

LEE ABBEY SMALL MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES (HOUSEHOLD COMMUNITIES)

Charity Commission registration number 1053813

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

In developing this safeguarding policy the Lee Abbey Small Missional Communities (LASMC; sometimes known as Household communities) wish to reflect that we are all in need of protection from harm and that as a Christian community it is the responsibility of every one of us to protect those less able to protect themselves.

LASMC is part of the Lee Abbey Movement, which is an Acknowledged Religious Community within the Church of England under the Religious Community Regulations 2020. The Church of England's policy statement, 'Promoting a Safer Church'¹, sets out the Church's commitment to the safeguarding of children and adults. This commitment extends to religious Communities under the "Whole Church" approach. LASMC therefore adopts the Church of England House of Bishops' Guidance for safeguarding children², young people³ and vulnerable adults⁴ in the Church of England as set out in 'Promoting a Safer Church' and 'Safeguarding in Religious Communities'.⁵

Specifically, this involves commitment to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture, *particularly by*
 - *Implementing effective policies, procedures and training to ensure that all members of our communities adhere to best practice in this area,*
 - *Establishing safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse;*
 - *Ensuring safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, with LASMC playing its part in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse [see appendix 1, Types of Abuse]*
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church, *including LASMC's communities;*
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation, *including Multi-agency working with statutory authorities, the police and relevant Diocesan safeguarding officers;*
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons;
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons, *including providing support to any member of LASMCs against whom an allegation of abuse is made;*
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

¹ The Policy Statement can be downloaded from <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

² A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

³ Young people/person means any individual(s) aged 14 to 17 years old

⁴ Vulnerable adult: Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 defines a '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 full text of the 2016 Measure can be found at:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201516/jtselect/jtecc/79.pdf

⁵ The Policy Statement can be downloaded from <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-acknowledged-religious-communities>

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of human beings in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm and to seek their flourishing as children of their heavenly Father.

LASMC recognises that it has certain responsibilities to all those individuals who both receive and give support as part of its mission as a caring Christian community. There is therefore, an individual responsibility on all persons providing a service on behalf of the LASMC to report incidents or suspicions of abuse through the procedure as set down by the Board.

Accordingly LASMC has adopted this document (hereafter 'the policy'). The policy is meant as a brief guideline to ensure we do all we can to protect the children, young people and vulnerable adults of the communities and in the care of the community members, and also those who engage with LASMC activities.

Aims

The aims of this Safeguarding policy are:

1. To ensure that best practice is followed in order to create a safe environment in which children, young people and adults may be cared for and nurtured. This is the best way in which to prevent and harm.
2. To ensure that speedy, effective and appropriate action is taken if there is a disclosure of abuse.
3. To protect the legitimate interests of any person against whom allegations of abuse are made.

Background Policy Guidance

This policy statement follows requirements from the following Government and Church of England Guidance:

Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government December 2020

Statement of Government Policy On Adult Safeguarding Department of Health 2013

Keeping Children Safe in Education Department for Education 2018

Protecting All God's Children (safeguarding policy for children and young people, 4th edition, 2010)

Promoting a Safer Church Church of England 2017

Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused Church of England 2011

Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance Church of England June 2021

Responding Well to Domestic Abuse Church of England 2017

Safer Environment and Activities Church of England September 2019

Safeguarding in Acknowledged Religious Communities Church of England February 2025

Roles and Responsibilities

The safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Not just parents, guardians and carers. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect vulnerable people. The communities, including all members, need to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

The **Leader**⁶ of each Small Missional Community (SMC) has overall responsibility for **ensuring** compliance with safeguarding policies and good practice and for promoting a safer culture. To support them in this responsibility, the Leader will be trained in safeguarding at the leadership pathway level.

⁶ If leadership is shared in an SMC (eg a married couple lead together), "Leader" should be read as "Leaders"

In each SMC there is an appointed **Designated Safeguarding Person** (DSP). The DSP:

- Is responsible for safeguarding practice, awareness raising and ensuring there is safeguarding training provision in place;
- Is responsible for establishing links with the local Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) to support with training and advice in handling any incidents or disclosures;
- must discuss all safeguarding matters, including ongoing cases, preventative measures and embedding a safeguarding culture with the Leader at regular meetings;
- will help facilitate the culture change referred to previously by taking a risk based, preventative approach, proportionate and appropriate for their community.

As the Church of England's Safeguarding requires that the DSP must not be the Leader of the community, usually this role will be taken on by the Chair of the SMC's Local Support Group. To support them in this responsibility, the DSP will be trained in safeguarding at the leadership pathway level and also in Safer Recruitment.

The Trustees will designate one of their number who has been trained in safeguarding at the Senior Leadership pathway level as the **Trustee Safeguarding Lead** (TSL). The TSL reports about Safeguarding to the Board on a regular basis, and ensures (s)he is up-to-date on safeguarding issues and training opportunities.

For Lee Abbey Movement, there is an **Episcopal Visitor**, who must be informed of serious incidents.

Lee Abbey Movement's **Lead Recruiter** (LR) is available to support with safer recruitment.

There is also a **Safeguarding Advisor** (SA) for the SMC to assist Leaders, DSPs and community members. The SA conducts site audits and local conversations annually, reporting with recommendations to community leaders, and reports annually to the Trustees.

If any further information is deemed to be required, this can be sought from the DSP. If further clarification is required, please contact the (TSL).

Special care must be taken when contact is required with any children living as part of the community; parents retain their responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the whereabouts of their children at all times and who is, with the parent's authority, supervising them, and who has responsibility for them in the absence of the parents; notwithstanding this it is advised that parents/carers of any 'community children' should not leave them in the custody of just one other person if at all possible. Every effort must be made to ensure that their children are given the opportunity to say if they are happy or not, with any arrangement made for them; their views must be taken seriously.

Allegations, Incidents and Concerns

If community members, the Leader, volunteers, members of the Local Support Group or Board Member have any suspicions about any other community member, Leader, volunteer, member of the Local Support Group or Board Member, in regard to the safety of any child or children, or any vulnerable adult, then the DSP is the person to whom all such concerns must be reported. A written record of the concern must be made and kept. The DSP must report all allegations or concerns to the local DSA in the first instance within 24 hours (excluding weekends / bank holidays). The DSP and DSA will agree the best way forward and inform the Leader (or TSL if the concern relates to the Leader). If the concerns are about the DSP or the Leader, then these must be reported directly to the DSA and also to the TSL. In an emergency situation, first contact should always be with the police or social services.

Any matter which is the subject of statutory provisions must be brought to the relevant agencies for determination, and where appropriate we will work with those statutory agencies. This is particularly important if there is a possible need for statutory action to protect a child or vulnerable adult, or to

bring an alleged offender to justice. Safeguarding is about more than the child and vulnerable adult's protection systems. It is about preventing harm to children and vulnerable adults wherever possible - sometimes this results in needing to use the child protection systems to address concerns, make someone safer and bring an offender to justice.

All community members, volunteers and members of the Local Support Group or Board are required to comply with any requests for assistance from either the DSP or the DSA. If the DSP is uncertain whether a matter should be raised with the DSA, they should raise it in any event and keep a record of the discussion.

LASMC has a duty to report any serious incidents (including safeguarding) to the Charity Commission and will do so in accordance with the House of Bishops' Serious Incident Reporting Guidance for Religious Communities. Where agreed with the local Diocese, this will be delegated to them.

Safer Recruitment & Training

Before a community member, paid staff or volunteer is accepted, references will be taken up and a confidential self-declaration is to be completed. If the applicant has worked with vulnerable groups before, then the reference must be provided by someone who has experience of the applicant's work with those groups. Otherwise, a general character reference should be used.

Trustees must be recruited in line with the current Charity Commission guidance.⁷

Appropriate DBS checks will be taken up i.e. enhanced (police record) or enhanced + barring (police records plus barred list). For LASMC Trustees, the LR will manage the DBS checks. DBS checks for community Leaders, and any required for community members and volunteers, will be managed by the DSP with the Local Support Group, seeking support from the LR as required. Individuals being checked will be sent an email attaching a booklet with a link to the website of thirtyone:eight for completion of the on-line application in order to obtain a DBS certificate. Evidence of identity will be verified.

The person being checked needs to show the certificate to the LR or DSP as appropriate, who checks it and makes a note of the date and number. Where the check is not clear, the LR will refer to the prevailing legislation regarding management of past offenders.

On satisfactory completion of all relevant forms and recommendation by the appropriate Leaders, the LR or DSP (as appropriate) notifies the Board Secretary and other appropriate people and the new applicant is appointed.

LASMC has decided that each worker, volunteer or community member will serve a probationary period of three months. At the end of the probationary period they will meet with the person to whom he or she is responsible. That person must be satisfied with the person's competence and their commitment to prevent abuse.

Any person appointed for a short-term engagement will be supervised as if they were undertaking a probationary period.

All community members, Leaders and volunteers must be willing to receive appropriate safeguarding training. In communities who undertake work with children and vulnerable adults or have contact with children/vulnerable adults, all members must participate in the basic and foundation

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finding-new-trustees-cc30/finding-new-trustees>

safeguarding learning. Training must be delivered to the community by arrangement with the DSA for the local diocese.

All community members, Leaders and volunteers need to meet at regular intervals to plan and review activity and to share experiences. Special attention must be paid to any situation in which a child or vulnerable adult is being highly favoured or harshly treated as these could be signs of abuse. Leaders should try to observe those for whom they are responsible as they come in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Record Keeping

With appropriate GDPR consent, formal records of vulnerable people having contact with the LASMCs must be maintained where possible. These should include, the name, date of birth, address, telephone number, emergency contact details, the name of the parent, guardian or carer, any special information concerning allergies to food or medication, whether any named persons have restricted access to them, and consent for emergency medical treatment. This record should be updated at least annually, or as soon as any change of details are known.

At any gathering, where children or vulnerable adults are in attendance, a register should be completed to ensure the Leaders know which such people are present. Leaders must be aware of the whereabouts of all children in their care at all times.

To ensure compliance with Data protection and confidentiality requirements, application Forms, references and confidential self-declarations are to be kept securely. The Leader and DSP will agree appropriate arrangements for each SMC, and the LR will retain relevant Trustee information. All community members, Leaders and volunteers retain their own DBS Certificates.

Good Practice

Few people actually wish to harm children or vulnerable adults, but we must reduce the opportunities for abuse to take place. See [Safer Environment and Activities Oct19 0.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#) for overall guidelines.

Some specific key principles for LASMC are:

- As far as possible, no adult is left alone with a child or vulnerable adult where there is little chance of the activity being observed by others.
- A lone adult should tell someone else that he or she is unaccompanied, whilst in contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- No community member, Leader or volunteer having contact with children should have plans to meet with a child on their own. They may meet individually with a young person in a mentoring capacity where they have signed parental consent, and meet in a public place (e.g. Café) with the times agreed with parents.
- Group trips involving children and young people should include at least three adults and a signed parental consent form with details of the trip must be obtained for all the children and young people. During the trip, there should be at least two adults with the group and any sub-group at all times. The Local Support Group must be informed fully of all arrangements for group trips.
- When children have to be transported by car or minibus, there must be more than one adult in the vehicle, and they must not be a married couple.

Social Media and Photographs

Taking of photographs by community members, Leaders or volunteers of children and young people must only take place with parental consent. See section 5 of [Safer Environment and Activities Oct19 0.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#) for details.

Any community member, Leader or volunteer having communication with young people through social media, (Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones, emails etc.) must have signed permission from parents.

Care must be taken over who has access to computers or devices being used to communicate with children and vulnerable adults. Where possible, there should be passwords on accounts.

All exchanges should be accessible to the DSP, so they can review them before deleting. Any video messaging should be done in a public place so others are aware of what you are doing and who you are speaking to. Any concerns from communication with a child or a vulnerable adult should be printed off and discussed with the DSP.

Community members, Leaders or volunteers should not be friends with vulnerable people on personal social media accounts.

The community Leader can have an account which is just for young people. It needs to be clear that this account is for youth work and youth mission work. Personal information should be kept to the minimum. Whenever possible conversations should be kept on public pages. Any concerns from communication with a child or young person should be printed off and discussed with DSP.

The Local Support Group and the Board (through the LSG's minutes) need to be kept fully up to date with the events that have contact with children and vulnerable adults or if deemed appropriate for items to be placed before the DSP between meetings.

Adoption and Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Lee Abbey Small Missional Communities Board.

Accepted by the Board after its meeting on Tuesday 3rd March 2026.

Chair -

Secretary -

Review Date: February 2027

Important Contact Details:

Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL) Ven Dr Andy Jolley
Mobile 07973 458403 Email: andy.jolley@leeds.anglican.org

Episcopal Visitor: Rt Revd Alan Smith,
Mobile: 07711 324575 Email: alansmith30@live.co.uk

Safeguarding Advisor (SA) to SMCs: Kairen Smith
Mobile: 07519813199 Email: kairen.smith@outlook.com

Lead Recruiter – Amy Bailey (Personnel), Lee Abbey, Lynton, EX35 6JJ
Landline: 01598 754250 Email : personnel@LeeAbbey.org.uk Fax: 01598 752619

LA Knowle West

Leaders' Names: Roger and Angie Allen

Landline: 0117 239 0147 Email: leeabbeyknowlewest@gmail.com

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP): Cesca Meager

Mobile: 07421 468834 Email: cescameager150@gmail.com

Church of England Diocese of Bristol DSA: Adam Bond

Mobile: 07458 073272 Landline: 0117 906 0100 Email: adam.bond@bristoldiocese.org or
safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org

Bristol City council – childrens 0117 903 6444 or email childprotection@bristol.gcsx.gov.uk

Bristol City council – adults (Care Direct) 0117 922 2700

LA Ford (Plymouth)

Leader's Name: TBA

Mobile: TBA Email: TBA

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP): Revd Claire McIlroy

Mobile: 07766 556321 Email: revclairemcilroy@gmail.com

Church of England Diocese of Exeter DSA: Costa Nassaris

Mobile: 07809 339501 Landline: 01392 294929 Email: safeguardingenquiry@exeter.anglican.org

Plymouth City council Safeguarding /LADO – 01752 668000 (Children or Adult Social Care Option)
(Out of hours for Children: 01752 346984) or email: gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

Other agencies which can supply assistance:

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

Stop It Now: 0808 1000 900

NAPAC: 0808 801 0331

Samaritans: 116 123

Family Lives 0808 800 2222

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Action on Elder Abuse 0808 808 8141

Police: Emergencies: 999 Non emergencies: 101

Appendix 1

Types of abuse for more details see⁸

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.

- 1. Physical Abuse.** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- 2. Sexual Abuse.** Involves forcing or enticing a child or adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- 3. Neglect and acts of omission.** The persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- 4. Emotional/psychological Abuse** (including Web-based bullying and witnessing Domestic Violence/Abuse). The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- 5. Institutional Abuse.** Institutional Abuse occurs where the routines and regimes within care settings (day, residential, hospital or other institutions including TEIs) deny people rights, choices and opportunities. Abuse can be caused by weak or oppressive management, inadequate staffing (numbers, competence), inadequate supervision or support, "closed" communication, lack of knowledge of Whistleblowing policies and lack of training.
- 6. Discriminatory Abuse.** Including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, sexual orientation, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- 7. Financial / material abuse.** Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

⁸ For children see [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) page 85 and for adults [No secrets](#) paragraph 2.7

8. Domestic Violence/Abuse. Domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of

coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently physically violent.

9. Spiritual Abuse. The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries.

NOTE

The lists above are intended to be helpful, but can never be anything other than indicative and certainly are not exhaustive. In some cases there may be clusters of symptoms. It is always important to bear in mind that some people who are being abused do not show any signs or symptoms at all. If you are in doubt or not sure what to do, consult the Designated Officer for Safeguarding or the diocesan safeguarding adviser or the local children's social care team.