

## Definitions and symptoms of abuse <sup>[2]</sup>

	Definition <sup>[3]</sup>	Symptoms
<b>Physical</b>	<p>Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.</p> <p>Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after – this is known as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.</p>	<p><b>Physical observations</b></p> <p>Bruising especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruises on trunk</li> <li>• Bruises on upper arm, shoulders, neck consistent with gripping</li> <li>• Finger tip bruising/finger marks</li> </ul> <p>Burns and scalds especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cigarette burns</li> <li>• Burns caused by lengthy exposure to heat</li> <li>• Scalds with upward splash marks or 'tide marks'</li> </ul> <p>Human bite marks</p> <p>Fractures, particularly spiral fractures</p> <p>Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs</p> <p>Any serious injury with no explanation or conflicting explanations/inconsistent accounts</p> <p>Untreated injuries</p> <p><b>Behavioural observations</b></p> <p>Unusually fearful with adults</p> <p>Unnaturally compliant to parents</p> <p>Frozen watchfulness</p> <p>Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help</p> <p>Withdrawal from physical contact</p> <p>Aggression toward others</p> <p>Wears cover-up clothing</p>
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>It may involve the parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure access to medical treatment, neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.</p>	<p><b>Physical observations</b></p> <p>Poor personal hygiene</p> <p>Poor state of clothing</p> <p>Emaciation, pot belly, short stature</p> <p>Poor skin tone and hair tone</p> <p>Untreated medical problems</p> <p><b>Behavioural observations</b></p> <p>Constant hunger</p> <p>Constant tiredness</p> <p>Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school</p> <p>Destructive tendencies</p> <p>Low self-esteem</p> <p>Neurotic behaviour</p> <p>No social relationships</p> <p>Running away</p> <p>Compulsive stealing or scavenging</p>

	<b>Definition</b> <sup>[3]</sup>	<b>Symptoms</b>
<b>Sexual</b>	<p>Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, e.g. looking at or involvement with production of pornography, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.</p> <p>Physical abuse and neglect is more difficult to hide – sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Another problem is that many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse where there are other explanations. This (together with confusing medical opinion) has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of sexual abuse.</p>	<p><b>Physical observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth</li> <li>Sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>Unexpected pregnancy especially in young girls</li> <li>Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth</li> <li>Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain</li> </ul> <p><b>Behavioural observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age</li> <li>Sexualised behaviour in young children</li> <li>Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity</li> <li>Deliberately unattractive clothing and appearance</li> <li>Hinting at sexual activity</li> <li>Inexplicable falling off in school performance</li> <li>Sudden apparent changes in personality</li> <li>Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness</li> <li>Socially withdrawn</li> <li>Overly compliant behaviour</li> <li>Acting out, aggressive behaviour</li> <li>Poor trust in significant adults</li> <li>Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting, by day or night</li> <li>Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour</li> <li>Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home</li> <li>Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust</li> <li>Eating disorders, hysteria attacks in adolescents</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional</b>	<p>Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying that the child is worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations; causing frequent fear.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical, mental and emotional development lags</li> <li>Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive</li> <li>Over-reaction to mistakes</li> <li>Continual self-deprecation</li> <li>Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>Fear of new situations</li> <li>Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)</li> <li>Self-mutilation</li> <li>Fear of parents being contacted</li> <li>Extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>Drug/solvent abuse</li> <li>Running away</li> <li>Compulsive stealing, scavenging</li> </ul>

## Part 3: Responding to the abused <sup>[2]</sup>

### *Responding to children*

Sometimes children or young people will want to talk about abuse. This may follow some specific activity. It may be that the individual feels 'safe' with you as a worker. It may be that you know the child and his/her family well and have difficulty in believing what is being shared.

At the time the young person approaches you, your main role is to **LISTEN**.

#### **General points**

- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Let them know you may need to tell someone else – don't promise secrecy
- Even if a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information
- Don't get too close physically
- Don't counsel a member of the opposite sex alone
- Don't express shock or horror – keep calm
- Don't make comments which might reject, condemn or question the truth of what they are saying
- Don't pass judgement or comment on any other person mentioned - you're hearing one side of the story
- Do be sympathetic - but remain impartial
- Do respond in ways which will leave the person free to say all that they want to share
- Do 'reflect back' to ensure that what has been said has been correctly understood
- Do offer them the opportunity to see someone who can offer further help

#### **Helpful things you might say or show**

- "I believe you"
- "Thank you for telling me"
- "It's not your fault"
- "I will help you"

#### **Don't ask questions**

- Children hate answering questions.
- A child might be frightened and 'clam up'.
- You might put something in their mind that wasn't there.

#### **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.

# Part 4: Policy documents

## OCC Child Protection Policy

These policy documents are available to download from the OCC internet site: [www.occ.org.uk/net](http://www.occ.org.uk/net)

### A. Introduction and mission statement

Oxfordshire Community Churches (OCC) has a growing children's and young people's ministry. It is the intention of our churches to offer support, encouragement and spiritual teaching to anyone who wishes to receive it. This means that we will come in contact with children from many different backgrounds and will encounter very different parental and social patterns.

[The Oxfordshire Community Churches](#) take this responsibility very seriously and, through teaching and this document, endeavour to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people (hereafter 'children') entrusted to our care.

As part of the mission of OCC, we are committed to:

- Listening to, relating effectively to, respecting and valuing children whilst ensuring their protection within our activities
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers
- Ensuring that children's workers are given support and training
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities

### B. Areas of policy

The policy contained here has been formulated to help children's and youth workers to respond appropriately when abuse is alleged, disclosed, discovered or suspected. It covers the following:

- Responding to allegations and indications of abuse or neglect, including those made against leaders/members of the churches.
- Appointing children's workers
- Providing child protection guidelines.

OCC recognise the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. Accordingly this policy and the accompanying guidelines have been prepared in consultation with Churches' Child Protection and Advisory Service (CCPAS). Copies are also held by Social Services.

### C. Scope of the policy

This policy sets out the principles for the protection of children and children's workers across the group of churches and ministries forming OCC.

The nature and diversity of OCC's children's and youth activities make it difficult to cover all aspects of the work in one policy document. Therefore Codes of Practice will be drawn up for each event, group of events or regular activities to ensure that the children are protected and children's workers operate within guidelines approved by OCC.

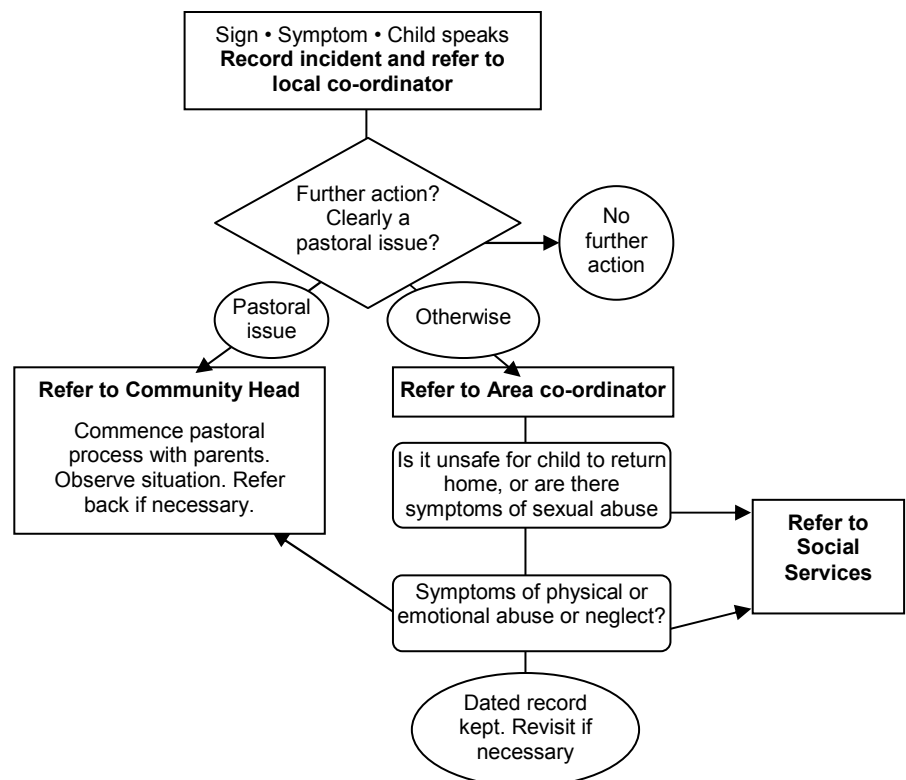
This policy will be approved by the OCC, and reviewed annually.

## D. Codes of practice

- A Code of Practice which is a practical outworking of the policy will be drawn up for each activity by the leader responsible, based on OCC standard Codes of Practice – see Appendix 1
- Each Code of Practice must be submitted to the OCC Trustees for approval, via the Area CPP Co-ordinator.
- Local Child Protection Co-ordinators must ensure Codes of Practice are updated on a regular basis to maintain compliance for each new circumstance.

## E. Procedure if it is suspected that abuse may have occurred

- You should **not** discuss allegations with accused children's worker(s), parent(s) or carer's.
- You must report concerns *as soon as possible* to your local co-ordinator.
- The local co-ordinator must inform the Area co-ordinator, Graham Sparrowhawk, or his deputy Gary Pizzey.
- They will act on behalf of the Area Leadership Team and Trustees in determining the course of action regarding all allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse, consulting the Senior Pastor and other pastoral or activity workers as necessary.
- The Area co-ordinator will refer to outside bodies as necessary.



**Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)**, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ. Telephone (01322) 667207

**Social Services North Oxfordshire** (including Cherwell and West Oxfordshire), Calthorpe House, Banbury. Telephone (01295) 756517

**Social Services South Oxfordshire** (covering Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire), The Charter, Abingdon. Telephone (01235) 549297

**Social Services Oxford City**, 134b Cowley Road, Oxford. Telephone (01865) 815489

***If a worker is accused or suspected of child abuse they will be asked to stand down from their activities with children whilst an investigation is completed.***

It is, of course, the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies, or to seek advice from CCPAS, although we hope that members of the church will use the OCC procedure. If, however, you feel that the Area co-ordinator (or deputy) has not responded appropriately to concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant organisation directly.

## F. Appointment of children's and youth workers

The following procedure will be implemented in advance of a children's or youth worker being appointed:

- Each work (or age group, if in a separate room) must be led by:
  - at least 2 registered and trained workers 14+
  - at least one of whom must be an adult 16+
  - additional workers according to the guideline ratios (see page 18, Child supervision <sup>[1]</sup>)
- [The prospective worker will generally be over 14 years old, and an active member of an OCC congregation.](#) In the rare circumstances the worker is not an active member, the community leader and OCC Executive Team must be consulted before any decision is taken.
- The following are permitted to act as *untrained* assistants but in a restricted role (for example, they must not be left in a room alone with the children, nor must they accompany children to the toilet):
  - adult church members who are needed to help on an *occasional* basis, or
  - young people under 14, or
  - young people 14-15 who have not completed the application process.
- Before the application is accepted:
  - The prospective worker will be given a copy of the OCC Child Protection Policy and be required to read it.
  - The activity leader will discuss with the applicant in detail the church's policy on safeguarding children's welfare and expectations in relation to the Codes of Practice of the particular activity.
- All children's and youth workers will be required to complete an OCC Child Protection Awareness Training Course, within 3 months of acceptance of their application – see Appendix 2 for course outline.
- [The prospective worker will be required to complete an application form – see Appendix 3.](#) This must be signed by activity leaders for each area of ministry in which the applicant will work; by the local CPP Co-ordinator and the Community Head. It will then be passed to the Area CPP Co-ordinator for approval.
- [In cases where a person of foreign nationality requests to work with children or young people action as in Appendix 4 must be undertaken.](#)
- [Each prospective worker will be required to complete a disclosure application form, available from their local Child Protection co-ordinator.](#) The completed form must be shown, with appropriate supporting documents (See Appendix 5) to the community leader/local child protection co-ordinator to verify identity. The completed form is then passed to the Area Child Protection co-ordinator for approval and forwarding to the Criminal Records Bureau. Disclosure forms are sent directly to the applicant and Area Child Protection co-ordinator. The disclosure reference number is recorded and retained while the original disclosure is destroyed after 6 months. If convictions and/or cautions on a disclosure give cause for concern the Area Child Protection co-ordinator will take action as follows:
- [Completed application forms \(together with any references and Disclosure\) will be held on file in the OCC Area Offices.](#)

- Sex offenders – Declaration made on OCC application form – see Appendix 6
- Sex offenders – No declaration made on OCC application form. Conviction or caution noted on receipt of CRB Disclosure – see Appendix 7
- Ex offenders – not sexually related – see Appendix 8

## **G. Role of local co-ordinators**

Local child protection co-ordinators are responsible to the OCC Executive Team for:

- Ensuring compliance with OCC child protection policy and procedures, in all areas of ministry of their church or department.
- Ensuring that all areas of ministry have an appropriate Code of Practice (see section D above).
- Reporting concerns to the OCC Area co-ordinator using the procedure outlined in section E above.
- Liaising with activity leaders and the Community Head (or departmental Head) to ensure that applications are correctly handled, and that appropriate briefings and training are given (see section F above). Appropriate local records of training and approved workers should be kept.