



Hammersmith Christian Fellowship

Safeguarding Policy

(revised)

June 2021

Safeguarding Policy

Hammersmith Christian Fellowship

2021

1. Aim

1.1 Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will contribute positively to building a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual member and visitor to be protected from abuse.

The aim of this Policy is to set out Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's commitment to safeguard and protect all children, young people, and vulnerable adults and to provide a clear protocol and framework for safeguarding and discharging our duty of care towards them.

This policy aims to ensure that our leadership, members and volunteers provide an appropriate and effective safeguarding response whenever a concern for a child, young person or adult's welfare and safety is raised or when an incident has been reported and to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect and support any one that is affected.

This policy also aims to ensure that our leadership, members, and volunteers are protected from false accusations as they embed this policy into practise. Appendix 1 is a one-page summary of this document.¹

1.2 Our Commitment.

Together with preaching and proclaiming the Word of God in all its fulness, Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will put the safety of all its members and visitors first and will encourage everyone to be open and have confidence that we, as a fellowship will act honestly and appropriately. We will develop a trusting and respectful relationship with everyone, and in doing so, provide a safe environment, so that everyone knows that they will be safe, listened to and supported.

To ensure this happens, Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will:

1.2.1 Challenge unacceptable behaviour and address all reported suspicions or allegations of abuse perpetrated against children, young adults, and vulnerable people. This includes language used both face to face and during telephone conversations.

1.2.2 Safely recruit all workers with any responsibility for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults through the use of appropriate vetting procedures².

1.2.3 Train all leaders, members, and volunteers in this policy by teaching them how to put it into practice.

1.2.4 Ensure that any physical premises on which Hammersmith Christian Fellowship carries out its work, meets all the standards required by Health and Safety.

1.2.5 Respond without delay to every complaint or report suggesting that anyone has been harmed and co-operate fully with any following investigations.

1.2.6 Offer first level support to any child, young person or vulnerable adult who informs us that they have suffered abuse in any form and signpost them to an appropriate source of support.

1.2.7 Challenge any abuse of power, by anyone in a position of trust while carrying out any work with children, youth, or vulnerable people.

1.2.8 Follow up to date safeguarding legislation, guidance and recognised good practice and ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are regularly updated.

¹ Appendix 1 One-page summary of the Safeguarding Policy

² Appendix 2 HCF Vetting Procedure and Safer Recruitment

1.3 Duty of Care.

We recognise that we have an obligation and duty of care to safeguard the children, young people and adults we work with in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place to promote the safety of vulnerable people under our care and to respond to any concerns that may arise. To that effect, this policy and other supporting policies, procedures and guidelines will provide the framework to support our leadership, members and volunteers in their safeguarding practices and the standards of care to be demonstrated in all church activities.

2. Definitions

The following are working definitions adopted by various bodies including the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), statutory bodies and safeguarding practitioners for the purposes of defining safeguarding in relation to children, young people, and adults.

2.1 What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding includes everything an organization must do to keep children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe, including minimizing the risk of harm and accidents and taking action to tackle safety concerns. Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults wherever possible.

2.2 Who is a child/young person?

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) defines anyone under the age of 18 as a child or young person and anyone aged 18 and over as an adult.

2.3 Who is a 'vulnerable' adult?

Until recently, the definition of a vulnerable adult was very clear and referred to someone who was either very elderly or disabled. However, this definition isn't particularly broad, and doesn't take into account other groups of people who might find themselves classed as vulnerable for other reasons, or even temporarily due to a medical condition, a bereavement or accident. The NHS has perhaps the best way of defining what a vulnerable adult is and talks about people "who for any reason is unable to take care of themselves" or "protect themselves from exploitation". That definition neatly wraps up people who are elderly or have a disability, but also people in different categories too. This definition has been taken from the most recent CRB information.

2.4 What is 'Regulated Activity'?

2.4.1 For safeguarding purposes and in line with current legislation an activity involving 'unsupervised' contact with children and young people is considered to be 'regulated activity'. Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) 'Regulated Activity' with children is defined as frequent and unsupervised contact with a child or young person or a vulnerable adult for four or more days in a month or once a week and overnight.

2.4.2 An individual working unsupervised with children is considered to be engaged in 'Regulated Activity' and must be appropriately vetted with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for that purpose, in order to perform their duties.

2.4.3 However, an individual working in a permanently supervised position will not be engaging in 'regulated activity' but should still be appropriately vetted with the DBS or relevant vetting body in order to work with anyone under the age of 18 or with a vulnerable adult. Note that in order for 'regulated activity' to become non-regulated, a designated appropriately vetted supervisor must always be physically present in the same room as the member/volunteer where the activity takes place.

2.4.4 Activities taking place in a 'specified place' such as a school or hospital is considered to be 'regulated activity' whether or not a designated supervisor is present, (see para 2.5 for definition of a specified place). Parliament are currently discussing the importance of including other places as 'specified places' e.g. sports halls, churches

2.5 What is a 'Specified place'?

For the purpose of obtaining a criminal record disclosure check, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) defines a specified place as any premises where regulated activity with children, young people and vulnerable adults takes place on a frequent basis. This includes schools, OFSTED registered nurseries and crèches, hospitals, and registered nursing care homes. Anyone working in a specified place will automatically be fully vetted whether or not their work in the facility involves direct contact with a vulnerable person or group.

2.6 What is abuse? The following are the main categories and standard definitions adopted by statutory bodies and safeguarding practitioners for the purpose of identifying and addressing abuse.

Abuse is any kind of selfish act of oppression and harm, exploitation, and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority over an individual or group of individuals. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender, or culture. It can take a number of forms, and some common examples of abuse that employees and volunteers might encounter include:

- Sexual abuse – involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. Participation could include physical or virtual (online/electronic) participation. It is not necessary for the child or young person to be aware that the activity is sexual, and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.
- Physical abuse – causes physical harm to a person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly or be the result of failure to prevent injury from occurring.
- Emotional abuse – occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment, rejection, or unrealistic expectation. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child, young person, or vulnerable adult's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.
- Bullying - is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, digital imagery, or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation etc.
- Neglect – neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and or psychological needs, such that it results in serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect can also involve not paying attention to a child or young person's safety.
- Financial (or material) abuse – can involve taking a material or financial item such as money from a vulnerable person without consent of the owner or their guardian.
- Parents who are themselves vulnerable adults - It is not uncommon for the parents of children who are abused or neglected to be themselves vulnerable adults. Particularly common are problems of mental ill-health, domestic abuse, and substance abuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol), often in combination.
- Female genital mutilation - This is an offence and any suggestion that it is being sought or has been carried out should be referred to the local authority children's social care service or the police if reported to Hammersmith Christian Fellowship.
- Trafficking - is the bringing of children and adults into the country, sometimes without proper immigration arrangements, for a variety of illegal purposes which can include domestic service, illegal adoption, organ harvesting, benefit claims or prostitution.
- Sexual exploitation - Children can be exploited by being given rewards in return for sexual activities. Internet and other media technology may be used in the abuse. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common.

Regardless of the challenging behaviours they may display, exploited children should be viewed as victims of child sexual abuse, not as criminals.

- Forced marriage and honour-based violence - Disclosures of actual or possible forced marriage should not be treated as a family matter or be disclosed to family members. Local authority children's social care or the police should be contacted.

2.7 What is relevant 'Relevant conduct'?

Hammersmith Christian Fellowship accepts the following definitions of relevant conduct under Schedule 3 of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 in relation to the barring of those who pose a risk of harm to children. A relevant conduct is a conduct which must be referred to the DBS and which could lead to a barring decision. It includes any:

- conduct which endangers a child or is likely to endanger a child (i.e. anyone aged 0-17)
- conduct which if repeated against or in relation to a child would endanger that child
- conduct involving sexual material relating to children (including possession or sighting of such material)
- conduct involving sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings
- conduct of a sexual nature involving a child

3. Safeguarding Responsibilities

3.1 All HCF Leaders, church members and volunteers must follow guidance laid out in this policy and other associated policies and procedures and should report any safeguarding concerns using the procedure set out in paragraph 8. We expect our leaders, members, and volunteers to be excellent role models and to contribute to developing safe working practices. The following positions within Hammersmith Christian Fellowship have been identified as having specific safeguarding responsibilities within the organisation and in its work with external partners.

3.2 Senior Minister, Elder and Deacons (Leadership Team). The responsibility of managing this will be delegated to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will work with the Leadership Team to monitor and report any safeguarding concerns or incidents. To that effect, the Leadership Team will:

3.2.1 Approve and monitor this and all other relevant policies and procedures and standards to ensure Hammersmith Christian Fellowship fulfils its duty of care towards vulnerable people.

3.2.2 Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to enable the effective implementation of this policy.

3.2.3 Ensure that any safeguarding concerns raised have been appropriately addressed and that the welfare of vulnerable people are ultimately safeguarded.

3.2.4 Ensure that Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's integrity is maintained at all times and its reputation protected.

3.2.5 Approve changes to this policy and any associated policies, procedures, and reports.

3.2.6 Constitute a panel to hear appeals challenging an existing decision made by HCF which the victim or perpetrator deems to be unsatisfactory or unfair. If the appeal is of a serious nature, this can be taken to the Old Baptist Union Council of Management.

3.2.7 Any concerns seen, heard, or raised within HCF should first be shared with a member of the Leadership Team who will report the concern to the DSL. The concern should always be recorded in writing initially by the person raising the concern and followed by what action has been taken; always dated.

3.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead –The DSL can either be an existing member of the Leadership team or anyone appointed solely for the purpose of the role. The DSL will be responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy and for reporting to the church Leadership Team. The DSL will:

3.3.1 Ensure that all aspects of this policy are implemented across Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's activities.

3.3.2 Liaise with the Leadership Team to ensure that members and volunteers with safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately vetted in line with this policy, prior to taking up a role with Hammersmith Christian Fellowship and ensure that relevant workers are re-vetted as deemed appropriate to a role (See Vetting policy document).

3.3.3 Ensure that all workers receive an appropriate level of safeguarding information and training that is commensurate to their duties.

3.3.4 Liaise with external agencies including the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Police and any other relevant statutory body when a safeguarding concern or incident is reported to HCF.

3.3.5 Ensure that any safeguarding concerns raised between Hammersmith Christian Fellowship and other related organisations are addressed and satisfactorily resolved.

3.3.6 Ensure that all vetting disclosures have been viewed and that blemished disclosures are appropriately risk assessed prior to a church member or volunteer assuming safeguarding responsibilities.

3.3.7 Receive and respond to all safeguarding reports and ensure they are fully investigated and resolved in accordance with Hammersmith Christian Fellowship procedures.

3.3.8 Ensure that there is an appropriate safeguarding monitoring and reporting procedure³ in place and that all employees and volunteers are aware of it.

3.3.9 Ensure that there are safeguarding parameters and standards in place for any activity, project, programme, contract, or event involving Hammersmith Christian Fellowship and a third-party organisation or individual.

3.3.10 Ensure that HCF projects have appropriate safeguarding standards for activities carried out with third party organisations or individuals.

3.3.11 Developing and implementing specific safeguarding measures as part of an activity or project in order to ensure the safety of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults present during the activity. This will include ensuring that any premises on which a Hammersmith Christian Fellowship activity takes place (with children and young people) is safe and secure and that all relevant HCF members and volunteers are appropriately vetted and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

3.3.12 Ensuring that any partner organisation involved in hosting or running an activity involving Hammersmith Christian Fellowship maintains a rigorous level of safeguarding to the standard expected by Hammersmith Christian Fellowship e.g. Grass Valley, Brentford Baptist Church.

3.3.13 Ensuring that any member of Leader, Member or volunteer working unsupervised in an 'regulated activity' has been fully vetted and cleared prior to taking up the role.

3.3.14 Ensuring that members and volunteers, who do not have a current enhanced DBS check and or have not received full training and are working in a regulated activity with children, young people or vulnerable adults are fully and permanently supervised (at all times) while carrying out the role. Note that if the role at any point

³ safeguarding monitoring and reporting procedure - Appendix 3

involves unsupervised and frequent contact with children or vulnerable adults, then it would be considered to be 'regulated activity' and the DSL will need to ensure that the member or volunteer has been appropriately vetted otherwise the activity will be deemed illegal under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2016) as amended by the 2012 Protection of Freedoms Act. The term 'fully supervised' can be defined as 'Activity where the supervisor – who has him/herself been safely recruited - is always able to see the supervised worker's actions during his/her work'.

3.4 Other church members and volunteers – For the purpose of this policy, volunteers are any person working within the church who is not a member. A volunteer must never be left unsupervised even when working in an unregulated activity. All leaders, members and volunteers of Hammersmith Christian Fellowship having substantial contact with vulnerable people have a duty of care. It is recognised that all church members apart from the Senior Minister serve voluntarily and without pay.

3.5 Partner organisations - In instances where a volunteer is recruited by another organisation to work in partnership with Hammersmith Christian Fellowship, it is the responsibility of the recruiting organisation to ensure that the volunteer is safely recruited and vetted should the role/project involve substantial contact with individuals involved in the church e.g. home visiting, working with the youth group. Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will ensure that any organisation it partners with, has robust safeguarding and safer recruitment policies⁴ and procedures in place and that relevant volunteers have been safely recruited to work in their respective roles. Partner organisations must also ensure that relevant volunteers fully understand their duty of care.

4. Hammersmith Christian Fellowship projects

4.1 Contact with vulnerable people will depend on the remit of the individual project as it may be impossible to foretell the specific nature of contact that HCF might have with vulnerable people until the project or activity has been risk assessed.

4.2 Where Hammersmith Christian Fellowship (HCF) works with vulnerable groups outside a Hammersmith Christian environment e.g. Neighbourhood Chaplains, Kid's Clubs, HCF will ensure that members and volunteers involved in such activities receive an appropriate level of vetting prior to their involvement. HCF will adopt the 2012 Protection of Freedoms Act's definition of 'regulated activity' with children and vulnerable adults for the purpose of DBS vetting such volunteers and employees. The Act defines 'regulated activity' as:

4.2.1 Supervision, training, listening, guidance, play or care to children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

4.2.2 Activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults taking place in a specified place such as a school, prison, registered crèche, hospital, or registered day care centre.

4.2.3 Any other activity for children, young people or vulnerable adult that takes place once a week and overnight or at least four times in a month.

4.2.4 Note that it is illegal for Hammersmith Christian Fellowship to ask to see an individual's criminal record disclosure where the role does not involve work with children, young people or a vulnerable adult and does not meet the Disclosure and Barring Service's eligibility criteria for an enhanced DBS check.

4.3 Examples of current HCF projects that may involve regulated and non-regulated work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and will require a DBS enhanced check

- Neighbourhood Chaplains

⁴ HCF Vetting Procedure and Safer Recruitment - Appendix 2

- Holiday Kids Club
- Youth Club (Epic Explorers)
- Lunch Bunch
- International Café
- Pastoral care groups

5. Implementation

The scope of this safeguarding policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within HCF aimed at embedding a culture of good safeguarding practice. These policies and procedures include the following:

5.1 Safer Working Guide⁵

This aims to raise awareness among leaders, members and volunteers of their duty of care towards vulnerable people by ensuring that they have a practical understanding of what constitutes illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. It provides general principles of safe working practices and aims to assist leaders, members, and volunteers with monitoring their own safeguarding standards and practice as well as serving as a reference point for leaders, members, and volunteers new to working with vulnerable people.

5.2 HCF Vetting Policy⁶

Will help Hammersmith Christian Fellowship ensure that all persons recruited to work with vulnerable people are safely vetted, trustworthy and reliable and are not subject to any offences, which may put the wellbeing of children, young people or vulnerable adults at risk.

5.3 The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy⁷

Will ensure that Hammersmith Christian Fellowship treats DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed on their disclosure certificate. It allows HCF to ask the 'Excepted Question' of an applicant who has spent or unspent convictions insofar as they have applied to work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

5.4 Whistle blowing Policy⁸

This enables members and volunteers to inform on other members/volunteer practices within HCF where there are suspected safeguarding concerns

5.5 Grievance and disciplinary procedures⁹

To address breaches of policies, procedures and protocols, including a failure to protect the welfare/safety of a child or young person or vulnerable adult involved in the work of Hammersmith Christian Fellowship.

5.6 Health and safety policy¹⁰

To protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, vulnerable adults, Leaders, members and volunteers and other parties involved in activities carried out on premises owned by Hammersmith Christian Fellowship or the Old Baptist Union.

⁵ Safer Working Guide – Appendix 4

⁶ HCF Vetting Procedure and Safer Recruitment – Appendix 2

⁷ Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy – Appendix 5

⁸ Whistle Blowing Policy – Appendix 6

⁹ Grievance and disciplinary Procedure – Appendix 7

¹⁰ Health, Safety and Welfare Policy – Appendix 8

5.7 Equal Opportunities¹¹

Ensures that safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory.

5.8 Data Protection Policy¹²

Ensures that confidential data is stored and accessed securely and disposed of appropriately.

5.9 Confidentiality Policy¹³

Ensures that 'service users' are aware of our duty to disclose any safeguarding incident or suspected incident to an appropriate member of the Leadership Team or external body.

5.10 Induction

Ensures that new church members and volunteers familiarise themselves with Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's safeguarding culture and its policies and procedures.

5.11 Safeguarding training, development, and communication

Ensures that Leaders, members, and volunteers are made fully aware of their duty of care towards vulnerable people and provided with the knowledge and skills to implement this safeguarding policy.

5.12 Things we should NEVER do.

- Touch children, youth or adult in a manner which is, or may be considered to be sexual, threatening, gratuitous or intimidating.
- Make arrangements to contact, communicate, or meet children or young people outside the approved church activities, unless this has the prior approval of the Leadership Team as well as their parents.
- Make inappropriate remarks or jokes of a personal, sexual, racial, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature.
- Use our position to make relationships with children and young people away from the church or their families. Play rough physical or sexual provocative games. Be sexually suggestive about a child or young person, even in fun. Invite a young person to the workers home alone.

6. Induction, Training, and support for workers

6.1 Hammersmith Christian Fellowship is committed to providing leaders, members, and volunteers with an appropriate level of safeguarding training on an ongoing basis as required.

6.2 Before members or volunteers begin working with vulnerable people they will be expected to:

6.2.1 Familiarise themselves with this policy document, the safe working practice guidance, DBS vetting and safer recruitment procedure, 'Recruitment of ex-offenders' policy, Lone Working practice¹⁴ and Health and Safety policy.

6.2.2 Understand the safeguarding reporting processes and lines of responsibility associated with their role and project

6.2.3 Undertake initial training on safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection as relevant and provided.

¹¹ Equal Opportunity Policy – Appendix 9

¹² Data Protection Policy - Appendix 10

¹³ Privacy Notice – Appendix 11

¹⁴ Lone Working Policy – Appendix 12

7. Maintaining professional boundaries

7.1 HCF leaders, members and volunteers will maintain professional boundaries at all times when working with vulnerable people. Professional boundaries define the limits between a worker and a vulnerable person and include a set of standards necessary for a close working relationship to exist while ensuring that an appropriate level of detachment is kept in place between both parties.

7.2 Section 4 of HCF's Safer Working Guide¹⁵ provides guidance on professional conduct that should be followed by leaders, members and volunteers when working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. A breach of professional boundaries or conduct by anyone representing Hammersmith Christian Fellowship could result in disciplinary measures taken against them.

8. Reporting and resolving safeguarding complaints, allegations, and incidents

Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will investigate and resolve any safeguarding concerns or allegations made against its leaders, members, or volunteers. We will follow the steps below to ensure that any safeguarding concern, allegation, or incident is appropriately reported, investigated, and resolved.

Step 1 - Any member of the Leadership Team, church member or volunteer can report and discuss a safeguarding concern or incident with a member of the Leadership Team or directly to the DSL either verbally or by email. A written record will be completed using HCF's Safeguarding Report form¹⁶ and given to HCF's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for investigation.

Step 2(a) - if the allegation concerns a member of the Leadership Team, church member or volunteer, that person may be asked to temporarily step down from their role with immediate effect until an investigation of the case has been completed.

Step 2(b) - If the concern was reported to a HCF member of the Leadership Team, church member or volunteer by a vulnerable person, the DSL will investigate the report and inform all relevant external agencies of the incident. The case will then be closed provided it does not involve a HCF members or volunteer or a HCF activity or project. The DSL should record the outcome of the investigation and report this to HCF's Leadership Team.

Step 3 – Where appropriate and as part of an investigation, the DSL should contact relevant statutory bodies in the area where the incident occurred for advice and to report the matter. In most cases, this will be the appropriate local authority and/or local police force, or Social Services. Contact can be made through a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in a local authority's Safeguarding Department, if the incident involves a child or young person.

Step 4 - Depending on the nature of the incident or concern reported, the DSL may report the incident to the responsible local Police force in the first instance, particularly if the incident or concern involves physical or sexual abuse, this is to ensure that the victim is protected from further harm.

Step 5 – The DSL should follow any professional or legal advice or suggested good practice provided by relevant agencies while investigating the matter.

Step 6 - Should the allegation be confirmed as a genuine safeguarding incident involving a HCF member or volunteer, the DSL should follow HCF's disciplinary procedure in dealing with the person concerned. This may ultimately require the person to be dismissed from the role should they be found liable for the incident.

Step 7 – if there has been a genuine safeguarding incident and the perpetrator has been dismissed from their role at HCF, the incident and the perpetrator must be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service by Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's DSL. Information about the referral process and a referral form can be obtained from the DBS' website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>

¹⁵ Safer Working Guide - Appendix 4

¹⁶ Safeguarding Report Form – Appendix 3

the perpetrator may be placed on the DBS' Child or Adult Barred lists depending on the outcome of the DBS's review of the case based on the information provided by HCF.

Step 8 – Being placed on the DBS' Child or Adult Barred list does not preclude HCF from 'employing' an individual – paid or as a volunteer, it just means that the individual is barred from working with either children or vulnerable adults. However, they may be employed or volunteer in any other capacity for HCF as long as it does not involve working with either or both vulnerable groups. HCF will risk assess a barred person before appointing them to any other role within HCF and will give due consideration to the requirements of its Rehabilitation of Offenders' policy

Step 9 – All safeguarding incidents and reports must be recorded and reported to HCF's Leadership Team.

Step 10 – Appeals - should either the victim or the alleged perpetrator be unhappy with HCF's resolution of a safeguarding complaint, they may write to the Senior Minister or Elder to appeal/review the decision. This should be done within five working days of receiving the original decision. An 'appeals panel' should be constituted by the Senior Minister within thirty working days of receiving the letter of appeal. The appeal panel's decision should be recorded using the Incident resolution form¹⁷ and communicated to the relevant parties within 5 working days of the decision. Note that an appeal can be lodged directly with the Old Baptist Union Council of Management should the Senior Minister be the subject of a complaint. The Chair should follow the same appeals procedure as described in Step 10.

9. Information sharing

9.1 All Leaders, church members and volunteers have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. HCF recognises that there may be occasions when the need to safeguard effectively may override confidentiality and necessitate the sharing of confidential information. In such circumstances information may be shared on a need to know basis only and with the approval of Hammersmith Christian Fellowship's DSL and Leadership Team. Refer to the para 4.2 of the Safer Working Guide on confidentiality and information sharing.

9.2 HCF also has a legal duty to refer anyone serving within the church who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to 5 years imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the person poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. HCF will also inform the police and other relevant authorities if it believes a relevant conduct has occurred (see para 2.7).

10. Monitoring

Hammersmith Christian Fellowship will endeavour to monitor safeguarding good practice throughout its work. To that effect the following key safeguarding activities will be monitored:

- a. Safer recruitment and vetting checks undertaken
- b. Records made and kept of supervision sessions
- c. Safeguarding training undertaken by employees and volunteers
- d. Safeguarding reports and complaints and action taken
- e. Currency of all relevant policies and procedures
- f. Current relevance of safeguarding incident reporting structure
- g. Presence and action of Designated Safeguarding Lead is in post

¹⁷ Incident resolution form - within Appendix 3

11. Reviewing Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and DSP and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Appendix

1. One-page summary of the Safeguarding Policy *
2. Vetting Procedure and Safer Recruitment *
3. Safeguarding monitoring and reporting procedure. Including the Incident Resolution Form
4. Safer Working Guide
5. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy *
6. Whistle Blowing Policy
7. Grievance and disciplinary Procedure
8. Health, Safety and Welfare Policy *
9. Equal Opportunity Policy *
10. Data Protection Policy * and Privacy Notice *
11. Privacy Notice *
12. Lone Workers Policy *
13. Risk Assessment Policy *