



**LIVINGHOPE**  
RESPONDING WELL  
ADULTS AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

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David Baker  
[safeguarding@livinghope.im](mailto:safeguarding@livinghope.im)

<sup>37</sup> “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:37-40

## 1. Introduction

This document provides practice guidelines including actions that should be taken when receiving a safeguarding concern in relation to vulnerable adults and cases of domestic abuse and also some guidance in recognising abuse.

## 2. First Response

There are many situations whereby a member of Living Hope may have concerns, or be made aware of concerns, regarding a child or adult. The person noticing or being informed of concerns must consult with the local safeguarding officer as soon as practicable. The only exception to informing the officer is if they are the subject of the concerns. In this situation the Safeguarding Manager should be informed directly or, if necessary, the Ecumenical Safeguarding Advisor. Under no circumstances, should the person who is the subject of the allegations be informed until after the allegations have been discussed and agreement reached with the statutory authorities. Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies.

### 2.1 Listening

If approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow the basic guidelines below:

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening, but seek the other person’s agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully, showing you are taking seriously what you are being told.
- Take into account the person’s age and level of understanding. It may be appropriate to ask if they mind you taking notes while they talk or at the end so you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain what you will do with the information.
- Find out what the person hopes for.
- Reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm you have understood what has been communicated.
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make notes of what was said, including the date, time, venue and the names of people who were present. Sign the record.
- Provide the person with the means to contact you and be clear about how and when you will give feedback. Be prepared to continue to be there for the person. Be dependable.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.

### 2.2 Emergency situations

The person receiving the information will need to assess whether the subject of the concern is at risk of immediate harm and if so, take any immediate action necessary to safeguard them including contacting the Police using the ‘999’ telephone number.

## 2.3 Assessment of risk

In all situations, the following risks should be considered and reviewed regularly in regard to the circumstances of any concern raised:

- risks to the victim
- risk to members of vulnerable groups within the church and involved with church activities
- risks to the person believed to be responsible for the issue and their family
- risks to the wider congregation or attendees at church activities
- risk to the reputation of Living Hope Church.

In most cases, the ongoing consideration of risk should be an integral and continuing part of responding well to an incident.

## 2.4 Logging and Reporting

All incidents, as soon as practicable should be logged on the Living Hope Safeguarding System – at the time of writing this document this is located at '<https://login.safeguard.software/>'.

Should you not have access to this site, contact any members of the Safeguarding Team for further information.

The reports through this site will have necessary comments added to by the Safeguarding Team, along with direction for the team member to undertake where necessary. This may involve providing further support to the abused individual and advice as to what is to be undertaken.

Telephone support is always available through the local Safeguarding Officers or the wider Safeguarding Team.

## 2.5 Referring to Statutory Agencies

All referrals to statutory agencies will be submitted by the Safeguarding Manager, or in his absence an individual with the delegated authority. The exception to this is contacting the Police for emergency situations.

The Ecumenical Safeguarding Advisor will be advised by the Safeguarding Manager when such a referral has been made.

# 3 Definitions of Abuse – Adults

## 3.1 Adult

The meaning of a “vulnerable adult” is defined in the Safeguarding Act 2018, but for general practice a simplified definition is –

Any person aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.

Thirtyone:eight

With regards to Domestic Abuse, the definition is slightly different –

Domestic abuse is defined as '*any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between persons aged 16 or over, who are or who have been in a relationship, or who are family members, regardless of gender.*'

## Safeguarding adults at risk of harm

This means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

### 3.2 Abuse

#### *Physical abuse*

The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication.

UK Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

#### *Sexual abuse*

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language (including sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, photography, online and social media abuse.

#### *Psychological/emotional abuse*

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include rebuking harshly or treating like a child; making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour; blaming someone for attitudes, actions or events beyond their control; use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create overdependence; lack of privacy or dignity; deprivation of social contact; threats to withdraw help and support; denial of cultural and spiritual needs; denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

#### *Financial/material abuse*

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds via omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation, where there are other forms of abuse occurring, financial abuse is also likely.

#### *Neglect and acts of omission*

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission. This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs; lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids.

#### *Discriminatory abuse*

This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups.

#### *Institutional abuse*

This includes neglect and poor 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 home. This may range from one-off

incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

UK Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

#### *Spiritual abuse*

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The victim experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.

Oakley and Kinmond 2014 Journal of Adult Protection

#### *Domestic abuse*

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

#### *Human trafficking*

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of force or other forms of any or all of the following:

- Coercion
- Abduction
- Fraud
- Deception
- the abuse of power of a position
- vulnerability
- the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person

so that they have control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

#### *Modern slavery*

The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation of bodies or body parts.

Siddharth Kara, Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited.

Kevin Bales, Slavery Today 2008

### *Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones*

Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation, safety and sexting.

## 4 Possible Signs and Symptoms of Abuse – Adults

Identifying abuse is not an easy thing to do and the indicators given here are examples only. Some of the indicators can occur in more than one type of abuse, bearing in mind that there can sometimes be other non-abusive explanations. However, they may alert you to the need to be aware of the possibility of abuse, to be observant and to record any concerns. If in doubt, you should always seek the advice from the Safeguarding Team.

### 4.1 Physical abuse

#### *Types of physical abuse*

- Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window or removing blankets)
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Misuse of medication (e.g. over-sedation)
- Forcible feeding or withholding food
- Unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair)

#### *Possible indicators of physical abuse*

- No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained falls
- Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- Signs of malnutrition
- Failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP

### 4.2 Domestic violence or abuse

#### *Types of domestic violence or abuse*

Domestic violence or abuse can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this policy and practice guidance relating to:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Domestic violence and abuse includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It also includes so called 'honour' -based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence.

Coercive behaviour can include:

- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour.

*Possible indicators of domestic violence or abuse*

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

#### 4.3 Sexual abuse

*Types of sexual abuse*

- Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing, innuendo or sexual harassment
- Indecent exposure

*Possible indicators of sexual abuse*

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks, upper arms and marks on the neck
- The uncharacteristic use of explicit, sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- Fear of receiving help with personal care
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

#### 4.4 Psychological or emotional abuse

*Types of psychological or emotional abuse*

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and/or seeing friends
- Removing mobility or communication aids
- Intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and/or cultural needs

- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Addressing a person in a patronising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying

*Possible indicators of psychological or emotional abuse*

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- A need for anti-depressant or anxiety medication when there has been no history of mental health problems

#### 4.5 Financial or material abuse

*Types of financial or material abuse*

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Staff or volunteers taking a loan from a person using the service
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement
- False representation - using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney or other legal authority
- Rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship

*Possible indicators of financial or material abuse*

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from account
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- Unnecessary property repairs

## 4.6 Modern slavery

### *Types of modern slavery*

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography
- Debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to repay.

### *Possible indicators of modern slavery*

- Signs of physical or emotional abuse
- Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and/or living and working at the same address
- Lack of personal effects or identification documents
- Always wearing the same clothes
- Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of law enforcers

## 4.7 Discriminatory abuse

### *Types of discriminatory abuse*

- Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice
- Substandard service provision

### *Possible indicators of discriminatory abuse*

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs

## 4.8 Organisational or institutional abuse

### *Types of organisational or institutional abuse*

- Discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends
- Run-down or overcrowded establishment
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes
- Lack of leadership and supervision
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- Not providing adequate food and drink or assistance with eating
- Not offering choice or promoting independence

- Misuse of medication
- Failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles or hearing aids
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication
- Failure to respond to complaints

*Possible indicators of organisational or institutional abuse*

- Lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Poor standards of care
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
- Absence of visitors
- Few social, recreational and educational activities
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet
- Absence of individual care plans
- Lack of management overview and support

#### 4.9 Neglect and acts of omission

*Types of neglect and acts of omission*

- Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
- Providing care in a way that the person dislikes
- Failure to administer medication as prescribed
- Refusal of access to visitors
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- Ignoring or isolating the person
- Preventing the person from making their own decisions
- Preventing access to hearing aids, glasses, dentures etc.
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity

*Possible indicators of neglect and acts of omission*

- Poor environment – dirty or unhygienic
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing or the clothing of another resident

#### 4.10 Self-neglect

*Types of self-neglect*

- Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety
- Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings
- Inability to avoid self-harm

- Failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs
- Inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs

*Indicators of self-neglect*

- Very poor personal hygiene
- unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury