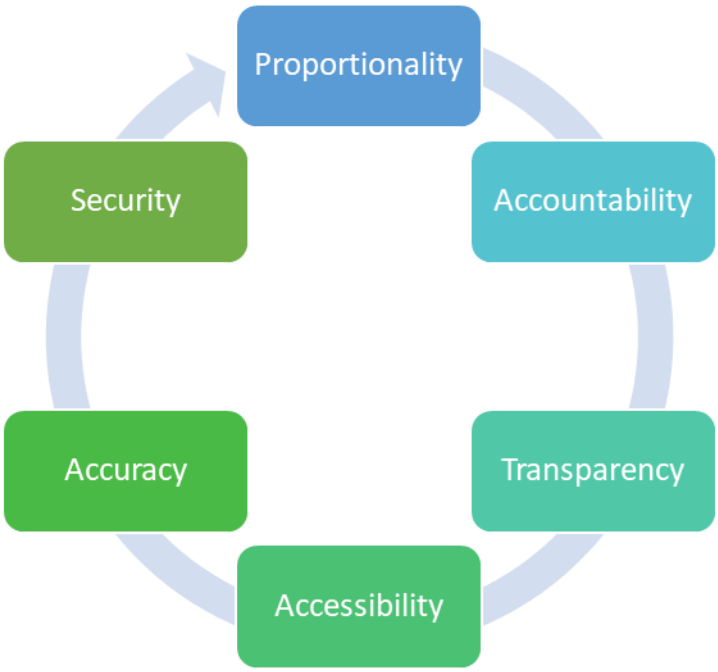
For further information about data protection, please see the Baptist Union's *Guideline Leaflet L13: Data Protection*, which can be found on the website or by clicking here. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website is also a useful source of information, which can be accessed by clicking here.

What is a Safeguarding Record?

For the purpose of this guide, safeguarding records include:

Allegations/ concerns	Any information that relates to allegations of abuse by church workers (paid or voluntary); disclosures of abuse perpetrated by individuals outside of the church; historic abuse allegations; concerns about risk of potential harm to a child or adult; support given to a child, adult or families following a safeguarding incident: ***e.g.*** *safeguarding-related enquiries, support and advice offered and received, allegations/concerns (including details of how these are handled, followed up, decisions reached, actions taken, referral information, pastoral support provided and eventual outcome)*
Risk Assessments	Any information that relates to risk assessments and managing risk in church settings: *e.g. health and safety risk assessments of activities, risk assessments of known/alleged offenders*
Safeguarding Contracts	Any contracts made with known / alleged offenders in order for them to participate in church life.
Subject Access Requests	An individual can make a Subject Access Request verbally or in writing, including on social media. An individual does not need to use a specific form of words, refer to legislation or direct the request to a specific contact. The information should be provided to the individual within one calendar month of the request unless an exemption applies.
Employment	Any information that relates to the recruitment, support and training of ministers and church workers (paid or voluntary) in line with safer recruitment best practice: *e.g. appointment files (councils, committees and other bodies), personnel files (current and leavers), job descriptions, applications, references, staffing reviews, training completed, employment tribunal cases, termination documents)*
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	DBS checks undertaken (date of the check; name of the applicant; position applied for; type of certificate requested and its reference number; actions taken), DBS referrals, DBS risk assessments following a blemished disclosure.
Disciplinary action	Any information relating to disciplinary action concerning a minister or church worker (paid or voluntary): *e.g. minister discipline files, supervision files, legal aid. It should include all documentation concerning allegations, investigations and risk assessments, regardless of the findings*
Leadership and governance	Any information that relates to safeguarding leadership and governance, including the development of local safeguarding policy and procedures: *e.g. agendas and minutes of safeguarding meetings, action points, policy development, training records, etc*
Quality Assurance	Audits and outcomes, annual returns, etc
Events and activities	Any information relating to events / activities held for children or adults at risk: *e.g. registers, emergency contact numbers, relevant medical information, consent from parent/carer (for attendance, photography and any communications with children, such as text, phone or email), incident/accident forms, insurance documentation, hiring agreements for groups using the church premises for activities with children or adults at risk*

Principes of creating a good safeguarding record.



Proportionality

Only record information that is relevant and necessary for your specific purpose, avoiding where possible repetition of written information.

Accountability

Recording practice must comply with legislation, professional standards, codes of practice and guidance.

Transparency

Where information about a safeguarding concern is classed as personal data (any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person), it is likely to be available to those about whom it is written, unless an exemption applies.

Accessibility

Written records are a vital tool and should be accessible to those who have a need to know this information. For example, the Designated Person for Safeguarding must ensure that an authorised individual from within the church is able to access the safeguarding records should they be unavailable.

Accuracy

Personal data must be accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date.

Security

Records should be stored securely, and measures must be taken to avoid loss, theft, damage and inappropriate access or onward disclosure (see section 7 for further details).

Recording safeguarding concerns/allegations

It is important to record safeguarding concerns and allegations as accurately as possible, and to pass it on to the Designated Person for Safeguarding at your church within 24 hours. A template Safeguarding Incident Form can be found on pages 10 – 11 (Appendix A) or downloaded from the safeguarding section of the BUGB website.

Timing	A written record of the concern / allegation should be made as soon as possible afterwards, but always within 24 hours

Who is it about?	Include the names of all key people involved, including any actual / potential witnesses
What happened?	Use exact quotes of the person's own words where possible, in quotation marks. Include the views / perspective of the child or adult at risk. Record any action taken by church workers.
How did it happen?	For example, if someone is alleged to have assaulted a child, did they use an implement, or was it a kick or a hit?
Where did it take place?	Include the location / venue name and full address
When did it take place?	Include both the time and date
Why did it happen?	Record any explanations offered to you by the people involved. Do not include personal opinions.
What should happen next?	What action will follow? For example, what are you going to do next, what is X going to do next? Make sure reminders are set for any action necessary.
What did happen next?	Did X do what they were planning on doing? Put checks in place to make sure that this is followed up.

Retention of Safeguarding Records

The following guidelines give indications of good practice in terms of the retention of specific types of safeguarding information.

Category	Type of Record	Retention Period
Allegations/concerns/ risk assessments/ safeguarding contracts	Records of safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns	75 years after last contact with the individual concerned
	Records that relate to safeguarding concerns/allegations about church workers (paid or voluntary)	75 years after employment / role ceases
	Risk assessments / safeguarding contracts concerning known or alleged offenders	75 years after last contact with the individual concerned
Events / activities specifically for children and young people / adults at risk (where no safeguarding incidents or concerns raised)	Registers / records of events or activities*	At least 3 years after the event
	Parent / carer consent forms*	At least 3 years after the form has been completed
	First Aid / accident forms*	At least 3 years after the form has been completed
	Health and safety risk assessment*	At least 3 years after the risk assessment has been completed.
Employment	Minister personnel records where there are safeguarding allegations / investigations, regardless of the findings	75 years from the date of the minister's death
	Personnel records relating to church workers whose role involves contact with children and adults at risk	75 years after employment / role ceases
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	Record of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check being undertaken for a church worker (paid or voluntary)	75 years after employment / role ceases (Please see BUGB Guide to DBS Checks for more information on what to keep)
	Record of a minister's DBS check history	75 years from the date of the minister's death
Discipline	Record of a church worker's (paid or voluntary) disciplinary procedure relating to safeguarding allegations / offences	75 years after employment / role ceases
	Record of a minister's disciplinary procedure relating to safeguarding allegations / offences	75 years from date of the minister's death

*Please check with your church insurer, who may require you to keep these records for a longer period.

Storage, Access, Sharing and Disposal of Records

Here are some key points to help you when thinking about managing safeguarding records:

Storage

- Church workers should be made aware that their basic details are being stored and for what purpose.
- Parents and carers, as well as the children / adults at risk concerned, should be aware that records for activities / events will be made and securely stored.
- All paper records should be stored in the church office, in a lockable, fireproof cabinet. If your church does not have its own building, then we would recommend that you store your safeguarding records electronically on a cloud-based system with appropriate security arrangements in place.
- You may wish to scan paper records once no further action is needed (for example, where an incident has occurred, any necessary investigation has been completed). Great care should be taken when scanning paper records to ensure they retain their authenticity. If you are scanning records, make sure that you do not shred your paper copy before confirming that your documents are correctly scanned and saved.
- Electronic records should be password protected and backed up regularly. A secure server (e.g. a cloud-based server) is preferable. Systems should be virus protected. Data must never be stored on personal computers, USB drives or other removable media unless it is securely encrypted.
- Passwords should be hard to guess and always stored separately.

Access

- Safeguarding records should only be available to those who need to have access to them, such as the Designated Person for Safeguarding, minister, group leader, DBS verifier.
- There should be a written protocol about who has access to the records, including how records are accessed in an emergency or in the absence of the record holder.

Sharing records

Before you share a record, make sure you've thought through the following:

- Do I have the right to share this information?
- Does the person receiving the information have a real need to know?
- Are there any conditions on sharing this information? For example, only for the named individual.
- How can I protect this information on transit?
    a. Sending information via e-mail carries the risk that someone other than the intended recipient can intercept it. Take appropriate care both in the content of the email and any attachments. Double-check the address you are sending it to. Only copy people in on a need-to-know basis.
    b. Great care is required when handling safeguarding information. Emails containing safeguarding-related personal data should ideally be in an approved encrypted format. If this is not possible, always password protect any attachments. Seek professional advice if you are ever unsure of how to manage such data.
    c. Letters containing confidential information and identifying details should be sent by Special Delivery. Use two envelopes, placing the relevant information in an inner envelope marked confidential, with no classification details on the outer envelope.
- How will I record the fact I've shared this information?
    a. We suggest a simple form (example shown below).

Disposal

At the end of an investigation:

When you have reached the point where you are planning the long-term storage of safeguarding records remember the following:

- Within your church, there is no need to keep multiple copies of safeguarding records. One full set should be kept securely, either on paper or in electronic version. The Designated Person for Safeguarding should keep control of these files.
- If several people in your church have been involved in dealing with a safeguarding concern, make sure that only one copy of any electronic correspondence is kept, and that other copies have been securely deleted (double delete)
- Plan ahead so that records can still be accessed by those who need to deal with them in the long term.
- Be aware that the police and other statutory authorities will keep their own records of any incident you report. However, you cannot rely on their records for future reference as they will not share records with you.

After the storage time period has elapsed:

- Confidential paper records should always be shredded.
- Electronic records should be permanently deleted (i.e. double-deleted).

Appendix A – Safeguarding Incident Form

PERSON REPORTING THE INCIDENT OR CONCERN:
Name:
Address:
Phone number:
Email:
Role in Church:

DETAILS OF CHILD / ADULT AT RISK YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT:
Name:
Date of Birth / Approximate Age:
Address:
Phone number:
Email:
Do they know that you are sharing concerns about them?
If not, please explain why:

IF UNDER 18 PLEASE INCLUDE DETAILS OF THE PARENT OR CARER:
Name:
Address:
Phone number:
Email:
Relationship to the child/ young person:
Do they know that you have concerns that you are sharing?
If not, please explain why:

DETAILS OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (IF RELEVANT)
Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
Email:
Are they an adult or a child (under 18):
Relationship to the child/adult at risk:
Does the child / adult at risk live with the alleged perpetrator?

DETAILS OF INCIDENT OR CONCERN:

- Remember to include the 4 W's – Who, What, Where, When.
- Be clear whether this is something you have been told about or something that you have observed directly.
- Include names of anyone else who witnessed the incident or is aware of the concern.
- Refer to the church safeguarding policy if you are unsure what to include.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

HAVE YOU CONTACTED ANYONE ELSE (SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICE, LADO, REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEAD, MINISTER)?

Please give details of who and when below:

Organisation:

Name of contact:

Date of contact:

This Incident Form should be passed to the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) within 24 hours of any incident or concern arising. Do not delay reporting your concerns to the DPS because you do not have all the information requested in this form. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, please call the DPS straight away and use this form to follow up on that call. Remember if they are not available call the police or social services, do not wait for the DPS to be available.

Remember: Treat this information confidentially. Do not discuss the contents of this form with anyone other than the DPS, not even for prayer purposes.

Signed …….

Date …….

APPENDIX B - Frequently Asked Questions

1) **Who needs to know about the requirements for gathering, processing and storing safeguarding information?**
   Everyone in your church who is involved in handling information about children, young people and adults at risk.

2) **What are the rights of an alleged perpetrator in terms of making a subject access request?**
   An alleged perpetrator has the right to make a subject access request, but you are acting legally if you do not supply them with data that would be likely to prejudice the apprehension or prosecution of an offender. In this instance, seek advice from your Regional Safeguarding Lead straightaway.

3) **If our church puts a safeguarding contract in place do we need to send a copy to our Association Safeguarding Contact?**
   Your Association Safeguarding Contact will need to see a copy of the contract, but will not store the contract afterwards, simply keeping a record of who the contract refers to, the church's name and the date it was put in place.

4) **As the DBS Verifier for our church, do I need to keep a record of DBS check certificate numbers?**
   Please see the BUGB Guide to DBS Checks for detailed information on this.

5) **What if the church insurers ask us to keep safeguarding information for longer periods than this guide suggests?**
   We would encourage you to comply with the greater of our guideline periods and your insurer's requirements.

6) **What should we do in the event of a breach of these data protection requirements in relation to safeguarding information?**
   The 2018 Data Protection Act requires organisations to report all breaches of the data protection legislation. Reports should be sent to the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.org.uk).

This policy has been produced for use in Baptist churches in England and Wales.
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Safeguarding Team, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RT
Tel: 01235 517700 Email: safeguarding@baptist.org.uk Website: www.baptist.org.uk
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