



Facing the Unthinkable

Safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm

Safeguarding Policy and Guidance

Section 1

Introduction

TFM is delighted to work in partnership with churches and communities to share the gospel. Within this partnership everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm irrespective of individual roles.

It is vital that all those who work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm – including local authorities, the police, the health service, the courts, professionals, the voluntary sector and individual members of local communities – are aware of, and appreciate, the role that each plays in this area.

TFM staff and volunteers must similarly play their part in this process.

Everyone involved in TFM must agree to the 'Spiritual Rule of life and Holiness' which has been used as a 'common standard' since the first Walk mission in 1991. This is intended to ensure that everyone on a team has a common spiritual approach to the task, rooted in the example of Jesus regardless of our own home church affiliation or background.

It is hoped that this standard will, apart from any legal requirements for safeguarding, guide us by God's grace to be above reproach in all circumstances.

Section 2

Our commitment

The leadership of **Through Faith Missions (TFM)** recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults at risk of harm

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.

The leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- support local Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk of harm.

Responsibility of Staff and Team members

We all have a three-fold responsibility;

1. Not to be the cause of harm
2. To be observant for harm caused by others
3. To report as soon as possible any concerns to the appropriate authority.

Section 3

Policy

Through Faith Missions greatly appreciates the army of volunteers who give up their time to come on mission with us and will strive to provide the highest standards of care for children and adults at risk of harm in a safe environment within the context of our partnership with Churches. We must set the highest standards as role models, while ensuring safety and wellbeing.

Everyone working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm is in a position of trust, influence and responsibility by virtue of their position as staff or team member. We must always act in the best interest of those children and adults.

It is recognised that some people use their position within church, allied organisations and the wider community to gain access to children or adults at risk of harm, win their trust and then abuse it for inappropriate or illegal purposes. We are all responsible for policing the environment and ensuring that anyone seeking to abuse their position of trust is deterred and referred to the appropriate authorities.

This policy and guidance sets out how TFM, Churches, other organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm in accordance with the principles, legislation and statutory guidance of the four nations of the UK:

- Working together to safeguard children (2015) in England
- Care Act 2014: statutory guidance for implementation in England
- Safeguarding children: working together under the children Act 2004 in Wales
- The children and young people Act 2004 in Scotland
- The children (Northern Ireland) order 1995
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

It is important that all those involved in TFM fully understand their responsibilities.

It attempts to achieve a balance between establishing sufficient control to minimise the risk of abuse to children and adults at risk of harm, while not over burdening the willing volunteer. It includes the mandatory legal requirements, and also highlights signs which should raise suspicions of abuse as well as practices which should be avoided, in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk of harm and those responsible for their wellbeing.

The key principles on which this policy statement are based:

- The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm is paramount
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm
- All allegations and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately

- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and adults at risk of harm
- The interests of those who work or volunteer.

Section 4

Defining Children

Children are defined as people under the age of 18 years. Abuse may be considered under the four headings of physical, emotional sexual and neglect.

Defining Adults at risk of harm

Adults at risk of harm are defined as someone 18 years or older who has:

- a dependency upon others, or a requirement for assistance from others, in the performance of basic physical functions
- severe impairment in their ability to communicate with others
- an impairment in their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect
- has been detained in lawful custody or is being supervised as a result of a court order

Abuse may be considered under the headings of physical, domestic, sexual, financial or material, modern slavery, discrimination, organisational, neglect and acts of omission, and self-neglect.

Regulated activities

According to the new rules that saw the creation of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as a replacement for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in 2012, the activities of TFM in supporting and working in partnership with churches in mission are not classed as 'Regulated Activities'. Therefore it is not possible for TFM to request disclosures.

Safe recruitment and working practices

TFM will endeavour at all times to vet both staff and volunteers by the use of safe recruiting and working practices such as;

- Taking up of references from church leaders
- Only accepting volunteers who are recommended to work in this ministry by a church leader
- Seeking a self declaration from the staff member or volunteer that there is no reason why they should not work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm
- Observation of conduct whilst on mission and team reports
- Requiring team members not to work alone whilst on mission
- Seeking local advice where appropriate about situations in which we are called to work
- In high risk areas such as schools, always work in a supervised capacity. A teacher or care worker should always be present.

Section 5

Inappropriate Relationships with Children or Adults at risk of harm

An adult must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a child over 16 years of age or an adult at risk of harm is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position.

TFM has a legal duty to report inappropriate actions to the authorities. Any such behaviour in a mission setting will be treated very seriously, reported to the authorities and may result in a ban from all TFM activities, including being asked to leave the mission centre immediately.

An adult in a position of trust involved in a consensual sexual relationship with a child over 16 years of age, or a vulnerable adult, may also be referred. This could result in the adult being barred from working with children or adults at risk of harm in all areas. The adult may also be asked to leave the mission centre immediately.

No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child or vulnerable adult in their care; this is often referred to as grooming. Adults must never send children or adults at risk of harm inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.

Safeguarding Disabled Children & Adults at risk of harm

Disabled children, adults and their families may need additional information, help and support.

Some children and adults may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- require higher degrees of physical care and support
- have limited communication skills
- find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser
- have a history of having limited or no choice or
- have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

Section 6

How to react to concerns about the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk of harm

Harm in the context of this policy is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child or vulnerable adult's physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying.

In the case of adults at risk of harm there is an additional category of abuse relating to financial matters, this includes: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Suspicious of harm must never be ignored. Whether physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect, suspicions of harm should always be reported and victims supported throughout.

Signs of harm;

- Changing their usual routine
- Beginning to be disruptive, aggressive or unreasonable
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Having possessions going missing
- Starting to stammer or stop communicating
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Starting to bully others
- Being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately or inappropriately dressed
- Displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Seeming afraid of parents or carers
- Stopping eating
- Being frightened to say what's wrong

There may be a number of reasons why someone displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. The contact that TFM have with anyone on mission is limited and therefore it may be difficult to make a true assessment of a situation.

On becoming aware of any suspicions or concerns the immediate response will be to;

- Stay calm
- If you are speaking with the person who is at risk you may need to reassure them that they are not to blame
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Report it and make brief, accurate notes at the earliest opportunity

Any suspicions or concerns must be passed on to the Team Leader or Church Leader as soon as possible. The local Safeguarding Coordinator should also be informed. If the person is at immediate risk of abuse then a statutory agency (local children's services or the police) should be contacted immediately. If an adult is at risk of harm, their consent to the statutory agencies being contacted should be obtained, if possible before doing so.

Contact the Child Protection Team

To contact the local Child Protection Team anywhere in mainland Britain telephone '101' and ask for this service.

Appendix 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership of Through Faith Missions (TFM) recognises the importance of its ministry / work with children and adults at risk of harm and its responsibility to protect everyone with whom we come into contact.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership/organisation on:

TFM is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm 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, young people and adults at risk of harm and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe everyone should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and adults at risk of harm have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults at risk of harm.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm 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 at risk of harm.
- Supporting our partners (churches and organisations with whom we work) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk of harm.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations.

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 at risk of harm.
- 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.

Signed by Senior Evangelist

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed by Chair of TFM Trustees

Signed _____

Date _____