

Safeguarding Policy

I. Policy Statement:

- **Commitment:**

Hope Today Counselling is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all clients, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

- **Ethos:**

Hope Today Counselling takes seriously the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where clients feel comfortable and respected.

- **Responsibility:**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but as an independent practitioner, I take ultimate responsibility for my own private practice.

II. Scope and Application:

- **Who it Applies To:** This safeguarding policy applies to Jonathan Crozier as counsellor and anyone who comes into contact with your practice.
- **Where it Applies:** The policy is in effect either online at the counsellors home or in a room based within St Ebbe's Church, Oxford by permission of the Minister (Operations) Tim Dossar.
- **Types of Abuse:** This policy is committed to safeguarding against all signs of abuse including physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and financial abuse.

III. Procedures for Reporting Concerns:

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer:**

As a private practitioner, Jonathan Crozier is responsible for overseeing safeguarding. In response to matters relating to St Ebbe's Church, all concerns can be directed to the Parish Safeguarding Officer Niki Ridgway (0300 3023270) or in relation staff leadership and adults, Alyson Grove (01865 240438). The Safeguarding Policy for St Ebbe's Church can be found by clicking [here](#).

- **External Reporting:**

If anyone is in immediate danger, call the police on 999 straight away.

Other contacts that may be of assistance are:

[How to make a complaint - ACC UK](#)

[Contact Safeguarding Service | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

- **Recording Concerns:**

In accordance with this policy, when handling concerns, all relevant information will be documented and stored, ensuring confidentiality and compliance with data protection regulations. A current GDPR policy is available on request.

- **Information Sharing:**

Information regarding a safeguarding concern may be shared in supervision however all confidential and private information relating to clients will not be revealed. If there is a concern of risk to a client's life, the police will be contacted immediately.

- **Safeguarding Training:**

To ensure ongoing good practice in safeguarding, I will engage in regular CPD training on safeguarding procedures and relevant legislation and frequency (3 yearly as recommended for safeguarding).

- **Supervision:**

I have regular monthly supervision with Elaine Walby -

biblicalcounselling@yahoo.co.uk

- **Confidentiality:**

The importance of maintaining client confidentiality is taken seriously yet there may be situations where confidentiality may need to be breached for safeguarding reasons. This is stated clearly in the counselling agreement.

V. Key Legislation and Guidance

- **Children's Act 1989:** This Act places a statutory duty on health, education, and other services to cooperate with local authorities in child protection.
- **Children's Act 2004:** This Act further strengthens the duty to cooperate in child protection.

- **The Human Rights Act 1998:** Applies to anyone whose care or treatment is funded or provided by a public body. Section 6 requires all public authorities to act in ways that are compatible with human rights when making decisions.
- **The Care Act 2014:** Sets out statutory responsibility for the integration of care and support between health and local authorities. NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups are working in partnership with local and neighbouring social care services. Local Authorities have statutory responsibility for safeguarding. In partnership with health they have a duty to promote wellbeing within local communities.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Bill:** This act was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. Organisations and individuals with responsibility for providing services to vulnerable groups have a legal obligation to refer relevant information to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010:** The way that agencies, organisations and individual private practitioners should work together to carry out their duties and responsibilities under the 1989 Children Act and other legislation is set out in a document called 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
It sets out the responsibilities of all agencies in the protection of children, and is aimed at staff in organisations that are responsible for commissioning or providing services to:
Children, young people and adults who are parents/carers.
Organisations that have a particular responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

- **The Mental Capacity Act 2005**

In order to protect those who lack capacity and to enable them to take part as much as possible in decisions that affect them, the following statutory principles apply:

You must always assume a person has capacity unless it is proved otherwise. You must take all practicable steps to enable people to make their own decisions.

You must not assume incapacity simply because someone makes an unwise decision.

Always act, or decide, for a person without capacity in their best interests. Carefully consider actions to ensure the least restrictive option is taken.

- **The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards 2009 (DoLS):** An amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005, provide a legal framework to protect those who lack the capacity to consent to the arrangements for their treatment or care, for example by reason of their dementia, learning disability or brain injury, and where levels of restriction or restraint used in delivering that care for the purpose of protection from risk/harm are so extensive as to potentially be depriving the person of their liberty.
- **The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018:** Introduced new elements to the data protection regime, superseding the Data Protection Act 1998. Practitioners must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information. However, the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping vulnerable adults safe.
- **The Equality Act 2010:** Lists nine protected characteristics, and health and social care providers (including counsellors) come under the Act as service providers, so they must not discriminate on the grounds of these characteristics.
- **The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998:** This Act, often referred to as the Whistleblowers Act, encourages staff to report suspected wrongdoing and protects those who do against being dismissed or suffering a detriment by their employers. It also gives protection to employees against suffering a detriment or retaliation from another employee for reporting suspected wrongdoing. This is relevant for counsellors working for a church or churches and where there is disclosure of Spiritual abuse or historical abuse.

The Terrorism Act 2000 : Makes it a criminal offence for a person to fail to disclose, without reasonable excuse, any information which they either know or believe might help prevent another person from carrying out an act of terrorism or might help in bringing a terrorist to justice in the UK.:

- **Links to relevant guidance on safeguarding:**

31:8: <https://thirtyoneeight.org/training-and-events/>

CofE's Safeguarding Training Portal: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

or Christian Safeguarding Services: <https://thecss.co.uk/>

VI. Review and Updates:

- **Regular Review:**

The policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

- **Feedback:**

Feedback is welcome on this policy and its implementation - please contact jcrozier.counselling@gmail.com

Appendix A – Detailed Information about external reporting

Children

- Find your local council's children's social care team and report your concern. You can often find their contact information on the local council website.

- **NSPCC Helpline:**

The NSPCC's freephone helpline is 0808 800 5000. They can provide guidance on what to do and how to report your concerns.

- **Childline:**

Childline is another resource that can offer support and advice if you are concerned about a child. They can be reached at 0800 1111 or through their website.

- **Emergency situations:**

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

- **Reporting anonymously:**

You can report concerns anonymously if you wish, but it's important to provide as much detail as possible to allow social services to investigate.

What to include in your report:

- **Child's details:**

Provide the child's name, age, and any other identifying information. • **Your details:**

You will be asked for your details, but you can choose to remain anonymous.

- **Specific concerns:**

Clearly describe what you are concerned about, including any specific incidents or behaviors.

- **Evidence:**

If you have any evidence, such as photos or videos, you can share it with social services. • **Background information:**

Provide any relevant background information, such as the child's family situation or history.

Adults

To report a safeguarding concern to adult social services in the UK you can typically contact your local council's safeguarding adults team or the emergency duty team, depending on the nature and timing of the concern. Many councils have dedicated safeguarding helplines or online reporting forms, with varying contact details for office hours and out-of-hours emergencies.

1. Local Council Contacts:

- **Safeguarding Adults Team:**

Most councils have a dedicated team that handles safeguarding concerns. They can be reached by phone during office hours (usually 9am to 5pm).

- **Emergency Duty Team:**

2. Reporting Online:

- Some councils offer online forms for reporting concerns, which can be useful if you prefer to report anonymously or have a complex situation.

3. Important Considerations:

- **Treat every suspected incident as urgent:** Report any suspected abuse or neglect as soon as possible.

- **You don't need to be certain:** Even if you have a hunch or a concern, it's best to report it.

- **Your report is important:** Information from multiple sources can help build a clearer picture of a situation.

- **If you're in danger, call 999:** If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, contact the police.

Appendix B – A Biblical Framework

A biblical framework for safeguarding emphasises God's care for the vulnerable and calls for Christians to actively protect and advocate for those in need, reflecting God's justice and compassion. This framework is rooted in various biblical texts, including Proverbs 31:8, James 1:27, and Matthew 25:31-46, which call for speaking up for the voiceless, visiting orphans and widows, and showing compassion to the marginalized.

Psalm 68:4-6:

"He is a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows... He sets the lonely in families."

Micah 6:8:

"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Mark 12:28-31:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Proverbs 31:8-9:

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are downtrodden... Give them justice and fair treatment."

James 1:27:

"Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself from being contaminated by the world."

- **God's Care for the Vulnerable:** The Bible consistently portrays God as a protector and advocate for the weak, vulnerable, and marginalized.
- **Love and Compassion:** Safeguarding is rooted in the biblical mandate to love one's neighbour as oneself and to show compassion to those in need.
- **Justice and Fairness:** The Bible calls for justice and fairness for all, especially for those who are vulnerable or unable to advocate for themselves.
- **Speaking Up for the Voiceless:** Christians are called to speak out against injustice and oppression and to defend the rights of those who are vulnerable.
- **Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults:** The Bible places a strong emphasis on protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm and exploitation.
- **Creating Safe Environments:** Safeguarding involves creating safe and supportive environments where vulnerable people can thrive and flourish.
- **Responding to Concerns:** Christians are called to respond promptly and effectively to any concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect.
- **Promoting a Culture of Safety:** Safeguarding is not just about policies and procedures, but also about creating a culture where everyone feels safe and valued.

- **Seeking Restoration and Healing:** When abuse or neglect occurs, Christians are called to seek restoration and healing for victims and survivors.
- **Living out the Gospel:** Safeguarding is a practical outworking of our biblically based values and our Gospel witness.

Resources & Sources

Safeguarding for counselling practice CPD

Legal Framework for safeguarding UK Overview.

Various online sources including: [Safeguarding Adults](#), [Safeguarding Children](#).

Biblical Framework for safeguarding UK Overview.

Various online sources including: [Thirtyone:8, A Theology of Safeguarding](#), Dr Krish Kandiah with Justin Humphreys.