



## Safeguarding Guidance for Leaders



Working in partnership with

**CCPAS**  
setting standards in safeguarding

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# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Our Commitment to Safeguarding</b> <b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>What is Safeguarding?</b> <b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Whose Responsibility is Safeguarding?</b> <b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Our Partnership with CCPAS</b> <b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>What does this mean for me?</b> <b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Adopting Safeguarding Standards</b> <b>8</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>The Model Safeguarding Policy</b> <b>9</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>The AOG Disclosure Scheme</b> <b>10</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>What Next?</b> <b>11</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Contacts</b> <b>12</b>

# Our Commitment to Safeguarding

*“Assemblies of God in Great Britain is committed to creating a safer culture within all its member churches and believe that those churches must demonstrate a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of all people who may be particularly vulnerable (either permanently or temporarily) must be taken into account when considering their involvement in church life and the support that is offered to enable them to live fulfilling Christian lives”.*



**John Partington**  
**National Leader, AOG**

# What is Safeguarding?

It might be difficult to accept, but every child or vulnerable adult can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity.

Safeguarding legislation and government guidance says that safeguarding means:

- protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's or vulnerable adult's health, development or wellbeing
- ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Adapted from: [Working together to safeguard children \(s1.18 HM Government 2010\)](#)

These principles are as vitally important within the church and faith-based community as they are anywhere else in society. The Biblical mandate to safeguard and protect the interests of the vulnerable (often described in scripture as the poor, oppressed, broken-hearted and grief-stricken) is clear:

*<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.*

Isaiah 61:1-3

# Whose responsibility is Safeguarding?

***Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility*** – we all have a part to play in preventing abuse and maltreatment or responding appropriately to it if and when it comes to our attention.

Assemblies of God (GB) has committed to providing as much assistance as it can to all churches in fellowship to encourage a solid foundation on which to build. However, the National Leadership Team are clear that this should not be interpreted locally as an opportunity to reduce any sense of responsibility that must be taken to uphold the principles and practices of safeguarding within the local church.

# Our Partnership with CCPAS

To strengthen our commitment to safeguarding within our churches and associated activities, the National Leadership Team have sought to develop a partnership with CCPAS, which will enable us to gain expert assistance nationally regarding safeguarding matters and have a consistent point of reference available for all local AOG assemblies with such matters.

CCPAS is the only independent Christian safeguarding charity in the UK. They exist to safeguard both children and vulnerable adults and also work to help those throughout the UK who are, or have been, affected by child abuse and similar issues. Amongst their core services are a 24 hour helpline, support for policy development, professional training and practice advice, disclosure checks, resources and regular email updates.

Due to CCPAS's unrivalled knowledge, expertise and comprehensive range of services, the National Leadership Team recommends strongly that all churches in fellowship with AOG join membership of CCPAS to gain access to the full range of support, advice and guidance.

Furthermore, the National Leadership Team have committed to setting the standard for safeguarding practice across the AOG movement that is based upon the 10 'Safe & Secure' Standards developed by CCPAS.

# What does this mean for me?

It is important that every church or organisation understands and accepts that it is possible for abuse to occur in its midst. This is the unthinkable reality, as experience and research tells us that those that seek to cause harm to vulnerable people (children or adults) will make every effort to find places where such people may present opportunities for their ill-intent.

Our job as church leaders is to do all we can and to encourage our church members to do all they can to make opportunities for abuse and maltreatment of the vulnerable as difficult as possible. We can start doing this by ensuring we have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place, including appropriate policies and procedures and training for all those working with vulnerable people.

# Adopting Safeguarding Standards

To ensure that all churches and organisations are working to the same standards and affording those they work with and minister to, the same level of safeguards, the National Leadership Team is endorsing and encouraging the use of the CCPAS 'Safe & Secure' standards as follows:

## **1. Safeguarding Policy**

Churches or organisations open to, or likely to have contact with, children, young people and vulnerable adults should adopt a formal, working safeguarding policy.

## **2. Awareness Training**

Churches or organisations in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults must develop awareness of safeguarding issues and provide access to appropriate training.

## **3. Safer Recruitment**

Churches or organisations open to children, young people and vulnerable adults should adopt a formal recruitment policy for all workers, both paid and voluntary.

## **4. Management of Workers**

Churches or organisations open to, or where services are provided for, children, young people and vulnerable adults, should ensure all workers (paid and/or voluntary) are appropriately managed, supervised and supported.

## **5. Working Safely**

Churches or organisations involved with children, young people or vulnerable adults must ensure they adopt safe working practice (including codes of conduct).

## **6. Communicating Effectively**

Churches or organisations should ensure that all those involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults know how to communicate effectively and relate to those with whom they come in contact.



# Adopting Safeguarding Standards

## **7. Responding to Concerns**

Churches or organisations in contact with, or providing services for children, young people or vulnerable adults must be prepared and able to respond appropriately to concerns or allegations of abuse.

## **8. Pastoral Care**

Churches or organisations open to, or providing activities for children, young people and adults, should ensure pastoral care and support is available to all those affected by abuse.

## **9. Managing Those Who Pose A Risk**

Churches or organisations must have strategies in place to supervise and manage individuals who pose a risk to, have committed, or been accused of, sexual or other crimes against children, young people and adults.

## **10. Working in Partnership**

Churches or organisations involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults in specialised areas, culturally diverse settings or through partner organisations or agencies must ensure appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.

The above standards are seen as the minimum necessary to provide a safer environment for those we work with and minister to. It is recognised that each church may be at a different stage of implementing such standards and that some may have other, similar arrangements already in place. However, the expectation is that these are actively aspired towards and that every effort is made to achieve these standards (or acceptable and comparable alternatives) within an appropriate timeframe.

Further information and printed material based upon these standards can be obtained from CCPAS at <http://www.ccpas.co.uk/Information.html>

# AOG Model Safeguarding Policy

In addition to the above standards, the National Leadership Team have agreed a Model Safeguarding Policy for use by churches and associated organisations in fellowship with AOG.

If you are already in membership with CCPAS and do not have a copy of this policy, please contact them directly. If you are intending to join membership with them, you will need to state clearly in your returned membership application that you are an AOG member church, following which a copy of the agreed policy document will be sent to you.

Please note that it remains the responsibility of the local church to ensure that the most up to date version of this policy is being implemented and used. It is also a condition of using CCPAS-based policy material that you a) do not modify its content without consultation with them, b) that you do not make it available to any other individual, church or organisation and c) that you do not make it openly available in electronic format (e.g. via a public area of your website) where it can be downloaded and reproduced without authorisation.

# AOG Disclosure Scheme

For many years AOG has provided a service to process CRB disclosures for workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults within our churches. This had been operated through the Children's Department at National Office.

During 2011, a decision was taken to discontinue this service and the National Leadership Team have requested CCPAS to offer a replacement service for all our churches. CCPAS are the 7<sup>th</sup> largest CRB 'Umbrella Body' in the country, processing in excess of 30,000 CRB checks in 2010-11.

We have therefore negotiated a special discounted rate of £7 + VAT for volunteer checks, with an additional mandatory CRB fee of £44 (per check) for paid workers for all AOG churches that join membership of the Disclosure Scheme.

Full details of the service and benefits of the Disclosure Scheme can be found by following the link:

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/Documents/CCPAS%20Disclosure%20Service.pdf>

You will automatically be given the reduced rates when you complete the Registration Form and indicate your status as an AOG assembly or affiliated organisation.

**NB.** *The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) operates in England and Wales only. For churches in Scotland, this service may not be the most appropriate. Disclosure Scotland operates a similar service to the CRB **for those that live and work in Scotland**, which can be accessed directly by the local church (rather than through an umbrella body as in England and Wales). If you are unsure of how to proceed, please contact CCPAS for advice.*



Criminal Records Bureau

## What should I do next?

If you have not already joined membership with CCPAS, it is strongly advised that you do so. If you are already members but do not make use of the special discounted CRB Disclosure Scheme, we would again strongly advise that you consider this as the service that will be offered to you is second to none.

For further information regarding CCPAS services, or to join membership, you should visit: <http://www.ccpas.co.uk/MembersArea.html> or make contact with them directly (see contact details below).

Once you have joined membership, please make full use of the advice and guidance they can offer and the comprehensive range of supporting material available through the members area of their website.

# Contact Details

*Working in partnership with*



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