

I am delighted to share the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Handbook 2022 updates with you. As you already know, the guidance and advice in the handbook forms our adopted safeguarding policy when working with vulnerable groups. These updates aim to make sure that the information is accurate, but we are also pleased to include some new elements to help you to make the safeguarding policy a reality in your church.

There are parts of the 2014 folder that have not been changed but, for your convenience, we have reprinted the whole document. Please insert the new sections in your existing file using the current dividers. I have noted the main changes and developments below.

The new [Section 1](#) contains the safeguarding policy statement for the individual church. The previous policy statement was at the beginning of Sections 3 and 4 but it is now a separate document. This should make it easier for you to display it so that you can clearly and publicly state your church's commitment to protecting vulnerable groups. We also strongly recommend that you appoint a safeguarding coordinator to facilitate the local implementation of the policy and you can find more information about this in the notes section of the new policy document.

[Section 2](#) has been revised but still includes a step-by-step guide to our safer recruitment process. This is essential to ensure that we take all reasonable steps to make sure that the care of our vulnerable groups is in the hands of safe and suitable people. Section 2 also includes flowcharts to help you understand who needs to do a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS). A new check is required every 4 years and churches should keep a record of their volunteers' DBS status, to ensure that all eligible people are checked, and that re-checking takes place on time.

There are no major changes to [Sections 3 and Section 4](#)

[Section 5 looks](#) at ways of supporting those affected by abuse. There are some small changes to the contact details.

[Section 6 - Appendices](#) - contains several important additions

[Appendix 1](#): the sources of support and additional information section has been updated.

[Appendix 2a](#): a new code of conduct based on the Statement of Intent. The code outlines the main responsibilities and good practice for those who work and volunteer with vulnerable groups. It would be good practice for all volunteers to read and sign this document

[Appendix 2](#): unchanged

[Appendix 3](#) an updated relevant legislation list.

[Appendix 4](#): an updated guide to how to carry out a risk assessment.

[Appendix 5](#) and [6](#) minor changes

[Appendix 7](#): a new information sheet outlining the safeguarding responsibilities of charity trustees.

[Appendix 8](#): guidance on taking and using images of children based on NSPCC resource

[Appendix 9](#): Some new or additional definitions which are now in regular use. The main categories of abuse have been set out in sections 3 and 4

[Appendix 10](#): A checklist to help you assess the safeguarding situation for your church.

[Section 7 forms](#). Please place the GDPR info sheet at the beginning of section 7. The forms have not changed significantly.

Remember that they are all available on the website in Word format so that you can customize them according to your own requirements and activities.

As you add these updates to your file, I would like to invite you to re-read the document in its entirety. Please also take this opportunity to consider and assess your local safeguarding processes and practice by working through the new self-assessment checklist in appendix 10 to see how you are doing. You can also access the whole file and the individual sections on both the panel and denominations website.

Thank you for your ongoing work to make our churches safer place

Julie Edwards (safeguarding and training officer)