

**The Gospel Hall
Spencer Bridge Road
Northampton**

Safe
and
Sound

**Guidelines on child protection
for the local church and its
children's workers**

Revised March 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Christians meeting at The Gospel Hall have decided to implement and manage an up to date and effective church child protection policy.

This is a positive opportunity for the church to demonstrate the love of Christ in a community increasingly marked by violence and abuse.

The primary aim of this policy is to protect the children who are in the church's care. The policy gives guidelines that will enable children's workers to provide a safe, caring environment while avoiding compromising situations that could lead to accusations of abuse.

This document will be given to all children's workers at their induction and is available to all church members and parents/carers of children.

The definition of a children's worker in the context of this document is any person from the church who attends activities involving children or who transports children to and from such activities.

The Safe and Sound policy is based on the guidelines in the Safe from Harm 1993 document written in support of the 1989 Children Act.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
2. Plan the work of the church to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all workers.
5. Give all workers clear roles.
6. Use supervision as a means for protecting children.
7. Use an application/interview system for prospective children's workers.
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's work with children.
9. Explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
11. Make appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
13. Train all workers and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

The policy also embraces the recommendations of the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

No part of this document may be copied by any individual or organisation without prior permission from CCPAS and this church.

As a church we are committed to following the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

2. CHURCH DETAILS

The Gospel Hall
68 Spencer Bridge Road
Northampton
NN5 7DP
www.thegospelhall.org.uk

Hereafter "the church".

Emergency telephone numbers: 01604 762159 - Michael and Gillian Platt
01604 371001 - Simon and Kirstie Swan
01604 586188 - Brian and Brenda Barton
01604 882585 - John and Wendy Salisbury

Child Protection Responsibilities.

Co-ordinator	01604 762159 - Gill Platt
Co-ordinator	01604 371001 - Simon Swan
Recruiter	01604 371001 - Simon Swan
Transport Co-ordinator	07730 552282 - Susanna Platt

Logbook Recorders:-

Transformers	Susanna Platt
Treasure Seekers	Paul Cartwright/Michael Platt
Bible Class	Luke Cartwright
Teen Night	Gill Platt
Toddler Zone	Gill Platt
Holiday Bible Club	Paul Cartwright
Residential Weekend	Michael Platt

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The church has adopted the following Policy Statement, which has been published and is displayed in the Hall as a sign of the church's commitment to this issue. (See Form I).

- We are committed to supporting parents and families.
- We are committed to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of children and young people.
- We recognise that child protection is everybody's responsibility.
- We are committed to following the agreed procedures and following statutory and specialist guidelines.
- We seek to support all in the church affected by abuse.
- We review this policy bi-annually or if circumstances dictate.

4. AREAS OF POLICY

The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

The appointment of workers.
The supervision of children's activities.
Abuse.

These guidelines have been prepared in consultation with Churches Child Protection Advisory Service.

The content of the policy forms the basis of seminars for all children's workers in the church.

The church leadership have signed the Policies Relating to the Use of Criminal Records Information (See Form 3) incorporating an equal opportunities statement and handling statement.

5. APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS

The Joint Co-ordinators are responsible for the appointment of workers and the ongoing supervision and training of all children's workers.

5.1 Age of a registered worker.

The process is aimed at workers who are over 18 years of age.

It is possible for workers over 16 to have some responsibility at the discretion of the leaders. They will be required to undertake the same recruitment and selection procedure as all other workers

Helpers under 16 must be supervised by an approved worker at all times.

5.2 The appointment process.

- An applicant must obtain an application form (See Form 4), a voluntary disclosure form (See Form 5), provide two references (See Forms 6&7) and read the Safe and Sound policy.
- Once the application form and references have been received by the Recruiter, and are satisfactory, an interview will be arranged. All new appointees will be interviewed by the Recruiter, one of the Co-ordinators or Youth Leader to assess their suitability for children's work. The role will be explained, as will the Safe and Sound policy. They will be asked directly if they have been asked to leave any posts working with children, or whether children have been taken from their care.
- If the applicant reveals information that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children the appointment process can be halted.
- Subject to a satisfactory interview the candidate will be asked to apply for a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. This is done online and the Recruiter will give necessary instructions.
- Once a satisfactory DBS is received, the candidate will be appointed a Registered Children's Worker and receive an induction relating to the

children's work and the Safe and Sound policy before commencing children's work. They will be required to sign a written acceptance of the church's policy statement. (See Form 8).

- **The appointment process may be halted at any stage by either party.**
- **Any applicant found to have a record of any offences of a sexual or violent nature will be precluded from work with children.**

5.3 Ongoing training.

The church leadership will provide ongoing training on a regular basis and every children's worker will be required to attend at least one training session every 4 years.

Failure to do so will disqualify the person from children's work.

6. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

6.1 Guidelines.

See Form 9 – Working Guidelines.

6.2 Identification.

All children's workers will be issued with Identity Badges, which must be worn when attending all children's activities.

6.3 Transportation.

Transportation of children to and from all activities, including Treasure Seekers, Gospel Meetings, Transformers, Camps and Outings is the responsibility of the Transport Co-ordinator.

Workers should liaise with the Co-ordinator, passing on any information (children on holiday, not coming, etc.) to help them carry out this responsibility satisfactorily.

All drivers will be approved Children's Workers.

All drivers must hold a full driving licence and have valid insurance.

They must wear their identity badge at all times.

Child restraints must comply with current regulations

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>

Passengers over 14 years of age must wear adult seat belts (it is the passenger's responsibility and not the driver's for ensuring this)

Children who refuse to wear a seat belt will **not** be transported until such time as they agree to the rules governing this issue.

Only the correct number of passengers must be transported.

It is preferable for a single adult driver to be of the same gender as the children, although the children may be a mixed gender group.

No children should be transported without a completed consent form (See Form 10).

Discretion must be used if returning a child to an apparently empty home. **On no account should a driver enter an empty home alone with a child**, but if thought necessary, contact the appropriate Youth Leader for advice.

Only minibuses fitted with seatbelts will be used for the transportation of children.

Drivers will be suitably qualified as per <https://www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus>
For health and safety reasons a second Registered Children's Worker should accompany the minibus driver when transporting a large number of children.

6.4. Children on the street.

Should children on the street ask to come to children's activities then verbal consent should be obtained from a parent or carer before transporting them to the activity.

Contact should then be made, as soon as possible after the activity, with the children's parents or carers to obtain written permission as above.

6.5 Supervision

It is not the church policy to accept children to children's activities less than 3 years of age except in exceptional circumstances (if a parent attends as well, for example).

Mums and Tots is the obvious exception as parents/carers accompany their children.

The ratio of workers to children at all activities will be in accordance (where possible) with the regulations governing day care which are:

	Adults :	Children
0-2 years	1	: 3
2-3 years	1	: 4
3-5 years	1	: 8

There would always be a minimum of two workers at any activity.

It is preferable to have both male and female workers present at all activities and to minimise the amount of time spent with one worker and a class (teaching lessons, etc.)

There is safety in numbers.

6.6 Keeping of records.

Proper records must be kept of children's activities. The Leaders of all activities are responsible for keeping these records.

6.6.1 Register of workers.

Names of workers should be entered for each activity including times of arrival and departure.

6.6.2 Register of children.

Every child should be registered with relevant details (See Form 11).

6.6.3 Logbook.

Logbook Recorders are designated for each Work and an entry should be made after every activity noting the workers present, any other adults present in the activity or building, any unusual or concerning behaviour on the part of any children or workers.

Logbooks can protect both children and workers.

6.6.4 Accident and incident form.

Any accidents or incidents should be recorded in the book at the Hall (See Form 12).

6.7 Children Placed with Host Families

The Residential Bible Study Weekend includes joint activities that may involve children staying overnight with host families.

Every potential host family will be asked to provide details of sleeping arrangements, meal times etc. together with a list of all occupants over 16 years of age. Criminal Records Disclosure checks are carried out on the host family.

Each host family will be given a copy of 'Safe and Sound' child protection policy together with full details of the person(s) they are accommodating. These will include home address, parents'/carers' details, home telephone number and any other relevant information (e.g. medical details).

Information for parent(s)/carer(s) of the child/young person being accommodated will include details of the host family, a statement that all host families have been assessed by the church prior to the visit, a statement that the church activity has a child protection policy, a telephone number of a contact person if there are any concerns and a programme of activities.

6.8 Communicating Safely with Children using Technology

There are an increasing variety of communication methods available today such as Computers, Tablets and Mobile Phones. These can be used to communicate with children but there are inherent dangers which are addressed in this section.

A child or young person shouldn't feel discriminated against because they don't possess such equipment and other methods of communication should be used with them. Obtain parental agreement before using such technology to communicate with the young person. Use clear unambiguous language to avoid misinterpretation and do not use terms such as 'luv' or 'lol' which can have double meanings.

6.8.1 Email

When using Email to communicate, workers should:

Use a Gospel Hall email address obtainable from Michael Platt, rather than a personal one.

Ensure all messages can be viewed by a Leader (copy one in) and ensure the children are aware of this.

Message should include an auto signature as follows;

'The views presented in this email may not necessarily represent those of The Gospel Hall unless otherwise stated. If something you say to us gives a concern that you or someone else may be at risk of serious harm, we may need to share those concerns. In such circumstances we would inform you giving details of who would be contacted and what information would be given'

6.8.2 Mobile Phones

Where appropriate use Group rather than Individual texting

A Log of calls made and texts sent and received must be retained on the phone.

Any texts giving rise to concern should be shared with a leader.

No communication should take place between the hours of 10pm and 7am.

6.8.3 Chat and Messenger Services

Workers must not engage in Chat or Instant Messenger services with children and if contacted in this way, explain that it is against our safe communication Policy.

6.8.4 Social Networking

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc are popular means of communication but should be used with care.

Workers should not become 'friends' with children i.e where private conversations and sharing of personal information takes place.

Children should be discouraged from inviting adults to become their online friends.

7. SAFETY.

A first aid kit will be available at all activities whether in the hall or outside. The first aid kits are stored in the kitchens and one will be carried to outside activities.

Fire extinguishers are positioned around the hall and serviced annually by a specialist company.

All workers should familiarise themselves with their operation.

8. TOUCHING.

The abused person may be frightened by touch because they associate it with violence or sexual assault.

They may never have received signs of physical affection or love, so hugging or even a handshake could feel threatening.

Children and young people who associate touch with sexual activities may feel sexually aroused and flirt provocatively with adults or other children and may touch them in the genital or breast area.

For your own safety and to help them learn what is acceptable behaviour you will need to explain why you are not responding to their overtures.

It would be wise, in these circumstances, not to see such children and young people on their own.

8.1. Taking care of touching.

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything, which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

8.2. Three questions I ask myself.

If someone asks or tells me to do anything that I am not sure about:

- Do I have a "yes" feeling or a "no" feeling?
- If I do as the person asks, will an adult I trust know where I am?
- If I do as the person asks, can I be sure to get help if I need it?

If the answer to any of these questions is "no", I can say "no!" and tell an adult I trust about it.

9. DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is an expression of God's love for the individual. (Hebrews 12: 5-12, Proverbs 22:6).

- Children who tend to be disruptive when together may need to be separated. They should be given a chance, warn them and only separate as a last resort.
- Have the child sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to the child.
- Be proactive and don't wait until a situation arises to be dealt with.
- Take the child aside and talk to them, challenge them to change, **whilst encouraging them on their strengths.**
- Warn a child that you will speak to their parents or carers and do so if necessary.
- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, all helpers should discuss the situation together and give feedback on the child and his/her family.
- **Never** smack or hit a child and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary

10. TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHILDREN.

It is permissible to take pictures of children in a crowd on an outing or activity in a public area so long as they are not identified.

Parental consent will be required before taking individual photos with Father Christmas etc.(See Form 13)

No pictures will be used on a website without written and specific consent from parents or carers.

11. ABUSE.

11.1. Definitions of abuse (England).

The following definitions of child abuse are recommended as criteria throughout England by HM Government in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015).

Abuse.

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy).

Emotional Abuse.

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse.

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child 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 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.

Neglect.

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Spiritual Abuse.

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting an individual's right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Domestic Violence. - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (updated March 2015) is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

11.2. Recognising possible signs of abuse.

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical signs of Abuse.

Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
Injuries which have not received medical attention.
Neglect, under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation – eg. Cuts/scratches/substance abuse.

Indicators of possible sexual Abuse.

Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
A child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.

Emotional signs of Abuse.

Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
Obsessions or phobias.
Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
Attention-seeking behaviour.
Persistent tiredness.
Running away/stealing/lying.

Race, Culture & Religion.

Crucial to any assessment is a knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious aspects. Remember also that differences exist not only between ethnic groups but also within the same ethnic group and between different neighbourhoods and social classes. While different practices must be taken

into account, it is also important to remember that all children have basic human rights. Differences in child-rearing do not justify child abuse.

11.3. How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse.

General points.

- Above everything else **listen, listen, listen.**
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared.

Helpful responses.

- You have done the right thing in telling.
- That must have been really hard.
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

Don't say.

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else."

Concluding.

Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.

Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services

or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
Contact one of the child protection Co-ordinators or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC.
Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

Making notes.

Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body. (See Workers Action Sheet, (Form 14) and Skin Maps, (Form 15).

Write down exactly what the child has said and when she/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity).

Write down dates and times of these events, when the record was made and any action taken. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed up. These notes should be passed on to the Child Protection Co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Children's Social Services. Any referral to Children's Social Services should be confirmed by the referrer in writing within 48 hours.

All documents should be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

Check with Co-ordinator regarding the conditions of the church insurance policy to ensure there is appropriate cover against any claims.

11.4 Responding to concerns for a child or an allegation of abuse.

- Contact Children's Social Services direct if there are concerns that a child may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of 'significant harm' or is afraid to return home. Do not tell the parents in such circumstances.
- If a child needs urgent medical attention an ambulance should be called or they should be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken. The hospital staff should be informed of any child protection concerns. They have a responsibility to pass these concerns on to the statutory authorities.
- If the concerns for the child centre around poor parenting it may be appropriate to speak to the parent/carer, offer practical domestic help and suggest, for example, a chat with the health visitor, doctor or the Children's Social Services Department.
- If a parent/carer is unwilling or frightened to seek help, then offer to accompany them. If they still fail to acknowledge the need for action it is possible to informally discuss the situation with Children's Social Services without divulging their personal details (such as names and addresses) unless, of course, Children's Social Services consider the situation to be serious enough to do so. In these circumstances it is important to realise there may be a bigger picture. Information may have come to light that

might be a vital missing piece in the jigsaw. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service is available to give advice in these situations.

- It is important to take older children's wishes into account when deciding whether to talk to parents/carers unless other children are potentially at risk.

Where there are allegations or concerns of sexual abuse:

- Contact Children's Social Services (Out-of hours, the Emergency Duty Team). **Do not** try to investigate the matter. The important thing is to relay the information to Children's Social Services and/or the Police so they can carry out any investigation and take appropriate action under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and 2004 Supplement.
- In the case of very severe sexual assault (such as rape), which may have occurred over the last few days, and where it has not been possible to get an immediate response from Children's Social Services, contact the police in order to facilitate a medical examination by a designated police surgeon. This could provide evidence, which could be used in any criminal prosecution. (Older young people are able to decline such an examination if they are considered to be of sufficient age and understanding). Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as stained clothing.
- **Do not** tell the parents/ carers. They could be involved. It is also important no one else who might be involved is inadvertently alerted to the situation because this may lead to the child being 'silenced'. Allegations of sexual abuse are usually denied and often difficult to prove. Remember, the child's welfare must be the first consideration at all times.
- Keep information on a "need to know" basis so that any alleged perpetrator is not "tipped off". The child or young person also has a right for their privacy to be respected as much as is possible.

Should the child protection co-ordinator not feel it necessary to refer the matter to Children's Social Services but the children's worker (or anyone else) has serious concerns for the child's safety, then they should contact the relevant authorities direct. The safety of the child over-rides all other considerations and it is important to remember that sexual abuse of children is a serious crime. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service can advise in cases of difficulty.

If the allegation is against a church leader who has responsibility for implementing the child protection policy, the referral should be made direct to Children's Social Services or appropriate professional advice sought, e.g. from the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

11.5. Referrals and third party allegations.

Where a third party alleges abuse is happening to a child, the role of the church worker is to gather as much information as possible from this person. They should be advised the information they have provided will be shared with the child protection co-ordinator and may result in a referral to the Social Services Department with their details. This is so that Children's Social Services can contact them if necessary.

11.6. Reasons for not contacting the parent or alleged abuser.

(i) A child might make an allegation naming someone as an abuser. The allegation might be the absolute truth or it could be that a child feels safer to name someone else because they are being told not to tell. Alternatively, the child may be presenting the situation in a confused way. The danger is, if a parent/carer is told about the allegation, a police investigation could be ruined if by their reaction they inadvertently alert the abuser or take matters into their own hands and confront a person under suspicion. There is also the risk a parent/carer might physically assault the alleged perpetrator, which would not be helpful, particularly if they turn out to be innocent! In fact, any reaction could alert an alleged perpetrator, even if it isn't threatening. So, it is vital that no one from the church informs the parent of the allegations at this stage. The decision to advise the parents/carer should be left to Children's Social Services or the Police.

(ii) If contacted, the alleged abuser (if guilty) might try to silence the child with bribery or threats. He/she could dispose of any incriminating material - books, videos, photos, computer files. If he/she is not guilty, their initial reaction (e.g. shock, horror) could be indicative of their innocence. If they have already been 'tipped off', less credence can be given to their initial reaction.

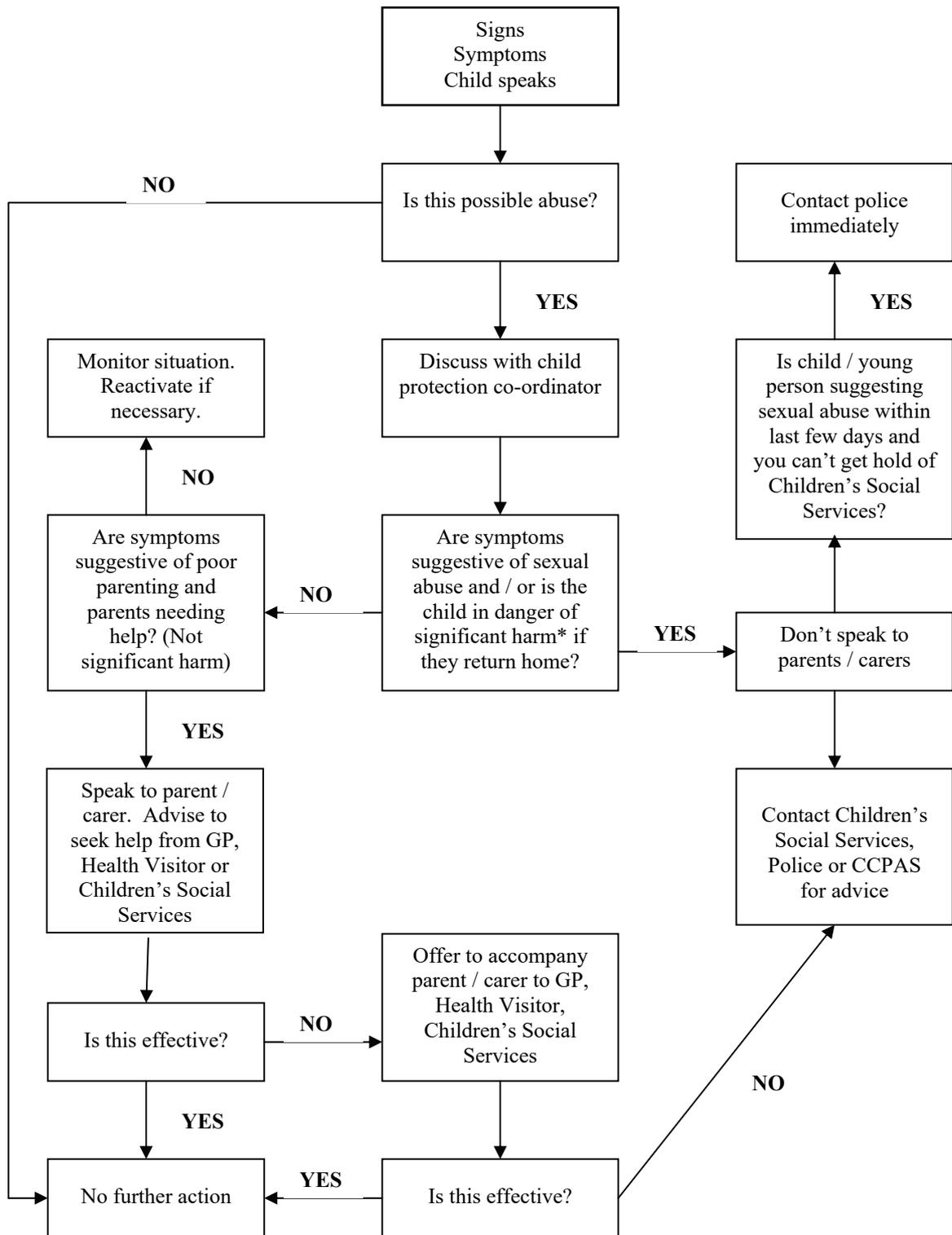
11.7. Allegations against a church worker.

If the alleged perpetrator has a role among children in the church, or has any contact with children, seek the advice of Children's Social Services and the police before taking any action such as suspension of responsibility. During an enquiry, it will be necessary to supervise the worker as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to your attention, the authorities being informed and the appropriate action taken. The suspension of a worker following an allegation is by definition a neutral act but may be necessary because the priority is to protect children from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

Children's Social Services will involve an Allegation Management Advisor to ensure that during any investigation children are adequately supported along with the worker involved.

11.8. Flow chart for action.

This is not a substitute for a formal child protection policy.



11.9. Helping victims of abuse.

The church members are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith.

11.10. Working with offenders.

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the church leadership will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. A formal contract will be drawn up, requiring the offender's compliance. This contract will be signed by the offender and monitored by the church leadership.

Such an individual will not be permitted to attend children's activities and not permitted to work with children in any way.