

Details of the place of worship /organisation

Name of Organisation: **Stroud Christian Fellowship**

Address: **The Cross**

Parliament Street

Stroud

GL5 2HL

Tel No: **01453 751509** Email address: **office@stroudcf.org**

Members of: Churches Together in Stroud, The Evangelical Alliance, and part of the family of Salt & Light Ministries

Charity Number: **1142276** Company Number: **7599383**

Insurance Company: Aviva Insurance Limited/aQmen (Underwriter)/Kingdom Bank (Agent)

Stroud Christian Fellowship ('SCF') is a family which encompasses those of all ages, backgrounds, and needs. The following is a brief description of our church activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

- Groups for children aged 0-18 during regular Sunday morning services.
- A youth group meeting during the evenings / weekends
- Residential trips for young people
- 1:1 and small group discipleship and mentoring support for all (including 11-18)
- Family activities such as picnics, trips, etc.
- Pastoral care visits for individuals or families within their own home and in hospitals/hospices etc.
- Online worship meetings/ youth sessions/ and pastoral support using the Zoom platform.

The church has offices and meeting spaces for its exclusive use but meets for weekly corporate worship in the local Salvation Army Hall (The Citadel, Acre Street, Stroud) and utilises other community spaces for its work.

Commitment

As a church, Trustees, Elders and Leadership team we are committed to: -

- Recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse or neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and those vulnerable and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children, young and vulnerable people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory and spiritual abuse or neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe in the necessity of creating a healthy culture in our church where the value of all people is recognised, and challenges are responded to appropriately.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to vulnerable people and those with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers and volunteers adhere to the agreed procedures in our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Responding to abuse allegations

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to **Steve Morris** (hereafter the "Safeguarding Officer") Tel no: **01452 812614** who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to **Martin Pearson** (hereafter the "Deputy ") Tel no: **07976 357517**.
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the fellowship's appointed safeguarding advisory service, Thirtyone:eight (hereafter 31:8), PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone **0303 003 1111**. Alternatively contact Social Services or the Police.
- Where the concern is about a child, the Safeguarding Officer should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from 31:8 as above.

Social services contact numbers:

09:00 – 17:00 Monday – Friday:

- **The Front Door (Children and Families Helpdesk): 01452 426565**
- **Adult Helpdesk: 01452 426868**

Out-of-hours:

- **01452 614194 - leave message & wait for call back.**

Gloucestershire Police:

- **Call 101**
- The Safeguarding Officer may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from 31:8.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from 31:8, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use the procedure above. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Officer(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Officer/ Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Prevention

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers (paid or voluntary) will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment.

This includes ensuring that:

Potential employees

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- Those short listed have been interviewed.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.

All volunteers and employees

- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview or prior to volunteering.
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Management of Workers – General Guidelines

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with general guidelines towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Procedures where there is a concern about a child.

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or 31:8) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g., poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by 31:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Procedure where there are allegations of sexual abuse.

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by 31:8 if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. 31:8 will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Procedure where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection.

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

- If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, 31:8 can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse (see definition in appendices), Safeguarding Officer will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e., counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact 31:8 and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Procedure where there are allegations of abuse against a person working with children/young.

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults with care and support needs. Where you are liaising with a designated officer discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a designated officer is not involved, you need to contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads you to end the employment of the worker or volunteer or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Identified concerns without disclosure.

Through observation or information received from third parties, workers may become concerned about a child or family member who has not made a disclosure. In these circumstances information or concerns should be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer or deputy as if a disclosure has been made.