



# Linking Lives UK Safeguarding Policy

## Section 1

### Details of the organisation

Name of Organisation: Linking Lives UK

Address: 6 Bow Bridge Drive, Embsay, Skipton BD23 6QU

Tel No: 0300 302 0225

General Email address: [admin@linkinglives.uk](mailto:admin@linkinglives.uk)

National Director: Jeremy Sharpe

National Director Telephone / Email: 07970 100131; [jeremy@linkinglives.uk](mailto:jeremy@linkinglives.uk)

Safeguarding Coordinator Name: Jeremy Sharpe

Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Telephone / Email: 07970 100131  
[jeremy@linkinglives.uk](mailto:jeremy@linkinglives.uk)

Charity Number: 1170325

Insurance Company: Markel International Insurance

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

Linking Lives UK works with churches and Christian organisations across the UK to help set up befriending projects aimed at supporting socially isolated older people. As a national charity we do not have direct contact with vulnerable adults or children/ young people but we ensure that all partners confirm that they operate in accordance with their own safeguarding policies when it comes to recruitment and vetting of volunteers and general processes in relation to safeguarding. Any engagement that the charity may have would predominantly be in relation older people at risk of harm, neglect or exploitation – as per the Care Act 2014. We have, however, incorporated guidance in relation to both children, young people and vulnerable adults in this policy.

## Our commitment

As an organisation 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 an organisation 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 any attached practice guidelines are primarily based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

Linking Lives UK 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.
- Work in partnership with other organisations to ensure good safeguarding practices and collaborative working, in order to safeguard individuals.
- 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.
- Ensure that concerns or complaints against staff are appropriately reported to statutory agencies
- We agree not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

## Section 2 Prevention

### 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 organisation 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.

This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

**Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Signs include:** History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries; Evidence of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems left unattended; Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them; bruising and discolouration

- particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.; Recurring injuries without plausible explanation; Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite; Person flinches at physical contact &/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather; Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people

**Domestic violence** – Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; So called 'honour' based violence.

**Signs include:** Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars; Coercive, controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; So called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation ; Age range extended to 16 yrs.

**Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Signs include:** Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse; Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour; Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting; Infections or sexually transmitted diseases; Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse; Self-harming; Emotional distress; Mood changes; Disturbed sleep patterns

**Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Signs include:** Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful; Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer; Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes; Unexplained paranoia; Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety; Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness; Loss of appetite; Helplessness or passivity; Confusion or disorientation; Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour; Low self-esteem

**Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Signs include:** Disparity between assets and living conditions; Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money; Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt; Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf; Recent changes of deeds or title

to property; Missing personal belongings; Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney

**Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Signs include:** Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished; Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours; Few personal possessions or ID documents; Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

**Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Signs include:** Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect; Poor quality or avoidance care; Low self-esteem; Withdrawn; Anger; Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality; Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves

**Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Signs include:** Low self-esteem; Withdrawn; Anger; Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality; Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves; No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users; Neglectful or poor professional practice.

**Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Signs include:** Deteriorating despite apparent care; Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support; Lack of medication or medical intervention

**Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

**Signs include:** Hoarding inside or outside a property; Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs; Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene; Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated –

constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food; Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions

Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment; Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example not heating or lighting); Depression

### **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 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
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring 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)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- Regular supervision is established, following induction
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

### **Safeguarding training**

We are 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 and volunteers, will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

We 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.

## **Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

We are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers 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.

### **Section 3 Practice Guidelines**

As an organisation 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.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or in the appendices.

#### **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.

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.

#### **Information Sharing**

Information will be shared with consent wherever possible. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others e.g. in the interests of public safety, police investigation, implications for regulated service.

- The Data Protection Act provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately

- We will be open and honest with individuals from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- We will seek advice if we are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- We will share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. We may still share information without consent if, in our judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest.
- Considering safety and well-being: We will base our information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions or the actions of the perpetrator
- Sharing will be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: We will ensure that the information we share is necessary for the purpose for which we are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely
- We will keep a record of our decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If we decide to share, we will record what we have shared, with whom and for what purpose. Any information disclosed will be:
  - clear regarding the nature of the problem and purpose of sharing information
  - based on fact, not assumption
  - restricted to those with a legitimate need to know
  - relevant to specific incidents
  - strictly limited to the needs of the situation at that time
  - recorded in writing with reasons stated

#### Sharing data when someone lacks mental capacity

Where an individual may not be in a position to give consent to disclosure of information:

- We will explore approaches to help them understand
- In some instances the individual will not have the capacity to consent to disclosure of personal information relating to them. Where this is the case any disclosure of information will be considered against the conditions set out in the Data Protection Act and a decision made about whether it is in their best interests to be shared.



## Section 4

### 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:

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:

**Name:** <Safeguarding Coordinator Name> (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator")

**Tel:**

**Email:**

The above 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:

**Name:** <Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator Name> (hereafter the "Deputy")

**Tel:**

**Email:**

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.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

**Name of local authority:** Wokingham Borough Council Children's Social Services

**Tel:** 0118 9088002

**Out of hours Tel:** 01344 786543

**Website Address:** <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-and-families/child-protection-and-family-support/report-a-concern-about-a-child/>

**Adult Social Services**

Tel: 0118 9746371

Out of hours Tel: 01344 786543

Website Address: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/safety-and-abuse/report-a-safeguarding-concern/>

**Police Protection Team Tel:**

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should also inform others, depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
  - Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
  - 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 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/multi-agency safeguarding team for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- At all times and with all decisions made, the safety, health and welfare of the child should be paramount.
- Only inform the parents or carers, once advice and guidance has been received Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the Emergency services of any suspicions.
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and parents, if appropriate, to ensure the appropriate care is afforded to the child/children and the child/children is made safe.

### **For other concerns about a child's welfare – where there are no signs of abuse**

- Contact ThirtyOne:Eight for advice and guidance
- 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.
- 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.

### **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 and 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:**

**Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, emotional, sexual, organisational, financial abuse or fraud/scams, 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.
- In addition, 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.
- Working in partnership with statutory agencies, identify appropriate support for the victim/individual to ensure their safety and well-being

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will;

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse
- 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 Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards 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.

- Work with statutory agencies to ensure appropriate information is shared and investigation undertaken.
- Support the worker/volunteer in making statements or interviews
- Make any appropriate referrals 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 co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Work with statutory agencies to ensure appropriate information is shared and investigation undertaken.
- Support the worker/volunteer in making statements or interviews
- Make any appropriate referrals 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.

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/organisation.

## **Section 5**

### **Pastoral Care**

#### **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.

The Care Act (2014) introduced the concept of Making Safeguarding Personal – taking a holistic and person-centred approach to any safeguarding investigation and involving the individual, families and friends in any safeguarding plan to protect individuals who have been subject to or at risk of abuse. The Leadership will ensure that the organisation works with the person and their family, and in partnership with other agencies to ensure the best possible resolution and outcomes are achieved for the individual from any safeguarding process or care and support offered.

#### **Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children or adults, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to children or adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will ensure close supervision and support of the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. However, its safeguarding commitment is to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs. Therefore, there will be set boundaries and support agreed for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties; this risk assessment will be reviewed regularly.

#### **Adoption of the policy**

This policy was agreed by the Board of Trustees and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Signed by Alan Magness

Position: Chair of Trustees

Signed by: Peter Ashall

Position: Trustee

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021

A copy of this policy is also lodged with the charity trustees.