



# Re:Hope Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

*February 2024*

*Next review Date: February 2025*

## **Locations:**

Re:Hope West End, 37 Stewartville Street Glasgow G11 5PL

Re:Hope Southside, 14 Regwood Street Glasgow G41 3JG

Re:Hope Royston, 117 & 121 Royston Rd, Glasgow G21 2QN

Re:Hope Paisley, Gordon Street, Paisley PA1 1XL

Charity Number: SC037327

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## **Section1 - Policy Statement**

Re:Hope Next Generation Bible Church (hereafter Re:Hope) is concerned with the wholeness and safety of every individual within God's purposes. Re:Hope is therefore committed to Safeguarding Adults in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.

We will safeguard adults by ensuring that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

Re:Hope is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults by: the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities.

Re:Hope is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Our church is committed to valuing, listening and respecting vulnerable people, including adults at risk, as well as promoting their welfare and protection.

This involves safe recruitment, supervision and training where necessary of all servers and staff workers in contact with vulnerable people within the church; the use of and adherence to correct procedure for dealing with suspected and confirmed abuse; supporting those affected by abuse in the church; following correct procedures to ensure information privacy for everyone in the church.

### 1.1 Re:Hope Church Commitments:

In order to implement this policy, Re:Hope will ensure that:

- We give paramount importance to the welfare of those that attend our church and recognise that at times this principle may take precedence over other principles such as confidentiality.
- We recognise that many of those that attend our church participants may be vulnerable adults and that there is a duty to protect them, as far as is possible
- Everyone involved with Re:Hope is aware of the vulnerable adult procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult.
- Any concern that an adult is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with Re:Hope's Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures.
- The well-being of those at risk of harm will be put first and the adult actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to.

- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- When planning activities and events Re:Hope includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all adults from abuse and neglect and designates a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for that event
- We understand our obligations to co-operate with local authorities in the enactment of our statutory duties under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007; and endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of vulnerable adults.

## Section 2 – The Law and Definitions

The current Scottish Government legislation covering the protection of vulnerable adults is the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

The Act includes:

- principles governing intervention in an adult’s affairs;
- definitions of ‘harm’ and ‘adults at risk’
- duties on local authorities to inquire and investigate, and new powers including protection orders;
- duties of co-operation that apply to other organisations, and offences by organisations or individuals that do not co-operate or obstruct;
- a requirement to establish local Adult Protection Committees that will organise training and issue inter-agency procedures.

Related to this Act is the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (Scotland) 2007 which introduced the PVG registration system, under which all who work with vulnerable adults (or with children) have to be checked and approved before they may start such work.

### 2.1 Definition of an Adult at Risk

*Adult Support and Protection Act 2007*

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 16 years and over who:

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

Many of those that attend our church may be vulnerable adults, but that does not mean they are ‘adults at risk’. It is only when the local authority has established that a vulnerable adult is both at **risk of harm** and **unable to safeguard themselves** that the person can be regarded as an **adult at risk** and the local authority is able to exercise its full powers.

### 2.2 What is meant by 'harm?'

Harm is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance. 'Harm' may take a number of forms, such as physical harm, psychological and emotional harm, financial harm, sexual abuse, neglect, spiritual harm or discriminating against a person in some way. It may also include 'domestic abuse' or other conduct which causes fear, alarm or distress or which dishonestly appropriates property.

Abuse can, and does, take many forms. Some vulnerable adults are subjected to more than one type of abuse, others to one. Some are victims of single incidents and others experience 'serial abuse'. The following descriptions are the most common.

## 2.3 Types of harm and possible indicators

**2.3.1 Physical harm** – the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury, for example: hitting, slapping, punching, pushing, kicking, hair pulling, misuse or withholding medication, misuse of restraint, use of inappropriate sanctions.

Indicators include: Bruising, A history of unexplained falls and/or minor injuries, Fractures not consistent with falls or explanations of the injury, finger marks, burns not consistent with possible explanations, excessive consumption of alcohol, which is unusual for the person

There can be rare circumstances where some restraint is necessary to ensure the safety of the vulnerable adult. A relative being cared for at home might be locked in while the carer goes out for a short time, to prevent the relative from wandering, for instance.

**2.3.2 Emotional or psychological harm** – any pattern of behaviour by another person that results in the psychological harm to a vulnerable adult and may include: threats of harm or abandonment, insults, ridicule, verbal abuse, bullying, intimidation and harassment, enforced isolation or deprivation of contact, lack of privacy or choice and denial of dignity, humiliation, blaming, controlling or coercion, withdrawal from services or supportive networks

Indicators include: strain within the relationship, indications that the abuser acts differently with another person present from when alone with the vulnerable adult an air of silence when the alleged abuser is present, a general lack of consideration for the needs of the vulnerable adult, refusal to allow the vulnerable adult an opinion of their own denial of privacy in relation to care, feelings or other aspects of life denial of access to services or support especially where the vulnerable adult is in need of assistance which they will consequently not receive denial of freedom of movement,

**2.3.3 Financial or material harm** – the misappropriation of the funds, theft or misuse of property of a vulnerable adult and may include: misuse of finances, theft or fraudulent use of money, theft of property, embezzlement, pressure in connection

with wills or property or inheritance or financial transactions, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Indicators include: situations where, despite having a personal income/pension, the adult is without money soon after its receipt, particularly where that person is not able to spend money without assistance, unexplained shortage of money despite a seemingly adequate income, unexplained withdrawals from savings accounts, unexplained disappearance of financial documents, for example building society books and bank statements and pension book.

**2.3.4 Neglect and acts of omission** – may be deliberate or by default. The abuser may not be able to provide the care needed and may not recognise the need for that care to be given. The carer may also be neglecting her/himself. Neglect is the failure of others to attend to a person's essential needs which affects their physical or mental health. Needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter, warmth and health. Neglect means stopping a person from getting the things they need to be well, including seeing their doctor, obtaining medicines or having food. Signs of neglect include untreated pressure sores, unnecessary sedation, unexplained falls, and medication denial or wrong administration.

Indicators include: persistent hunger and loss of weight, poor hygiene and inappropriate dress, consistent lack of supervision for long periods, especially during activities which hold danger for the individual. denial of religious or cultural needs, constant fatigue or listlessness, physical problems and medical needs that are not addressed, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

**2.3.5 Sexual abuse** – any act with a sexual content to which a vulnerable adult has not given consent, or could not consent to, or was pressurised into consenting to and may include: rape or sexual assault, sexual intercourse, fondling or inappropriate, touching, sexual innuendoes, offensive or suggestive language, sexual activity or viewing sexually explicit materials

Indicators include: unexplained behaviour change – becoming aggressive, withdrawn, moody, unwillingness to be with a particular person, difficulties in walking, indicators that will only be apparent to medical, nursing or someone entrusted with personal care

**2.3.6 Spiritual harm**– This occurs when leaders to whom people look to for guidance and spiritual nurture abuse their positions of authority to manipulate, control or dominate.

**2.3.7 Discriminatory abuse** – can occur in many ways and frequently will include a combination of forms of abuse. What differentiates it from the other categories is that the abuse is motivated by prejudice and discrimination against the individual because he or she is perceived to belong to a specific group or groups. These may be: age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, cultural background, disability

Abuse may include: bullying, humiliation, harassment, slurs or similar treatment

## 2.4 Who might abuse?

Abusers may be individuals, groups or organisations.

### **2.4.1 Individual Abusers:**

Potentially anyone could be an abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate but it may also be unintended or a consequence of ignorance, lack of awareness or it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The following is a check-list of some of the possible people who may abuse:

- Medical, care or nursing staff in care homes, nursing homes, hospitals, general practice, day centres, supported housing services or people from domiciliary support services
- Health care workers in a health care setting, in the person's home or a care setting
- Social workers
- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, etc. This will sometimes include a relative who is the main carer.
- Church members, whether voluntary – undertaking tasks on behalf of the church with a vulnerable person, or professional – a member of clergy or other paid church worker
- Visitors to a vulnerable person
- Neighbours
- Lawyers
- People who are themselves vulnerable or are users of a care service
- Complete strangers who seek out vulnerable people for the purposes of abusing them
- Confidence tricksters and salespeople who prey on vulnerable people in their own homes.

### **2.4.2 Abuse by Groups or Organisations**

Abuse can and does occur because of the failure of groups or organisations providing support or services to vulnerable adults. This may be a direct failure to provide an appropriate service or an indirect failure because it has failed to train, support, supervise or monitor those providing the service on their behalf.

### **2.4.3 Other circumstances where abuse might occur**

Relationships where there is:

- Domestic violence
- Situations of fear where the vulnerable person may be afraid of the perpetrator of the abuse or may be afraid of the threat of other acts from the perpetrator
- Where there is use or abuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- Relatives who are main carers will often experience stress, distress, frustration and lack of respite from the caring role. This may lead to the

unintended abuse of the person for whom they are providing care. Relatives who are main carers may be subject to abuse by the person for whom they are providing care. This abuse is often endured for long periods, is unreported and unnoticed.

## **Section 3 – Safeguarding Measures**

### **3.1 Recruitment of Workers & Volunteers**

It is important to us that we know and trust those who we allow to work with any vulnerable adults.

#### **3.1.1 Recruitment**

Our application process for those wishing to work with these groups is as follows:

1. Where the post involves or could involve contact with vulnerable adults our recruitment process will include relevant questions and checks. We will take up references for all such posts and volunteer roles before confirming the appointment.
2. Applicant applies for PVG membership (if not scheme member) or a PVG scheme record update (if already a scheme member). This includes verifying the identity of the applicant. In line with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act, it is mandatory for those carrying out regulated roles with vulnerable adults to be a member of the PVG scheme. or staff posts and volunteer roles which are in the category of 'regulated work' currently covered by the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme we will ensure PVG checks are completed as part of the recruitment process.
3. Applicant's references, form and disclosure are checked - if satisfactory, the applicant is appointed to the role
4. We will regularly review and update our recruitment procedures, particularly with regard to changes in safeguarding legislation or in the PVG Scheme.

#### **3.1.2 Training and supervision**

- Staff and volunteers will be provided with appropriate levels of training and supervision, including general awareness about safeguarding and how to raise any concerns.
- If required, we will provide more specific training to minimise any identified risks and/or assist the staff/volunteer to recognise possible or actual signs of harm or abuse.
- All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy which includes the Code of Practice and will understand how this translates into practice.
- All staff and volunteers are to follow the practical guidelines for appropriate conduct.
- It is best practice to always work alongside another leader, and for no leader to be left unsupervised.



### **3.1.3 Removal of workers**

If it emerges at any point that a worker or member of staff is inappropriate for the role they occupy, for whatever reason, they will be immediately removed from their position as part of the standard disciplinary procedure. If necessary, boundaries will be set in church attendance and contact with attendees to maintain safety and well-being and fulfil our duty to protect those at risk of harm.

## **3.2 Procedures**

This policy and procedure document provides instructions on the action Re:Hope staff and volunteers are required to take in situations of allegations, concerns or disclosures.

These procedures are designed to ensure that:

- The welfare of vulnerable adults is protected
- Re:Hope staff and volunteers have access to the appropriate information and guidance and are supported in these situations
- Decisions are taken within a consultative framework

### **3.2.1 Confidentiality**

- Vulnerable adults may ask staff/volunteers to promise confidentiality before disclosing abuse. This is usually requested by asking for a promise not to tell anyone else. Re:Hope staff and volunteers must NEVER promise to keep secrets.
- Re:Hope recognises that vulnerable adults are entitled to expect privacy as well as protection, so Re:Hope's policy is that information will only be passed on to people on a need to know basis.
- No worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a vulnerable adult, their family or anything the vulnerable adult may tell them to anyone other than the designated safeguarding officer (DSO) or the church leadership. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are "off duty" or no longer involved in the work. However, workers cannot promise to keep secrets or conceal disclosed information, and are expected to report any concerns to the DSO immediately.

### **3.2.2 Responsibility**

- In all situations it is the responsibility of Re:Hope to ensure that the practice and decisions of staff and volunteers are within Re:Hope's policies and procedures.
- It is recognised that Re:Hope staff or volunteers may be called on to give evidence or to help support a vulnerable adult during any investigation or inquiry initiated. They may also be called to give evidence in subsequent court proceedings. Re:Hope will seek to support any member of staff or volunteer through any such proceedings.

## **3.3 If a disclosure is made**



- Where a vulnerable adult discloses an incident of abuse or potential abuse this information must be passed to the location designated safeguarding officer (DSO) immediately or at least on the same day.
- Where a member of staff or volunteer informs the DSO that a vulnerable adult has made a disclosure it is important to take time to allow that person to relate exactly what has been said and in what context. Consider what has been said, find out the context of the disclosure, how the staff member or volunteer concerned handled the situation and what they said if anything. Check that the vulnerable adult has been told that the information was being passed on.
- If/when speaking to the vulnerable adult say as little as possible, do not ask closed or searching questions or put words into the vulnerable adult mouth. It is good practice to ask; “have you told this to anyone else?” and “do you know what they are doing about it?”
- Where information is passed to the DSO and where there are grounds for concern a referral will be made to the relevant external authorities (local social work department and/or police).
- The DSO should keep the vulnerable adult as informed as possible of the action being taken.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the vulnerable adult is appropriately cared for and supported and where appropriate to continue their involvement with any current Re:Hope activity.
- All conversations with the vulnerable adult and between staff and volunteers should be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.

### 3.4 Raising and investing concerns

In the course of their duties Re:Hope staff or volunteers may become concerned about the vulnerable adult they are responsible for. These concerns should be passed to the DSO immediately or as soon as possible. These concerns could include:

- Observations and changes in a vulnerable adult behaviour and/or presentation
- Witnessing an incident
- Concerns expressed by a third party

Concerns about a vulnerable adult need to be addressed without delay. Evidence of physical abuse may only be visible for a limited time.

- Where a member of staff or volunteer expresses a concern about a vulnerable adult to the DSO it is important to take time to allow that person to relate exactly what the basis of this concern is. Consider what has been said, establish the context in which the concern arose, how the staff member or volunteer concerned handled the situation and what they said if anything. Check that the vulnerable adult has been told that the information was being passed on.
- If/when speaking to the vulnerable adult do not ask closed or searching questions or put words into the vulnerable adult’s mouth. Consider whether

any explanations given by the vulnerable adult that seem reasonable or likely in the context of what has been seen or heard and record/report this accurately.

- Where information is passed to the DSO and where there are grounds for concern a referral will be made to the relevant external authorities (local police and/or social work department).
- The DSO should keep the vulnerable adult as informed as possible of the action being taken.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the vulnerable adult is appropriately cared for and supported and where appropriate to continue their involvement with the Re:Hope activity.
- All conversations with the vulnerable adult and between staff and volunteers should be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.

### 3.5 An Allegation (made about Re:Hope staff or volunteer)

- The staff member or volunteer concerned must be immediately removed from contact with this vulnerable adult and any others present.
- The staff member or volunteer should be accompanied by another adult at all times until they leave the situation/event.
- The DSO should be informed immediately or as soon as the situation allows (as above).
- The DSO will discuss the incident with the responsible person at the time and where appropriate interview the staff member or volunteer involved, the vulnerable adult involved and any witnesses. In all cases 2 adults should be present so there is a witness to the interview and notes can be taken.
- Should it appear at any stage that an offence might have been committed and the police should be involved, no further questions should be asked.
- When interviewing anyone involved in the situation do not ask searching questions or put words in their mouth.
- Under no circumstances should a member of staff or volunteer collude in keeping the matter “a secret” between them and the vulnerable adult. You must explain that you have a responsibility to protect them and others and that you must, where appropriate, take the matter further. At the same time reassure the child/young person that the matter will be treated confidentially and only shared with those who need to know.
- If it is alleged that sexual behaviour has occurred, the vulnerable adult must not wash, shower or swim as this may affect the gathering of evidence during any possible medical examination.
- Suggest to the vulnerable adult that he/she should not talk to others about what they have shared.
- The vulnerable adult must not be allowed to talk to the alleged perpetrator, even if he/she requests this.
- It is important to ascertain if and who the vulnerable adult has already spoken to. Appropriate action will be taken to reduce any unnecessary anxiety and/or speculation at an event or activity.
- The staff member or volunteer involved will be kept informed of the situation at the discretion of the DSO. However confidential information received from others must not be passed on.

- Re:Hope acknowledges that this will be a traumatic time for the staff member or volunteer concerned (and they may be entirely innocent of any blame) so appropriate support will be provided. It is also important that the DSO remains objective at all times.
- Where further investigation is required the concerned member of staff or volunteer should not have direct contact with vulnerable adults until the matter is fully resolved.
- The decision to contact external agencies will be made by the DSO who will keep the church leadership informed of the situation.
- All conversations with the vulnerable adult and between staff and volunteers must be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.
- Any discussion with parents will be considered by the DSO and if appropriate in discussion with external agencies. Parents/carers will be contacted immediately in all situations where the matter is to be taken further.
- If a member of Re:Hope staff or a Re:Hope volunteer observes actions or behaviour in another member of staff or volunteer which gives cause for concern or a sense of unease, they should discuss these with the DSO.

## **Section 4 - Code of Practice**

In all contact with vulnerable adults, Re:Hope staff and volunteers are required to display the highest standards of practice putting the care, welfare and safety of children and young people first. This means that Re:Hope staff and volunteers will:

- Be a positive role model and Christian witness (where applicable) to vulnerable adults.
- Play their part in developing an ethos where all vulnerable adults matter, are treated equally and with respect and dignity
- Respect a vulnerable adult's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- Listen attentively to the ideas and opinions any vulnerable adults wants to share with them
- Respect a vulnerable adult's culture, faith and religious beliefs
- Respond sensitively to any anxieties a vulnerable adult has
- Speak to the DSO if they suspect a vulnerable adult is experiencing bullying or harassment at a Re:Hope activity
- Refer any concerns observed or communicated to them to the DSO
- Be mindful of the safety of the vulnerable adults at all times, and in all circumstances.
- Respect the boundaries, privacy and confidentiality vulnerable adults
- As a Re:Hope staff member or a Re:Hope volunteer it is unacceptable on any occasion to:
  - Exaggerate, trivialise or ignore vulnerable adult protection concerns, allegations or disclosures
  - Discuss personal issues about a vulnerable adult or their family with anyone other than the DSO, the elders or the person in charge of an activity or event where you have concerns about a vulnerable adult.

- Allow a vulnerable adult to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation
- Form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with vulnerable adults
- Harass or intimidate a vulnerable adults or Re:Hope volunteer because of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, socio-economic class or disability
- Invite or allow a vulnerable adult to stay with you at your home.

#### 4.1 Practical Guidelines for appropriate conduct

- Avoid being on your own with any vulnerable adult
- Have two or more leaders present with a group whenever possible, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises.
- Never take a vulnerable adult home on your own - you should have another helper with you, or else ensure that the last two people are dropped off together.
- Encourage vulnerable adults to enforce their own personal boundaries, for example by saying 'no'.
- Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling ) ensure that others know when and where the interview is taking place, and that someone else is around in the building.
- Be wise in your physical contact with vulnerable adults. Physical contact can be natural and healthy but must be kept appropriate at all times. It should also be initiated by the vulnerable adults. Avoid physical contact in private.
- Do not show favouritism to some vulnerable adults at the expense of others.
- Be wise with your words and actions around vulnerable adults, especially those of the opposite gender.
- Never smack, hit or physically discipline a vulnerable adult.
- If a vulnerable adult is in immediate physical danger or is at risk of causing immediate physical danger to another person, it may be appropriate to temporarily hold them still.
- If you feel that a vulnerable adult may have a "crush" on you, inform the DSO and seek advice and guidance.
- Inform the DSO immediately if you see or discover an issue of concern, including suspected abuse
- Inform the DSO immediately if you see another worker acting in a way which could be seen as inappropriate

#### 4.2 Social Media and communication

- Do not follow or befriend vulnerable adults on Facebook or Instagram.
- Do not communicate privately with vulnerable adults via any social media or communication channel.
- If you have public social media accounts (e.g. Instagram), keep your online presence consistent with Christian standards for behaviour and living.
- Do not take or store still or moving images of vulnerable adults on your personal device. If you are asked to do this for social media purposes, they must be deleted once they are uploaded to the Re:Hope Flickr account.

## **Section 5 – Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually.