

Policy for safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable

A **vulnerable adult** is defined in **section 42 of the Care Act 2014** as “an adult at risk”, in other words, an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not their local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or is **at risk of, abuse or neglect**, and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The Archbishop’s Council of the Church of England defines “vulnerable adult” as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.’

The term **adult** covers all those over 18 years of age.

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person’s human and civil rights. The abuse can vary, from treating someone with disrespect in a way that significantly affects the person’s quality of life, to causing actual physical or mental suffering.

Journey UK, as a charity, does not minister to children or “vulnerable adults” as defined within the first paragraph of this document or according to the definition adopted by the Archbishop’s Council of the Church of England.

However, we recognise that all of us may be vulnerable at varying points in our lives.

We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- Encourage adults who may be vulnerable to choose how to live their lives and lead as independent a life as possible
- Protect adults who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

We recognise that:

- Everyone has different levels of vulnerability, and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives
- All adults who may be vulnerable (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Abuse of adults who may be vulnerable can occur in all communities and is most likely to occur within families and by people known to them

- Working in partnership with adults who may be vulnerable, together with their pastors or church and support structures, is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will endeavour to safeguard adults who may be vulnerable by:

In all our activities -

- Valuing, listening to and respecting adults who may be vulnerable.
- Fostering and encouraging best practice by setting standards for working with adults who may be vulnerable, and boundaries for acceptable behaviour, in cooperation with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other support structures or faith communities.
- Ensure that any participants on our courses have completed an application form that highlights any potential safeguarding concerns or therapy conflicts. (Appendix 5 - course application form).
- Applicants for our 'Journey of Grace' course are to complete an application and have an interview (face-to-face or via Zoom) with a staff member. Only applicants demonstrating understanding of the course content and the ministry model and evidencing emotional stability will be considered for our courses.
- Applicants provisionally accepted for Journey UK courses must provide a reference from a pastor confirming that they have the necessary support available locally.
- Participants accepted for Journey UK courses will be sent a link to our Safeguarding Policy, and the policy will be available on our website.
- TAG (The Accountability Group) members are required to disclose any criminal convictions and whether they are currently bound by any barring decision made by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) from working with adults or children. (Appendix 4 - TAG interview form). Before acceptance on TAG, they are also required to provide a photo ID and a reference confirming that they are known by a pastor in their local church. All TAG members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement, which states that any disclosure of intentions to harm another human being or themselves will necessitate TAG leadership to warn appropriate individuals of such intentions and appropriate law enforcement officials. Suspected acts of child abuse or neglect will be reported to law enforcement officials.
- As some TAG (The Accountability Group) members meet in a room in a church building where children and vulnerable adults may be present, for transparency, Journey UK will inform the Safeguarding Lead in the church hosting the TAG meetings of any such declarations.
- If any safeguarding concern is raised, Journey UK's Safeguarding Lead will contact the appropriate local authorities.
- Safeguarding will appear as an agenda item at Trustee meetings.
- Team training (Appendix 1).

In our recruitment and training of paid staff and volunteers -

- *Staff:* We ensure careful selection and recruitment of staff through relationship, interviews, and obtaining appropriate references. Journey UK Leaders will have up-to-date safeguarding awareness training and be obliged to declare whether they are currently bound by any barring decision made by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) from working with adults or children.
- *Volunteers:* All our volunteers are past participants and invited by staff to be part of our volunteer team based on their initial suitability and ongoing monitoring. Volunteers will be obliged to declare whether they are currently bound by any barring decision made by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) from working with adults or children. (Appendix 2 – Volunteer Form).

When concerns are raised, we follow these procedures -

- Responding without delay to every concern raised that an adult (whether volunteer team or beneficiary) may have been harmed, or be at risk from harm, through abuse, harassment or bullying;
- Working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of staff or our volunteer team;
- Challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust within the ministry.

In our care -

- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired;
- Ensuring that appropriate pastoral care is offered to any staff member or volunteer team against whom an allegation is made.

In our supervision, following procedures in –

- Ensuring, in partnership with the relevant agencies and support structures, that care and supervision are provided for any staff member or volunteer team known to have offended against a vulnerable adult, or to pose a risk to them.

Escalation pathway

- In the event of a potential safeguarding concern being raised, a volunteer team member will report this to the National Leader of Journey UK.
- The National Leader will escalate any concerns to the chair of the trustees and the Journey UK Safeguarding Lead, who will advise and recommend next steps.
- However, in the event of a serious/urgent concern, the National Leader will contact the police or the appropriate local authority Safeguarding team directly. This will be dependent on where the adult or child at risk lives. The Journey UK Safeguarding Lead will be notified of what steps have been taken, and any actions will be recorded.
- For TAG, the above steps will be used, but the host church Safeguarding Lead will also be informed of concerns or actions taken by the National Leader.

Advice

Southwark Safeguarding Partnership, which includes the Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board, can be contacted for advice and referrals:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- Telephone Number: 020 7525 1921 (9.00 am-5.00 pm) or 020 7525 5000 (out of hours) for urgent concerns.
- Email: mash@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP):

- Email: sscp@southwark.gov.uk (for general enquiries about children's safeguarding).

Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB):

- Email: ssab@southwark.gov.uk (for general adult safeguarding queries).

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- Works within Children's Services and provides advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals. Contact for advice regarding concerns about adults working with children.
- Telephone Numbers: Phone: 020 7525 3297 / 020 7525 0689.