



Safeguarding Adults Policy

Approved by the Kirk Session June 2026

Review every 3 years

1. Policy Statement

Hill Street Presbyterian Church (HSPC) promotes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. It is committed to practices that promote the welfare of adults and prevent harm.

It is the policy of HSPC to safeguard to the best of our ability all adults who interact with our ministries in any form. This includes both preventing harm from occurring and actively taking actions to protect when an adult is at risk of being harmed or harm has occurred and we are aware of it.

This commitment is demonstrated through the provision of this policy and its accompanying procedures. These are designed for all those involved in adult ministries, ensuring that all adults can engage safely, free from the threat of abuse and in a safe environment.

2. Biblical Basis for Safeguarding

HSPC affirms that safeguarding is a biblical imperative and central to its mission.

Safeguarding reflects the Church's calling and demonstrates the character of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Bible is used as a key reference point for guiding safeguarding practices—not only as a legal and ethical duty, but as a core part of the Church's identity.

Examples of biblical guidance include:

- Love your neighbour as yourself (*Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:13–15*)
- Treat others as you would want to be treated (*Matthew 7:12*)
- Meet the needs of others (*Romans 15:1–2; Philippians 2:3–4*)
- Seek justice and correct oppression (*Psalms 89:14; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8*)
- Protect the weak and those in need (*Psalms 82:3–4; Matthew 18:10*)

3. Legal Context

This policy and accompanying procedures have been developed with the following legislation and guidance documents considered, which all seek to safeguard adults;

- The rights of adults to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Their right to life is protected (under Article 2); their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment (under Article 3); and their right to liberty and security (under Article 5).

3.1 Additional areas of legislation that inform this policy and accompanying procedures include;

- The Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Orders and the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75
- The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
- The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Adult Protection Bill, (NI), remains pending implementation at the date of this policy issue.

3.2 Additional Policy Context

The regional adult safeguarding policy *“Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership”* was launched in July 2015.

The policy was jointly developed and published by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive.

This sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends adult safeguarding to be taken forward across all Government Departments, their agencies and in partnership with the voluntary, community, independent and faith organisations.

4. Core Principles

This Policy and accompanying procedures will state clearly the arrangements for adult safeguarding, including preventative and protective measures.

We understand that not all adults coming into contact with our missions or ministries are formally members of our denomination. We want to promote confidence that HSPC is safe for all.

We understand that safeguarding involves a wide range of activity and the church plays a vital role in both the prevention of harm and the protection from harm of adults in our communities.

All safeguarding for adults is underpinned by the core principles of respect for the unique worth of each individual and ensuring all adults in contact with our ministry are treated with dignity.

This policy applies to all aspects of ministry and work within HSPC, whether this be within a church building or elsewhere.

5. Church Commitments

HSPC will

1. Appoint an Adult Safeguarding Champion
2. Maintain robust procedures for the recruitment, checking and monitoring of staff and volunteers working with adults at risk of harm
3. Ensure effective working structures are in place to respond to concerns and these are clearly understood through a regular system of training staff and volunteers
4. Ensure clear processes for the reporting of abuse and the risk of harm, in regards to any adult at risk, both externally to statutory services and internally through a clearly identified chain of responsibility
5. Ensure that identified risks to adults are assessed and managed, ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to
6. Ensure that any person of risk engaged in our ministries (for example those with a history of serious offending behaviour) is safely managed, monitored and supported
7. Ensure that we have a timely, effective and sensitive approach to managing non-recent abuse disclosures
8. Ensure we have safe and confidential methods for managing information

9. Ensure that safeguarding procedures signpost to the appropriate department of the church for the management of comments, complaints and suggestions

This policy is implemented through detailed procedures and will be displayed at various points throughout the church buildings.

6. Review

- This policy will be reviewed every **three years** by the Kirk Session
- The Designated Person(s) will advise on required updates

6.1 Procedures Review

- Reviewed at least every three years by the Kirk Session, taking advice from the Safeguarding Administration Team.
- Updated as needed for legislative or best practice changes

Kirk Session is responsible for ensuring relevant updates are communicated effectively and promptly to the congregation.