

agapé uk†

# Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed January 2026



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# Section 1- Details of Agapé Ministries Limited

## **Agapé Ministries Limited (Agapé UK)**

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**Registered Charity Number:** England & Wales (258421) and Scotland (SCO42332)

**Registered Company Number in England:** No 949989

**Insurance Company:** Ansvar Insurance (Policy Number: ACY 2338323)

## **The following is a brief description of Agapé UK.**

Agapé UK exists to help people discover Jesus together. Our vision is that every person will have the opportunity to discover Jesus and live their lives to the full in relationship with Him. We are a UK charity, registered with the Charity Commission, with staff based in 9 cities in England and Northern Ireland. We are led by an Executive Leadership Team, governed by a Council of Management (Trustees), and supported by a Panel of Reference.

### **At home**

Agapé UK is strengthening relationships and promoting the importance of family life and community, to enhance the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of everyone in society. Through our Family Life relationship courses and events, we're helping couples up and down the country to connect with one another in flourishing relationships and build a lasting relationship with Christ.

### **At work**

Agapé UK is equipping people to confidently live and share their faith at work. We're helping the UK's workforce to learn more about their professional strengths and weaknesses, achieve a healthy work life balance and gain a sense of satisfaction and purpose at work. And, through our network of music professionals, Crescendo, we're sharing our faith through music.

## **At university**

Agapé UK has been active on university campuses across the UK for over 50 years – working with students to help them navigate the complexities of student life. Together, we're building student communities where people from all backgrounds can discover more about themselves and explore big questions about life, faith, and God.

## **And abroad**

Agapé UK works with a number of international partners to meet the needs of people around the world. This includes our humanitarian work with the **Global Aid Network (GAiN)**, and the wider activities of the **Agape Europe** and **Cru** global networks. We offer short-term projects to far-flung destinations and opportunities to go and work overseas longer term.

## **Staff Conferences**

In addition to our ministry activities Agapé UK run a number of all-staff or ministry specific conferences to which staff are able to bring their children. Alongside the adult programme we provide a separate programme for the children run by volunteers. (The ratios of volunteers to children follow NSPCC guidelines.)

## Section 2: Governance and Leadership

### Our Commitment

As a Leadership we recognise that as part of normal ministry activities in each of these areas our staff and volunteers may work with children or vulnerable adults and it is our responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- take any report of abuse by a staff member or volunteer seriously, investigate the allegations and ensure the appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- ensure there are named safeguarding leads for Agapé UK.
- support the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- consult with and comply with guidance from thirtyone:eight who supply expert information and advice to faith based organisations.
- fulfil duties required by the Charities Commission.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

The policy and any practice guidelines are based on the **ten Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

### Governance

Agapé UK's Council of Management (board of trustees) is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility. This includes having a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or “the way we do things around here”. Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways. It helps an organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise.

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Abuse and neglect can have devastating effects on individuals, families and wider society, and the damage from safeguarding incidents and allegations can be devastating to the charity concerned.

“The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object” (IICSA The Governance Institute, 2017).

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- there is a commitment to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- there are accountability structures
- there are clear codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication.

## Section 3 - Prevention

### Understanding Abuse and Neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult. For the purposes of this policy, a child will be referred to as someone under 18 years old. The legal definition of a child or adults at risk of harm/adults in need of protection vary in the different regions of the UK. The definitions can be found in Appendix 5.

In order to safeguard those in Agapé UK we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

*1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

See Appendix 1 - Definitions of Abuse

See Appendix 2 - Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

See Appendix 3 - Responding to Abuse

### Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal in England and Wales and Northern Ireland for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision

All staff and volunteers are expected to:

- treat all individuals with respect and dignity
- respect people's rights to personal privacy
- ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful
- ensure that people know who they can talk to about a personal concern
- record and report any concerns about a child or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. All written records should be signed and dated
- obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored

When working with children and young people:

- always aim to work with or within sight of another adult
- ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around
- ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

During the course of ministry we are aware that our staff and volunteers can be seen as having a position of responsibility or authority over those they work with. Whilst this is not usually in the same sense of the legal definition of a position of trust (which relates to adults who are "caring for, training, supervising or in sole charge" of a child under the age of 18) Agapé UK is committed to creating a culture where all children, young people and adults that are involved in our ministry will be appropriately safeguarded and their wellbeing protected.

## Safer Recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers (employees) will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a suitability or self-declaration form depending on the role applied for.
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed at the appropriate level. (We will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information.)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Volunteers undergo an application process appropriate for the role that they are applying for. Job descriptions, references, DBS checks, induction and safeguarding training are part of the onboarding process.

## Safeguarding Training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction training and undertake refresher safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Please ask the HR department [hr@agape.org.uk](mailto:hr@agape.org.uk) for the guidance and policies for those working with children at a staff conference.

## Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All employees and volunteers have been issued with a code of conduct that includes the way we work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Staff and Volunteers will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and outside of their role. They will also receive further training as necessary.

Agapé UK's code of conduct can be found in the Core Staff Handbook or Volunteer handbook

## Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable employees and volunteers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation. All employees and volunteers have a code of conduct issued to them when they join and we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in.

Details of Agapé UK's Practice Guidelines can be obtained from the HR Department [hr@agape.org.uk](mailto:hr@agape.org.uk)

## Section 4 - Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

## Section 5 - Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

### Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

**Name:** (hereafter the "Safeguarding Lead") Henrietta Duncan

**Tel:** 0121 765 4404 / 07833 100 179

**Email:** [henriduncan@agape.org.uk](mailto:henriduncan@agape.org.uk)

The above is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

**Name:** (hereafter the "Deputy") Ruth Birkenshaw

**Tel:** 0121 765 4404 / 07947 395 529

**Email:** [ruthbirkenshaw@agape.org.uk](mailto:ruthbirkenshaw@agape.org.uk)

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

**thirtyone:eight:** PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

**Tel:** 0303 003 1111

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

If required, thirtyone:eight will be able to help provide contact details of the appropriate agencies in other areas of the England. Details for Birmingham are below.

For Birmingham, contact details are:

**For Children:**

Birmingham's Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS)

Telephone: 0121 303 1888

E-mail: [CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)

## For Adults:

Birmingham Adult Social Care (office hours):

Tel: 0121 303 1234 extension 1

E-mail: [CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk)

Webpage: [ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk)

The **out of hours** emergency number is 0121 464 9001 for all adult services.

The out-of-hours Social Services emergency number is 0121 675 4806

Website Address: <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/safeguardingadults>

For urgent mental health support 24 hours a day Call 0121 262 3555 or 0800 915 9292

**Contacting the Police:** 999 for serious crime and emergencies; 101 for urgent help and safeguarding referrals.

The Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:

- Chair of the Council of Management or member of the council responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.

England and Wales [Charity Commission] – **Reporting Serious Incidents [RSI]**

[How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK](#)

Northern Ireland [the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland] – **Serious incident reporting**

[New guidance on serious incident reporting | The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#)

- Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police, Police Service Northern Ireland or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of Agapé UK will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

## Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child

### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- If the child requires immediate medical attention, contact the relevant medical services, informing the Doctor of any concerns.
- Contact Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland) (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- If the disclosure, allegation or concern is directly about the parents, then do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland).
- For lower-level concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Care direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland).

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland) for children and families and police, police Scotland or Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) on 101.
- Depending on the circumstances, they will need to consider whether it is appropriate to speak to the parents of the child. If they are not sure about this, then they will contact Thirtyone:eight.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland)/police, police Scotland or Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

## Detailed procedures where there is a concern about an adult at risk

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

- Contact Adult Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) or Adult Social Work Services (Northern Ireland) who will be able to advise whether this reaches the safeguarding threshold and actions required. Alternatively, Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

## Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children or young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer -LADO(England and Wales), Child's Named Person (Scotland) or the Gateway Team (Northern Ireland) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland (Scotland) or AccessNI (Northern Ireland) for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (England and Wales), Children's Social Care (Scotland) or the Gateway Team (Northern Ireland) if they are involved.
- Share information about the concern with the police, police, police Scotland or Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI).

## Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults who are vulnerable

It is recognised that Agapé UK in the normal course of its activities does not work with vulnerable adults with care and support needs. However, we recognise that anyone can at some point in their life be considered vulnerable for some reason. For example, this could include physical ill health, stress or depression, family conflict, low self-esteem.

Where an allegation of abuse is made about a staff member or volunteer Safeguarding Lead will contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

## Allegations of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult:

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from a child, the procedure in relation to sexual abuse will be followed (please see above).

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Give the adult the option to report this to the Police (England and Wales), Police Scotland or Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). If the adult does not wish to report this to the police, then the Safeguarding Lead can pass on the information relating to the alleged Perpetrator, however, must not share details of the Survivor.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working or volunteering with children or young people, make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer - LADO (England and Wales), Children's Social Care (Scotland) or the Gateway Team (Northern Ireland) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working with adults with care and support needs, liaise with Adult Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland) or Adult Social Work Services (Northern Ireland) to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role within your organisation, contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

## Section 6 - Pastoral Care

### Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with Agapé UK; this includes employees, volunteers and ministry contacts.

The Wellbeing Team led by Kathy Horne are available to give advice to those who may have been affected by abuse so that they can receive appropriate support.

### Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone involved with Agapé UK is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Details of Agapé UK's policy on employing ex-offenders can be obtained from the HR department. [hr@agape.org.uk](mailto:hr@agape.org.uk)

# Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse

## Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance. We are aware that children with disabilities and young carers are more vulnerable to abuse. The Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) defines a young carer as: 'a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except generally where the care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work).

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

### **What is abuse and neglect?**

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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children 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.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is 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 children 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 the 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 cyberbullying), 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**

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.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

## **Neglect**

Neglect is 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.

## **Extremism**

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

## **Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults)**

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14. Safeguarding, this replaces the previous guidelines produced in 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2000) The legislation is relevant across England and Wales but on occasions applies only to local authorities in England.

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who;

- has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and

- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professional and other staff should not be advocating 'safety' measures that do not take account of individual well-being, as defined in Section 1 of the Care Act. This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

**Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

**Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.

## Further Definitions of Abuse

### **Significant Harm**

This relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child. It is based on the individual child's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child. e.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important.'

### **Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome By Proxy)**

This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

### **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 their 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**

The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.' (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.) In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence. The definition of domestic violence in Working Together 2010 states: Forced marriage and honour-based violence are human rights abuses and fall within the Government's definition of domestic violence. (Section 6.21) Home Office (2009) What is Domestic Violence? The Home Office defines domestic violence as 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Nearly a quarter of adults in England are victims of domestic violence. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic violence, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover.

## Appendix 2: Signs of Possible Abuse

### Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

#### Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation\*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

#### Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- 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. These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

#### Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- 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

#### Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc

## Signs of Possible Abuse (vulnerable adults)

### Physical

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

### Domestic Violence

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars
- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation  
Age range extended to 16 years

### Sexual

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming

### Psychological

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia

### Financial or Material

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

### Modern Slavery

- Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours
- Few personal possessions or ID documents
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people
- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users
- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support
- Lack of medication or medical intervention

### Self-neglect

- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.

## Appendix 3: Responding to Abuse

### Effective Listening

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place. It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk.

Above everything else listen without interrupting; be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking. Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used.

Don't ask leading questions or put words into their mouth, avoid asking questions, and only use open questions if you feel that's appropriate. Let them tell you what they feel comfortable saying and if they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality. Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different.

### Helpful responses:

You have done the right thing in telling.

I am glad you have told me.

I will try to help you.

I will have to tell somebody about this.

### 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?

I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.

I'll keep it a secret.

### Action:

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:
- The person in receipt of disclosures, allegation or concern of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Immediately write down everything they have said as accurately as you can remember, using their words where possible. Use the form below if possible, if it is not easily accessible at that moment,

write it down elsewhere, trying to include all of the information possible. Any records should be passed to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy as soon as possible and be stored in a secure location.

**If the person hasn't given consent but you have any of the concerns listed above then you should consult the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy for advice.**

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

**Safeguarding Lead:** Henrietta Duncan 0121 765 4404 / 07833 100 179 [henriduncan@agape.org.uk](mailto:henriduncan@agape.org.uk)

If she is not available, then you should report your concerns to:

**Deputy:** Ruth Birkenshaw 0121 765 4404 / 07947 395 529 [ruthbirkenshaw@agape.org.uk](mailto:ruthbirkenshaw@agape.org.uk)

In an emergency or if the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are unavailable:

Agapé UK is a member of thirtyone:eight. Any staff member or volunteer can ring the thirtyone:eight helpline on 0303 003 11 11 and seek advice on any safeguarding matter at any time. Our organisation reference number is 704.

## What to do if you do not have consent to share the information

Where the allegations or concerns are about a child then you are required to report your concerns regardless of whether you have consent and you should make sure that the child knows this.

Where the allegations or concerns are about an adult you should consider:

- Is anyone else at risk?
- Has a serious crime been/will be committed?
- Does the person appear to understand the implications of not doing anything?
- How likely is it that the person or someone else will come to serious harm?
- Can you provide them with more information to help them understand the risk and are there any other services who could help?

# Appendix 4: Safeguarding Incident Report Form (A template of this form can be found on the Staff Web/Spaces/Agapé UK – All Staff in Useful Information/HR/Safeguarding.)

[Safeguarding Incident Report Form](#)



## Safeguarding Incident Form

(To be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident and sharing as a document on OneDrive with the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.)

Name(s) of Child/Young Person/Vulnerable Adult affected	
Address of Above	
Date of Birth	
Name of Person Reporting Incident	
Date and Time of Incident	
Place of Incident	
Witnesses of the incident/other people involved and if so what was their role in the incident	

Please give full details of the Incident.

Sequence of Events / Actual Words Used / Observations (continue on separate sheet if necessary)  
Also note if any action was taken immediately and or any further actions since then

To be completed by Safeguarding Lead/Deputy  
**Date Report Received:**

**Details of Action taken (Including Person(s) contacted):**

**Telephoned 31:8 for advice on how to act? Yes / No**

Advice given:

**Signed:**  
(Safeguarding Lead/Deputy)

# Appendix 5- Definitions of children and adults

## Children

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the relevant legislation defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years old.

In Scotland, the definition of the child varies depending on the contexts. For example children who are under child protection may be classed as a child up to 16 years old as opposed to 18 years old. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 legislation can apply to over 16-year-olds and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

## Adults at risk of harm/adults in need of protection

There are different criteria mapped out across UK legislation to define an adult at risk of harm under safeguarding. Please see below for a breakdown across the four nations of the UK:

### England:

The Care Act 2014 states that adult safeguarding duties apply to any person aged 18 years or older who:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

### Northern Ireland:

An '**Adult at risk of harm**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics AND/OR
- b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An '**Adult in need of protection**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics AND/OR
- b) life circumstances AND
- c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests;

AND

- d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c), and (d).

**Scotland:**

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 refers throughout to an 'adult'. In terms of Section 53 of the Act, 'adult' means a person aged **16 years** or over.

Section 3(1) defines an 'adult at risk' as someone who meets all of the following three-point criteria:

- They are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- They are at risk of harm; and
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity they are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

**Wales:**

Section 126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an "adult at risk" as an adult who:-

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- And as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

# Appendix 6: Safeguarding Statement



The following statement was agreed by the leadership of Agapé UK on: [DATE]

- Agapé UK is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and adults with care and support needs in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise that the personal dignity and rights of adults and children and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of Agapé UK
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe every child and adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that all those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

**We are committed to:**

- Following statutory denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a place of worship/organisation all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014. (Please amend this list for appropriate legislation in N. Ireland and Scotland)
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by Agapé UK.
- Supporting all who are involved with Agapé UK who are affected by abuse.

**We recognise:**

Children's Social Care (England, Wales, Scotland), Gateway Services (Northern Ireland) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.

Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police, police Scotland or Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

A copy of Agapé UK's policy can be seen on our website: [Safeguarding Policy](#)

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as Safeguarding Leads for Agapé UK.

**Safeguarding Lead:** Henrietta Duncan

**Deputy Safeguarding Lead:** Ruth Birkenshaw

Signed by:

**Lesley Cheesman,  
National Director:**



Date: 14.05.26

**Steve Botham, Chair of  
the Council of  
Management:**



Date: 13/5/26