

Waypoint Church - Safeguarding Individuals with Additional Needs and Disabilities Policy

Effective Date: 07/08/2026

Who We Are

Waypoint Church is a Christian church based in Hull, serving Boothferry Estate.

Our heart is to help people find and follow Jesus and to create spaces where people can connect, feel welcome, and be part of a community.

If you have any questions about this policy please contact us at:
info@waypointchurch.co.uk

Policy Statement

Waypoint Church is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where every individual is valued, respected, and able to participate in church life.

We believe that every person is made in the image of God and has inherent worth, dignity, and value. We recognise that individuals with additional needs and disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, discrimination, exploitation, or harm and may require additional care, understanding, and support to ensure they are safeguarded effectively.

Our Commitment

We will:

- Treat every individual with dignity, respect, compassion, and understanding
- Take time to understand each individual's communication, physical, emotional, and social needs
- Work appropriately with parents, carers, families, advocates, and support workers where appropriate
- Make reasonable adjustments to help individuals participate fully in church life wherever possible
- Ensure church activities are welcoming, inclusive, accessible wherever possible, and safe
- Follow all safeguarding policies and procedures at all times
- Respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns

Recognising Abuse

Physical Abuse

Unexplained injuries, frequent bruising, burns, fear of physical contact, or wearing clothing to cover injuries.

Emotional Abuse

Withdrawal, low self-esteem, extreme behaviour, fearfulness, or being overly anxious to please.

Sexual Abuse

Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or language, reluctance to be with certain people, sudden changes in behaviour, or distress around physical contact.

Neglect

Poor hygiene, hunger, unsuitable clothing, constant tiredness, or lack of supervision.

Child Exploitation

Children and young people may be exploited criminally, sexually, financially, or online. Indicators may include unexplained gifts, secrecy, changes in behaviour, missing episodes, or concerning online activity.

Spiritual Abuse

Misuse of religious language or authority to control or manipulate, fear of punishment from God, isolation from family or friends, or being told they are not loved by God unless they behave in a certain way.

Understanding Additional Needs and Disabilities

Additional needs and disabilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical disabilities
- Learning disabilities or learning difficulties
- Autism
- ADHD
- Sensory impairments
- Sensory processing differences
- Communication difficulties
- Mental health conditions
- Long-term health conditions
- Emotional or behavioural needs
- Hidden disabilities

We recognise that every individual is unique. Support should always be person-centred, taking into account each individual's circumstances, abilities, preferences, and support requirements rather than making assumptions based on a diagnosis or disability.

Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

If a child or young person shares information that raises a safeguarding concern, all staff and volunteers must respond appropriately and follow the procedures set out in the Waypoint Church Safeguarding Procedures Document.

For detailed guidance on responding to disclosures, recording concerns,

completing Safeguarding Concern Forms, reporting concerns, and emergency safeguarding procedures, please refer to the Waypoint Church Safeguarding Procedures Document.

Recognising Increased Vulnerability

Individuals with additional needs and disabilities may:

- Find it more difficult to communicate worries, concerns, or experiences of abuse
- Rely more heavily on others for care, support, or personal assistance
- Be more trusting of others or less aware of appropriate boundaries
- Experience social isolation or discrimination
- Display behaviours that could mask signs of abuse or neglect
- Face additional barriers when accessing help or reporting concerns

All concerns must always be taken seriously and never dismissed as being solely related to an individual's additional needs or disability.

Reporting Concerns

If you have a safeguarding concern:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously
- Remain calm and reassure the individual
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Record the concern as soon as possible using the Safeguarding Concern Form
- Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

If an individual is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, contact the emergency services by dialling **999** before informing the DSL or DD

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Dan Kelsey

Email - dankelsey@waypointchurch.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Debbie Kelsey

Email - debbiekelsey@waypointchurch.co.uk

Waypoint Church takes all safeguarding concerns seriously. Any concern, disclosure, allegation, or suspicion of abuse must be reported promptly and appropriately.

All staff and volunteers are expected to follow the reporting procedures outlined in the Waypoint Church Reporting Concerns Procedure.

Advice and support may also be sought from Thirtyone:eight. Their Safeguarding Helpline can be contacted on 0303 003 1111.

Waypoint Church maintains a Reporting Concerns Procedure which provides detailed guidance on responding to disclosures, recording concerns, completing Safeguarding Concern Forms, confidentiality, information sharing, and reporting safeguarding concerns.

All staff and volunteers are provided with access to this document. If you would like to request a copy or find out more about how safeguarding concerns are reported and managed within Waypoint Church, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead at dankelsey@waypointchurch.co.uk.

What Happens When a Concern Is Reported

When a safeguarding concern is reported, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the information provided and determine any appropriate action.

This may include:

- Seeking further information where appropriate
- Consulting with Thirtyone:eight
- Recording the concern securely

- Referring the concern to statutory agencies where required
- Implementing safeguarding measures to protect the child or young person

Waypoint Church is committed to acting in the best interests of every individual and will always seek to act in accordance with current safeguarding legislation, guidance, and recognised best practice.

Safe Working Practices

All staff and volunteers must:

- Maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries at all times
- Ensure they work in ways that promote safety, dignity, and respect
- Avoid being alone with an individual wherever possible and follow Waypoint Church's safeguarding procedures when this cannot be avoided
- Ensure that any personal care or assistance is provided transparently, respectfully, and only where appropriate
- Record and report any safeguarding concerns immediately using the Waypoint Church Safeguarding Concern Form
- Seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) whenever they are unsure about any safeguarding matter

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information is highly sensitive and must be handled appropriately. Information will only be shared where necessary to protect an individual and in accordance with safeguarding legislation, guidance, and best practice.

Further information regarding confidentiality, information sharing, and safeguarding records can be found in the Waypoint Church Safeguarding Procedures Document.

Support and Guidance

Working with individuals with additional needs and disabilities can require different approaches depending on the person's individual circumstances.

If a member of staff or volunteer is unsure how best to support someone safely or has concerns about an individual's wellbeing, they should seek advice from their Team Leader, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Waypoint Church is committed to providing appropriate support, guidance, and safeguarding training so that staff and volunteers are equipped to care for individuals safely, confidently, and with compassion.

We believe that individuals with additional needs and disabilities are a valued and important part of our church family. Every person is loved by God, made in His image, and should be able to participate in church life in a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment.

Training

Waypoint Church is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers working with individuals with additional needs and disabilities are appropriately equipped to safeguard, support, and care for them safely and effectively.

Where appropriate to their role, staff and volunteers will receive:

- Safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities
- Regular safeguarding updates and refresher training
- Guidance on this policy and the Waypoint Church Reporting Concerns Procedure
- Training and guidance to help them understand and appropriately support individuals with a range of additional needs and disabilities
- Practical guidance on effective communication, reasonable adjustments, and creating an inclusive and accessible environment

wherever possible

- Ongoing support and advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), and other appropriate leaders where required

Waypoint Church recognises that every individual is unique. Training will therefore seek to equip staff and volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to provide person-centred support while maintaining appropriate safeguarding practices.

Working Under Thirtyone:eight

Waypoint Church is a member of Thirtyone:eight and works in line with their safeguarding guidance, training, and best practice. Our safeguarding policies, procedures, and child protection processes are informed by the standards and resources provided by Thirtyone:eight.

Related Safeguarding Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following safeguarding documents:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Reporting Concerns Procedure
- Any other safeguarding-related policies and procedures adopted by Waypoint Church

Policy Review

This policy is approved by the Waypoint Church Core Team and will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, safeguarding guidance, or church activities.

Policy Owner: Waypoint Church

Date Approved: 07/08/2026

Next Review Date: 07/08/2027

Last Updated: 07/08/2026