

PURSUIT

Safeguarding Policy

June 2025

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

PURSUIT exists as a Christian organisation to encourage, equip and engage the local churches in the Taunton area in prayer and worship

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect everyone who attend Pursuit events from harm, particularly vulnerable adults.
- This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Pursuit including team members, guest speakers, musicians and volunteers

We believe that:

- Everyone should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We are committed to:

- To promote a safer environment and culture within any of our events and activities by adhering to safe working practices and acknowledge the principle that safeguarding is everyone's business
- Respond promptly to any safeguarding concern or allegation in accordance with safeguarding procedures, with support of the local authority. We will ensure that any complaint made regarding a vulnerable person, who may have been harmed or is in significant danger, will be reported immediately and we will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning a member of the team or any other person.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons. We will seek to sign post to appropriate agencies and support within their local authority.

Pursuit will:

- Ensure that all core team are familiar with this policy
- Ensure that all volunteers know who to report to should they have a safeguarding concern.
- Usually gain formal consent from service users, before sharing any information with another agency however, if a person is in danger, a child is at risk or a crime has been committed, then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without consent.
- Make a referral to the Adult Social Care Team where appropriate.
- Ensure that the Designated Named Person understand their responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies.
- Ensure all concerns and incidents are recorded and passed on to other relevant agencies where appropriate.

Safeguarding Representatives

- We will ensure that there is an identified person to be Safeguarding Representative at any event, who will be aware of their role and responsibilities.

Vulnerable adults specific use of North Street Church:

- Vulnerable adults will be directed to use the single disabled toilet and not the shared public toilets.
- If vulnerable adults are attending unaccompanied then Pursuit will aim to assign a responsible adult to watch out for their wellbeing and safety during events.
- 1-1 prayer ministry is to be avoided
- Physical contact with vulnerable adults is to be avoided unless initiated by the VA. (see below for more details)
- No photography or videos of U18s or vulnerable adults will be permitted except in group shots from behind where individuals cannot be identified.

Training

We will expect Pursuit Core team to have up to date DBS and basic safeguarding training. (Pursuit Core Team Safeguarding Training last carried out on Sat Nov 4th 2023)

Best Practice Guidelines

Supervision of guests

Pursuit will sometimes invite outside speakers, musicians and guests to be involved in Pursuit meetings. Pursuit is committed to ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately line managed and any guests are always supervised by a member of the core team. All guests will be expected to be familiar with the Pursuit safeguarding policy.

One-to-one situations

One-to-one situations will not be permitted in any context involving a young person. Pursuit meetings always happen in a public meeting space and at no time should any team member, volunteer or attendee be in a one-to-one context with a young person.

Physical Contact with Vulnerable Adults

Physical contact with vulnerable adults should be generally avoided and never initiated or maintained by an adult. Physical contact should only happen if instigated and continued by a vulnerable adult and in an appropriate manner and part of the body (hugs and hand holding, shoulders and arms). The adult is responsible for ensuring that contact is kept public and is always free to end any contact they are not comfortable with. If contact occurs that makes them feel uncomfortable, whether it be appropriate or not, then they are encouraged to self-report themselves to the DSL.

Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact should only be by mutual agreement and in appropriate areas of the body (hands, arms, shoulders, top half of the back)

As an organisation running public meetings which involve people from different backgrounds and cultures and church styles attending, we understand that for some people it is very normal to greet people by shaking hands or giving hugs or by a tap on the shoulder. We believe that appropriate touch can be a healthy expression of community. For people who are uncomfortable with any physical contact we always want people to be able to decline contact at any time and particularly during prayer ministry and the Pursuit team will aim to discourage unwanted touch but cannot promise that this won't happen accidentally at times. Anyone that feels uncomfortable with any way in which they have received physical contact should talk to a member of the Pursuit team and if appropriate this will be passed to the DSL and followed up.

Physical Contact during prayer ministry

In many church cultures it is common for people to lay hands on shoulders or the upper back during prayer which is acceptable as long as it adheres to the general prayer ministry guidelines. Any physical contact should always be by permission. It is expected practice to ask permission before laying hands or touching anyone. If while receiving or giving prayer someone feels uncomfortable at any time then they are welcome to ask to stop being ministered to and can talk to a member of the core team and this will be passed on to the DSL.

Contact Information

No personal contact information for vulnerable adults should be held by team members, staff or volunteers (including phone numbers / FaceBook / social media). Pursuit also has a policy to discourage any sharing of personal information by any vulnerable adults with any attendees at events. Any situation where this is found to have happened will be followed up by the DSL and where necessary (or if in doubt) passed on to relevant authorities as a safeguarding concern.

Volunteering by Vulnerable Adults

In the exceptional situation where a vulnerable adult was invited to be part of a volunteer team (e.g. hospitality / worship team) then all communication must happen through a parent/guardian/supervisor and the VA should at all times be accompanied.

What to do in the event of a safeguarding incident or disclosure

1. Reassure the person making the disclosure. We are committed to keeping people safe. Let them know that you will listen to whatever they want to disclose and you will take it seriously
2. Listen - let the person speak in their own time without prompting or using leading questions. Do not show shock or disbelief or offer explanations.

Remember that we cannot promise confidentiality but we will only be passing on the concern to relevant agencies and those who need to know about it and are able to deal with it and protect the person.

3. Make a written record of what is disclosed either at the time or as soon as possible after the disclosure.

4. Pass the concern immediately on to the designated safeguarding lead. But if a person is in danger then you should immediately contact the police or relevant authorities.

Categories of Abuse:

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a person, and includes somebody inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may take place in any context and may involve someone known to the person or may involve a stranger. Abuse may be perpetuated by an individual or by a group.

Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

Pursuit is committed to ensuring that all trustees, core team and volunteers have access to a basic awareness booklet.

Abuse includes:

- Physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint
- Sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material
- Psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation.
- Financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- Neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food, warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- Discriminatory abuse: including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.
- Institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practises, lack of person-centred treatment.

Managing allegations made against a trustee, core team member or volunteer

PURSUIT will ensure that any allegations made against a trustee, core team or volunteer, will be dealt with swiftly. Where a trustee/core team/volunteer is alleged to have committed a criminal offence, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed, the police should be contacted immediately.

The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount. A risk assessment must be undertaken immediately, to assess the level of risk to all service users, posed by the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within Pursuit, whilst the investigation is undertaken.

External Agencies

Thirtyone:eight

0303 003 1111 info@thirtyoneeight.org

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: Kathryn Andrews

Phone/email: somersethouseofprayer@gmail.com

Deputy child protection lead(s)

Name(s): Chris Sampson

Phone/email: somersethouseofprayer@gmail.com

Trustee/Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Phone/email:

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on:

9th June 2025

Signed:

[this should be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding in your organisation, for example the safeguarding lead on your board of trustees].

Date:

