

Safeguarding policy

Purpose

Dream Centre Church's safeguarding policy applies to all employees at all levels of the organisation, as well as volunteers, congregation members and visitors.

The purpose of the policy is to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and to provide all involved with Dream Centre Church with information about the safeguarding policy adopted by Dream Centre Church.

The policy is particularly important in the regulated activity that Dream Centre Church does with children and vulnerable adults.

In England and Wales this is referred to as regulated activity and in Scotland this is referred to as regulated work. In this policy this will be referred to as regulated activity.

Dream Centre Church has a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe.

Dream Centre Church complies with all the legal obligations placed upon it by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (England and Wales) and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (Scotland).

The policy covers the arrangements for safeguarding during the recruitment and selection process and safeguarding issues that arise during employment in circumstances where children or vulnerable adults are placed at risk, or where they could have been placed at risk.

The policy also sets out the reporting obligations for all employees and volunteers and the procedure that should be followed to report abuse if this occurs to anyone in a position of vulnerability whilst in the care of Dream Centre Church.

Recruitment process

Advertisements for job roles at Dream Centre Church will specify clearly whether the work involves regulated activity together with the basis of that work.

Offers of employment will be made conditional on the receipt of a satisfactory disclosure checks. These will be conducted by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales and Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

The check will confirm that the applicant is suitable to carry out the role and has not been barred from performing this work.

If the background check reveals that an applicant is not suitable, the offer of employment will be withdrawn by Dream Centre Church and the applicant will not be employed.

Existing employees

Existing employees or volunteers may be required to provide a satisfactory disclosure check where their work becomes a regulated activity or Dream Centre Church requires them to start carrying out regulated activity. Existing employees cannot conduct any regulated activity until they have undertaken a satisfactory disclosure check.

The disclosure check will be conducted by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales and Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

The check will confirm that the employee or volunteer is suitable to carry out the work and has not been barred from performing this.

If employees are unable to provide a satisfactory disclosure check, or refuse to undertake a disclosure check, Dream Centre Church will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated activity.

If existing employees become added to the children and adults barred lists by either disclosure body, Dream Centre Church will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated activity. All employees who are added to the barred lists are required to inform their line manager of their inclusion on the list at the earliest opportunity. A failure to do so may be deemed a disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

In both cases, if redeployment is not possible, Dream Centre Church may need to consider dismissal of the employee on the basis of the statutory ban imposed by the disclosure. Dream Centre Church may be unable to continue to employ the employee in any capacity if the continued association with the employee cannot be maintained, causes reputational damage to Dream Centre Church or other reasons that harm its position in the marketplace.

What is abuse?

Given the risk of abuse to children and vulnerable adults, all employees are required to be alert at all times to the possibility of abuse towards children or vulnerable adults.

Abuse may be a single incident or something that occurs over a long period of time. It can take many forms including, but not limited to:

- financial or material abuse
- physical abuse
- mental abuse
- neglect and failures to act
- sexual abuse
- threats of abuse or harm
- controlling or intimidating conduct
- self-neglect
- domestic abuse
- poor practices within an organisation providing care
- modern slavery.

The abuse may come from employees, personal assistants, visitors, leadership, relatives, neighbours, social workers, providers of support services etc.

Reporting and investigating abuse

Dream Centre Church will treat all complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse with the utmost seriousness. Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of the warning signs of abuse and the correct reporting procedure to follow if they suspect abuse is, or has, taken place.

Dream Centre Church's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Lisa Tilbrook, and can be contacted via email Lisatilbrook@hotmail.com.

Dream Centre Church's deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Helen Lavell, and can be contacted via email admin@thedreamcentre.co.uk.

Employees that suspect abuse is occurring should refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, with as much detail as possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed of the names of the people involved (if known), what type of abuse is or may be occurring, and the dates and times this occurred (if known). An official written report of the alleged act may be requested at this stage as part of the evidence gathering procedure.

Employees may be asked to refrain from discussing alleged abuse with fellow colleagues, other than those specified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to avoid the spread of potentially harmful misinformation and to protect the validity of any investigation.

The allegations will be investigated fully and all such reports are taken seriously. The investigation will be conducted in a discrete and timely manner, and will involve the collation of evidence typically derived from witness statements and surveillance footage where possible. [insert timeline for investigation]

If it is suspected that a criminal act may have been committed, Dream Centre Church will report the situation to the police.

Employees suspected of abuse will be suspended on full pay pending a full investigation of the complaints. Volunteers suspected of abuse will be suspended pending a full investigation of the complaints. It should be noted that this suspension is not an indication of guilt, but rather a necessity given the circumstances. Dream Centre Church appreciates the impact prolonged suspension can have on an employee's reputation, even when allegations are later found to be incorrect, and does not take the decision to suspend lightly.

Dream Centre Church may be under a duty to disclose allegations of abuse to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland as appropriate. The organisation may also consider it necessary to inform the police of allegations under investigation.

Maintaining records

Dream Centre Church will ensure that all details associated with allegation of abuse are recorded clearly and accurately. The records will be maintained securely in line with Dream Centre Church's Data Protection Policy.

Disciplinary action

Full details can be found in Dream Centre Church's Disciplinary Procedure.

Duty of disclosure

Dream Centre Church is legally required to send information to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland if a decision is taken to dismiss an employee or remove them from working in regulated activity.

Dream Centre Church may also be required to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland if Dream Centre Church suspends an employee, or an employee resigns in suspicious circumstances, as the referral duty criteria may already be met at that stage.

Additional support and guidance

Employees who wish for further information on safeguarding are encouraged to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or relevant HR representative. Dream Centre Church will endeavour to provide up to date support and guidance to all staff when it comes to safeguarding and their duty to protect service users from harm. Relevant supporting material is also readily available online and Dream Centre Church will look to furnish employees with this where requested.