

Appendix 1

WHAT ABOUT SAFEGUARDING?

Discussions on safeguarding, boundaries and expectations can provoke anxiety. As the church we are family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and we don't want to deter people from expressing their love and concern for each other, and create lots of barriers to them doing so. But equally, there are risks, and those risks need to be managed proportionately so that everyone feels safe and confident.

We need to consider how we protect our church volunteers and the people we are serving.

Hopefully your church has a safeguarding policy – make sure it is fit for purpose to cover volunteers offering practical support to carers, whether that is offering lifts, or sitting with a loved one.

Your policy should include processes for the safe recruitment of volunteers. You need to have vetting procedures in place, such as taking up two references and self declaration forms. Eligibility for DBS checks will depend on the nature and regularity of the support that volunteers are providing. It is worth checking eligibility with your DBS provider.

Boundaries and Guidelines for Volunteers

Most people serve more confidently when they are clear about the boundaries of their role – what it does and does not include. It is worth writing some concise and straightforward guidelines about this for volunteers. The guidelines will be specific to your church and situation but you may want to consider including:

1. Confidentiality (i.e. not gossiping or sharing personal information, but knowing who you can speak to privately if you have concerns)
2. Helping people with personal care eg. toileting, washing
3. Accepting gifts
4. Helping with health care, eg. taking medications
5. Handling money if helping with shopping

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Other considerations

- Volunteers need to be clear about who they can speak to if they are worried about anything, or if they are struggling to say no to what is being asked of them.
- You should think through the safety of volunteers visiting on their own and consider adopting a lone working policy. Again this should be proportionate. If you know all the people that they are visiting well as they have been part of your church family for years you may assess that there is minimal risk. But it's good to think these things through, and include guidelines in the information that you give to volunteers if it's needed.

Managing the Expectations of Carers

It may also be helpful to have a simple information sheet for carers to manage their expectations of what volunteers from the church can and can't do, and who they can speak to if they have any concerns about volunteers.

Example – Info Sheet for Caregiver [You'll need to adapt to your situation]:

Volunteers from the church are keen to support you in your role as a caregiver, in ways that you would find helpful. We want you to feel confident in the volunteers, and for the volunteers to feel confident in their role. They can help with things like:

- Shopping
- Spending a few hours with your loved one whilst you have a break.
- Giving lifts
- Helping with technology
- Providing last minute cover in an emergency
- Praying with you

However, they are not trained to provide:

- Personal care – eg. help with washing and dressing
- Health care – eg. help with taking medications

We hope that you will enjoy a helpful, supportive relationship with the volunteers from church, but if you have any concerns or problems please speak to....