The Roost

Safeguarding Handbook

(Last updated Oct 2026)

the Roost

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Introduction to The Roost

The Roost is a registered charity seeking to support and nurture the wellbeing and spirituality of young adults in Northumberland.

These aims are achieved through:

- The Roost Community; a fresh expression of new monasticism, comprising a network of missional communities, larger gatherings and a rhythm of life which enables members to explore and deepen their lived experience of Christian faith;
- Partnership with schools and colleges where education regarding personal and communal wellbeing, and activities promoting exploration of spiritually are delivered;
- Activities taking place in The Roost Meadow and across Northumberland such as gardening club, walks & other activities;
- Also through activities hosted by The Roost such as retreats, workshops and pastoral support.

The Roost Community is a worshipping community operating under a Bishop's Mission Order[1] (BMO). Communities operating under the BMOs are distinctive Christian communities which are fostered or developed as part of the Church of England where a Bishop is satisfied that the initiative would be likely to promote or further the mission of the Church.

As a BMO, The Roost operates in line with the House of Bishop's instruction that 'these communities should adopt the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (i.e. includes both policy and practice guidance) and ensure arrangements are in place to report any safeguarding concerns or allegations to the DSA.'[2]

The Roost is therefore accountable to The Diocese of Newcastle for its episcopal oversight, and for its adherence to Church of England safeguarding policy and practice.

This safeguarding handbook for The Roost is a fit for purpose guide, and takes the relevant guidance from Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook and presents it here. More general and all-encompassing guidance (which includes safeguarding for all members of society, not just for young adults) can

[1] See https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2011/3/section/80 for more information regarding BMOs and Mission Initiatives in the Church of England

[2] See 'Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guide', p.24, https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5fbc2ba5a8086/content/pages/documents/cd44272c0faa085106a9e87356417b9d2750da1c.pdf

be found here.[3] It should be consulted for awareness of the Church's wider responsibilities and practice.

The Roost: Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees are the primary decision makers within The Roost. Its members include the Leader of the BMO who is appointed by the Bishop of Newcastle. Other trustees are appointed, initially by the founding trustee, and then by unanimous agreement with other trustees.

The Trustees of The Roost are:

Chair:	Mrs Tara Russell tara@roostcommunity.org
Treasurer:	Mrs Lynn Chambers lynn@roostcommunity.org
BMO Leader:	Rev Beth Rookwood 07793964392 beth@roostcommunity.org
Other Trustees	Dr Sarah Keith sarah@roostcommunity.org Mrs Nicola Taylor nicky@roostcommunity.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Ms Elodie Hewes elodie@roostcommunity.org

As part of the BMO, oversight and supervision for the Leader of The Roost is given by Newcastle Diocese. This person is referred to in this document as 'The Visitor'; someone who is appointed by The Bishop of Newcastle to this role. The Diocese can be contacted at Church House, here: 0191 270 4100

Support in the area of safeguarding is also given to The Roost by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) and thirtyone:eight who can be contacted on: 0303 0031111

[3] Parish Safeguarding Handbook, https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5fbc2ba5a8086/content/pages/documents/89dfd2daa907fb3bd9e8921b8bd38aba1a1a21b5.pdf

The Trustees and their Responsibility for Safeguarding

The Trustees have a duty of care to all who participate in The Roost. As part of this duty the trustees:

*Adopt and implement The House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy: Promoting a Safer Church.[4]

*Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

*Ensure Safer Recruitment, Disclosure and Barring service checks and ongoing supervision and support for all who serve as part of The Roost. This includes relevant training, Church of England National Safeguarding Training levels C0 Basic Awareness, C1 Foundation and C2 Leadership Learning as appropriate to the role, which is undertaken every 3 years, safety plans which promotes wellbeing for all, and appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of The Roost.

*Respond promptly to all safeguarding concerns, which includes reporting them to the DSL & DSA within 24 hours, offering support to those who disclose abuse and the effective managing of any who pose a risk to vulnerable adults.

*Review safeguarding at every meeting of the trustees, and produce an annual report which is given to the appropriate episcopal staff.[5]

*Any complaints are to be made to The Chair of Trustees, Mrs Tara Russell. The complaint, grievance, and whistleblowing policies can be found in the Appendix.

[4] Please find 'Promoting a Safer Church' 2007, here: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf
[5] Likely to be 'The Visitor' to The Roost, copied to the DSA

The Roost Safeguarding Policy

This policy is signed by anyone in a position of authority within The Roost. It is accompanied by relevant training and checks.

The Roost is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and adults.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Roost will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Safeguarding Officer to work with the Trustees to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of The Roost.
- Display on The Roost website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, including notifying the DSO, the Leader immediately and the DSA and statutory agencies within 24 hours.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of The Roost who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and safety plans are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Safer Recruitment

In line with The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy, The Roost 'will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults' within The Roost.

The Trustees are responsible for the appointment of those working with young people and adults, paid or unpaid. At least two individuals (who could include the Leader of the BMO) must be responsible for recruitment. All those involved in recruitment must be capable and competent, trained in safer recruitment and able to keep personal matters confidential.

All those who serve in any pastoral role or leadership capacity in The Roost will be asked to go through a process of safer recruitment, which includes:

*A clear and accurate Job/Role description which includes what supervision will be given and what level of DBS required

*Completing an application form where two references are required

*Completion of a confidential declaration form

*An in-person interview

*Completion of all necessary checks (eg. DBS)

*Appointment, including a date for the end of term (particularly for unpaid roles which may then be continued after review).

*Induction period including training, and probation period

*Ongoing training, monthly supervision with the Leader of the BMO and an annual review with a designated trustee.

Anyone involved in working within The Roost will be required to sign and supported to implement the Roost's Code of Conduct. Please see the appendix for this.

Safeguarding Training

All members of The Roost will complete the online Safeguarding Basic Awareness and Foundation. This will encourage the nurturing of a safe culture across our work.

Trustees any person in any pastoral role or leadership capacity in The Roost will undertake the Safeguarding Basic Awareness and Foundation online learning and the Safeguarding Leadership Learning facilitated by the diocese.

All Safeguarding learning will be updated every 3 years at the level required for the role.

The DS: for The Roost will ensure that the appropriate level of training is in place for all those within The Roost, and that the training is relevant, and applied in every context in which The Roost operates.

Partnership Working:

Where The Roost works in partnership with a parish, school or college, The Roost will fulfil not only its own safeguarding policy, but also work within the guidelines of what is required by the other institution. This agreement will be made at the outset of the partnership. An example is given in the Appendix.

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Young Adults

The Roost seeks to serve young adults in Northumberland, which includes some who are age 16-18 where we work in schools and colleges, as well those who are age 18 and older.

Although there may be mitigating circumstances where the rights of a 16-18 year old are taken into account, particularly in terms of decision making, persons of this age are, by law, children. Any activity undertaken with young people of this age must be done so with the consent of a parent of guardian acting on their behalf. An example of a letter of consent is given in appendix **

Vulnerable Adults

The term 'vulnerable adults' is deliberately not used in The Roost. This is because a 'vulnerable adult' may have circumstances in which they are not 'vulnerable' and also because any adult may at any point quickly become vulnerable. The presence, or absence, of a 'vulnerable' label may therefore affect the way in which a person is treated.

However, in order to build an awareness of the sort of vulnerabilities which may present during the work of The Roost, and so that any response and care may be appropriate to the safeguarding of both the person and the post-holder, the following information is given and would form part of any safety plan:

In the Church of England, the term 'vulnerable adult' refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. Please note that some young adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility.

As young adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection, it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds themselves in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

- A mental illness, chronic or acute.
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- A learning disability.
- A physical illness.

- An addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- Those who are homeless.
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum).

- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion.
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood.
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma.

Consideration will be made in each case of perceived 'vulnerability' of someone participating within The Roost, of what appropriate care might look like and what safety plan and/or behaviour management plans may need to be in place in order to safeguard the person and the post-holder offering them support. At each stage The Roost would seek to engage in conversation to collaborate with the person involved.

Abuse:
Abuse for young adults can take many forms. They have the same right to protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Young adults from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection.

All adults (aged 18+) have a fundamental human right to choose how and with whom they live, even if this appears to involve a degree of risk. They should be supported to make those choices, to live as independently as possible and treated with respect and dignity. Where mental capacity is impaired, or believed to be impaired, The Roost would seek guidance from their DSO, the DSA and statutory bodies as to how we may best support the individual concerned.

The UK government categorises abuse against children in terms of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. It also takes into account the effects of domestic abuse on children, as well as bullying and cyberbullying, online abuse, electronic images, and child sexual exploitation.

In terms of young adults (and adults), abuse is categorised in terms of physical, sexual, psychological, financial (or material), neglect, acts of omission, discriminatory, domestic, organisation and modern slavery. See Appendix for further information.

Trustees and those who serve as leaders in The Roost work to prevent abuse within the organisation through the actions listed above, and, where there are

concerns and/or disclosures, to respond and report also as described in the following pages.

Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

In line with national guidance, The Roost responds to any safeguarding concern using the following procedure:

RECOGNISE RESPOND RECORD REPORT

RECOGNISE	To be vigilant for any signs of abuse, as potentially indicated by factors described above
RESPOND	When a safeguarding concern or allegation of abuse is made, to remain calm, listen, ask open questions and reassure the individual that disclosing is the right thing to do. Let them know what you are going to do next.
RECORD	If appropriate, make brief notes at the time, and later, record in more detail. Record what was said in detail, and sign and date your records. Keep all your notes.
REPORT	If there is immediate danger, or if medical attention is required, call 999. Otherwise, report to the activity leader or the DSL for The Roost within 24 hours, who will report to the DSA. The DSL and DSA may advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies.

Northumberland Local Authority's 24 hour helpline is: 01670 536400.

Please see overleaf for a flow chart on the process of reporting concerns and potential outcomes after a disclosure. At every stage all action must be recorded, and the welfare of all involved must be paid attention to.

The Appendix has more information about the 4R process, which also forms part of the Safeguarding Basic Level Training.

Non-recent Abuse

This same process should also be followed in any instance where non-recent abuse is disclosed.

Record Keeping:

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. A record, called a case file, will be opened whenever a safeguarding concern or allegation occurs. The record needs to include key contact details, dates of when the information became known and the nature of the concerns. The record should include ongoing actions with dates, other key documents on the case file (e.g. observation notes, reports, consent forms etc.) and the case closure date. Records should use straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. Every record should be signed and dated by the author.

Records will be kept securely in a password protected file shared between the Leader of the BMO and the DSO. Where individuals are no longer in post, this information will be past on to the next post-holder.

Data Protection and Information Sharing:

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 replaced the Data Protection Act 1998. The GDPR contains the principles governing the use of personal data. It should be noted that the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations being accountable and transparent in relation to their use of personal data.

Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as what is called 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes specific reference to processing data in relation to the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' and allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent. Where this situation arises, the DSO and the DSA will work together to advise the way forward, and where appropriate, the DSO will seek to gain consent from the individual who's data is being shared.

Reporting Concerns About Young Adults:

Referrals of suspected abuse are made to Adult Social Services and the police. Where possible, for a person over 18, this should be done with their written consent. The starting point is the presumption that an adult can give consent and has the mental capacity to do so. The provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 are complex and questions and concerns about consent and mental capacity should always be discussed with the local authority.

Sharing without consent : Information can be shared legally without consent, if a person is unable to or cannot reasonably be expected to gain consent from the individual concerned, or if to gain consent could place somebody at risk. Relevant personal data can be shared lawfully without consent if it is to keep a child or adult who is deemed vulnerable, safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental or emotional well-being.

These decisions should not be made by sole individuals. Issues around sharing data and reporting on behalf of older others should be discussed with the DSL and the Leader of the BMO. Of course, you may be able to share data, at least initially, without identifying the individual concerned both within The Roost and with the statutory services.

Ultimately, the most important consideration is whether the sharing of information is likely to support the safeguarding of a young person or young adult.

Pastoral Care

Caring for victims/survivors of abuse and those affected by it

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy 2017 states that 'The Church will endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred …Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. Our first response to those who have suffered abuse, especially abuse within the Church, should be compassionate; we must listen and take what we are hearing seriously.'

It is likely that The Roost will interact with people who have been abused and/or adults who have experienced abuse, either as adults or when they themselves were children. Some may have been abused within activities relating to, or part of the Church (see below).

Responding well to a disclosure of abuse is essential to being able to build trust and support. For some, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be a powerful, healing event. Some may be seeking pastoral support. Some may need advice about how best to seek professional help. This may involve support to access local specialist services. Victims/survivors who are young people will require specialist support.

The DSL for The Roost or the Leader of the BMO are able to give advice about how best to support a victim/survivor of abuse. We journey alongside those who have been abused; for some, forgiveness may be a part of that journey, while for others, it may not be so. In any event, there should not be any pressure or expectation from the church on the victim/survivor to forgive.

Those within The Roost who are offering this care to others will be offered extra support at these times so their own wellbeing is paid attention to. It may be also be appropriate and desirable to work alongside other statutory services so that both The Roost worker and any individual concerned is receiving the best possible care and support.

Support following alleged abuse by a Roost post-holder

All concerns or allegations of abuse by a Roost post-holder must be reported to the DSL for The Roost and/or the Leader of the BMO who will report to the DSA. A Support Person will be offered to all identified victims/survivors.

What the Support Person offers will be agreed with the identified victim/survivor, but it is likely they will:

- Listen to and represent the victim/survivor's pastoral needs.
- Identify any therapeutic or other needs and offer choices as to how these best be met.
- Record any meetings or contact they have with the victim/survivor
- Share relevant information with the DSL: for The Roost and/or the DSA.
- Victims/survivors who are young people will require specialist support.

Support for families of victims/survivors and for The Roost is co-ordinated by the safeguarding management team in conjunction with statutory agencies. This would involve discussion with the Leader of the BMO, the DSL for The Roost, and the DSA, and the Visitor to The Roost as appropriate. In addition, dioceses have access to specialist support services for victims/survivors of abuse which would be sought out. The nature of any ongoing support needs will be agreed by the DSL for The Roost, and/or the DSA with the victim/survivor. The DSL or the Leader of the BMO and/or the DSA will liaise as required with statutory services; the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Lead will be informed of the allegation or concern, and their guidance will be followed.

Caring for any post-holders within The Roost who are the subject concerns or allegations of abuse

Support for the subject is provided by a Link Person which will be arranged by the DSL and the Leader of the BMO and/or the DSA.

The statutory agencies, where involved, will inform the DSL for The Roost and/or the DSA about when and what they can tell the subject about an allegation that has been made. It may be that the statutory agencies themselves inform the respondent as part of their own investigative practices i.e. where a voluntary interview or arrest is necessary.

Where the statutory agencies are not involved, the safeguarding management team will determine when and what the respondent should be told. This will normally be done by the Diocesan Bishop's nominated representative and the DSA, at an arranged meeting with the subject.

At this meeting the subject will also be offered a Link Person and the support needs of the subject's family will be considered. What the Link Person offers will be agreed with the respondent, but it is likely he/she will:

- Keep the person up to date with the progress of their case
- Help with access to advice and additional support
- Make and keep a written record of any meetings or contact with the respondent and share relevant information with the core group.

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Responding to those who may present a risk to young people or adults within a worshipping community

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy 2017 states, 'The Church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of The Roost community whom may present a known risk'.

This means that there may be those with criminal convictions for sexual offences and other forms of abuse attending The Roost. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they still might pose a risk to others.

Where people may pose a risk to others, their position in The Roost will need to be carefully and sensitively assessed to decide whether they pose a present risk to others and to put in place arrangements to ensure that these risks are mitigated. In these circumstances it is not only about monitoring individuals but offering support to lead a fulfilled life. As such, the Church has an important role in contributing to the prevention of future abuse.

Respond and Report:
Always contact the DSL or the Leader of the BMO as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, if you learn that any of the following people attend your worshipping community : The Roost must contact the DSA within 24 hours.

1. Anyone placed on the sex offenders register, with a violent offence or conviction and/or who is barred from working with children or adults by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
2. Anyone who admits to being an abuser including non-recent abuse.
3. Anyone who is subject to an investigation for suspected abuse, including possession of indecent images of children, and/or is suspended from their usual role.
4. Anyone who may pose a risk to other members due to their behaviour, irrespective of their criminal status. Category (4) may include a person in relation to whom:

- An allegation of abuse against a child or adult has been investigated, but the matter has not proceeded to court, or the person has been acquitted, or the matter is currently the subject of proceedings in the criminal or civil courts but the person may still pose a risk.
- A complaint or grievance has been received alleging inappropriate behaviour, which is not criminal.
- There have been concerns about the person's alleged abusive behaviour to a previous or current partner.

If the DSA is made aware by any other source of any person in the above categories who is intending to or is worshipping at The Roost Community, he/she will notify the DSL and/or the Leader of The Roost in the first instance. They, in conjunction with the DSA will determine the appropriate action to be taken to best safeguard The Roost, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case. A risk assessment and the formation of a risk management plan known as a Worship or Safeguarding Agreement will be undertaken.

This will involve the respondent, the DSL, the Leader of the BMO, if involved, statutory agencies e.g. Police, National Probation Service and Children's Social Care. Who is involved will depend on the case. If a person is assessed as posing a risk to children or adults, the DSA, together with any statutory agencies involved, will support The Roost to:

- Form a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to monitor the respondent.
- Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or vulnerable adult.
- Agree with the respondent that he/she worship elsewhere if his/her victim or their family worship in the same community.
- Ensure the respondent is never offered any official role in The Roost or position of responsibility where he/she may be trusted by others.
- Consider whether, with the person's agreement and that of any statutory authorities involved, The Roost members should be informed.
- Meet with the respondent to draft a Safeguarding Agreement , setting out the parameters of his/her behaviour in The Roost setting. The Safeguarding Agreement may include the following elements:
- Attend designated services or meetings only.
- Sit apart from children.
- Stay away from actives where vulnerable adults meet.
- Attend a house group where there are no children or vulnerable adults.
- Decline hospitality where there are children or vulnerable adults.
- Never be alone with children or vulnerable adults.
- Never work or be part of a mixed group with children or vulnerable adults.
- Take no role or office in The Roost which gives him or her status or authority as others may deem that person to be not trustworthy.

The Trustees should be involved in the drawing up of the written agreement with the respondent. The Safeguarding Agreement will be monitored and reviewed at least annually. Should the respondent refuse to sign the agreement the DSA will advise The Roost and liaise with the police and other relevant agencies, as required, to seek a resolution. Any breach should be shared with the DSA immediately, who will liaise with the statutory agencies, as required.

Creating a Safe Environment and Activities

All those working on behalf of The Roost must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful.
- Ensure that people know who they can talk to about a personal concern.
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or Safeguarding Lead. Sign and date the record.
- Obtain written consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.
- Seek a trained First Aider if medical attention is needed, or call for further assistance (999 in an emergency).

In addition, for young people (age 16-18) must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Respond warmly to a young person who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- Ensure that the young person and parents/carers are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and its nature before the activity takes place.
- Complete safety plans for all activities involving young people and young adults, to include insurance being in place for each activity.

All those working on behalf of the The Roost with young people and adults must not:

- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking.
- Allow unknown adults access to young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Allow strangers to give young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group, lifts.
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media.
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras without permission as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

They must:

- Ensure that for any lifts given, ensure that vehicles are in a good state of repair, and up to date with legal requirements (for example appropriate insurance and in date MOT certificate).

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In addition, for young people (16-18), Roost post-holders must not:

- Give lifts to young people you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where prior written consent from parents/carers has been agreed. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person, for example the leader of the activity, The DSO, or the Leader of the BMO at the earliest opportunity)
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of young people.
- Arrange social occasions with young people (age 16-18) other than events which also include adult family members/carers, outside organised group occasions, unless by written consent where this information is also shared with the DSO or Leader of the BMO.

Acceptable Touch:

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by young people and adults. Some physical contact is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are required:

- Always ask permission. If you are praying with someone it may be appropriate to touch their should but you must always ask for permission and not touch any other body part.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the other, not The Roost post-holder.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the other to determine the degree of physical contact except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Roost post-holders at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Prayer with any 16-18 year old or young adult:

- At times in activities across The Roost collective prayer in a group is an expected activity. Whoever is leading the prayer should always outline what will happen, and remind the group that any participation is entirely down to an individual's decision. You should always offer a follow up conversation either at the time or later for anyone who wishes ask questions.
- There are times when prayer may be something that is initiated by a young person or young adult, for example in school or in a cafe. Where this occurs Roost post-holders should respond warmly, suggest both parties keep their eyes open (perhaps looking out or down) and gently say a prayer that honours what has been requested or shared. All other safeguarding good practice applies here (especially being in sight of other adults).
- We do not encourage any physical touch during prayer. However, if it is the practice of the Roost post-holder to place a hand on the shoulder of the person they are praying for, then if in a public place, and if given permission by the young person or young adult, this may be appropriate. The touch must not linger, and must not be on any other part of a person's body (including eg. if the person has asked for their hurt finger to get better).
- As with any other pastoral conversation you must record that any personal prayer took place in your notes.

Visiting Young Adults in their homes

Visiting young adults in their homes may sometimes be appropriate for work within The Roost. Many members will be well known to each other and the post-holder in The Roost. Where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk to the post-holder and the other will usually be very low.

However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a Roost post-holder at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour.

In order that post-holder within The Roost, and those they serve, are as safe as they can be, and so that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which we undertake lone-working or visiting at home, post-holders in The Roost will:

- Undertake a safety plan before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a safety plan. In these circumstances, consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another Roost post-holder. In addition, visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.

- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from young adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to The Roost, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visited, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well. If there are any safeguarding concerns, record and report and previously stated.

Within The Roost, leaders and post-holders will be encouraged to work together and offer each other peer support. Discussions around this will be part of the ongoing supervision. We recommend that, especially in the area of visiting people and meeting with individuals, post-holders let another know where they are, and check in with them before and after. Names do not need to be shared, but leaders working to keep each other safe and well is part of our work to build a culture of wellbeing across the community.

Social Media

Social media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users. This includes maintaining a profile on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person; and taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards.

For many young adults, using social media is an extension of physical face-to-face relationships, as well as being places of community in and of themselves.

It is therefore important that The Roost as a whole and post-holders within it also engage with their community through these platforms. However, this must be done safely to avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships.
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments.
- Grooming and impersonation.
- Bullying and harassment.

- Inappropriate sharing and blurring of boundaries of a person's private/personal life

Being vigilant to the use of social media is also so that the wellbeing of all, both post-holders and those who participate in The Roost is nurtured and protected.

Social Media initiated by The Roost :

The Trustees will approve the use of social media used to promote and connect the work of The Roost. A named person must be accountable for each of the streams of communication (eg. Instagram) and they and one other member of the Trustees must be aware of the accounts name and password so that it may be monitored at any time. The named person will be bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where, through social media there is concern that a young adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

Social Media use by post-holders in The Roost:

- Have your eyes open and be vigilant. Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with young people and young adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the DSL/and or the Leader of the BMO who may report this to the DSA.
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or The Roost.
- Always think before you post. Ask yourself whether what you are posting is in line with the values of The Roost: is it Nurturing, Creative, conducive to offering Friendship and in line with the Christian Faith. All post-holders should be willing to be accountable for their online activity, whether that be personal use or activity directly related to The Roost.
- Be aware of the necessity of drawing clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep in mind that you may not always know other participants in The Roost well, and some may be age 16-18 and it may not be appropriate to share what you would on a personal account with them. It may be wise to keep activities associate with The Roost separate from your personal accounts, for example holiday pictures.

Always ask for permission to (and obtain written consent from parents/carers of those 16-18 yrs old which will be stored securely by the DSL and the Leader of the BMO):

- Use and store photographs of young people from activities or events within The Roost to use in official publications, or on The Roost's social media, website and displays.
- Use telephone, text message, email, whatsapp and other messaging services to communicate. Where this communication occurs, the post-holder within The Roost should retain all records of communication and be willing to show the exchange to the Leader of the BMO, the safeguarding lead, the DSA or other agencies if it is required. Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted. (NB the primary way of communicating within The Roost will be through the platform 'Slack')
- Allow young people to connect to The Roost's social media pages.
- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the DSO, the Leader of the BMO, who will, if required, report to the DSA.
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

<u>Post-holders within The Roost should not:</u>

- Use a private, undisclosed personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work for The Roost. All methods of communication with regard to The Roost should be made known to the DSL and the Leader of the BMO and in advance of it being used, and all of it must be kept, be traceable and, if required, made available.
- Add young people (age 16-18) or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts without a risk assessment being in place which can be discussed as part of supervision. If a young adult who is deemed vulnerable wishes to become friends with a post-holder in The Roost, then this, as well as any other communication with them, must be risk-assessed in order that the wellbeing of all is protected.
- Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless it is appropriate to your role within The Roost and in line with the values of The Roost of Nurture, Creativity, Friendship and Faith.
- Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime)for one-to-one conversations with young people unless they are risk-assessed. Use safety plans for online group work also.

In particular, do not allow any content on social media to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.
- Breaches of copyright and data protection.
- Material of an illegal nature.

- Offensive sexual or abusive references.
- Inappropriate language.
- Anything which may be harmful or which may bring The Roost into disrepute or harm its reputation.

Mobile Phones

Wherever possible, post-holders within The Roost should use the slack channel to community, rather than their personal phone number. This safeguards their own wellbeing as notifications can be switched off outside work hours, but also enables usage to be more easily accountable. It also means that the slack channel or work phone number (if a second phone is purchased) is the only number that young people or young adults are given, and the Roost post-holder's personal number can remain private.

Where participants in The Roost are well known to post-holders, the agreement may be simply that any safeguarding concern be raised in line with the process of disclosure.

Where participants in The Roost are not well known to post-holders, it may be that clear boundaries are made around the area of communication, for example creating groups where only the post-holder may post messages to all, or using apps such as slack where notifications may be easily turned on and off.

Any communication that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the DSL or Leader of the BMO.

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Further Guidance and Support

NSPCC for adults concerned about a child – 0808 800 5000

Childline for children and young people – 0800 1111

24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline – 0808 2000 247

NAPAC offers support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse – 08088010331

Stop It Now helps prevent child sexual abuse – 0808 1000 900

Cruse bereavement helpline – 0808 808 1677

Family Lives provides support and advice on family issues – 0808 800 222

MACSAS for people who have been abused by church officers – 0808 801 0340

Samaritans for people struggling to cope and needing someone to talk to – 116 123

Sources of support for victims and families of abuse:
The Survivors Trust – http://thesurvivorstrust.org

Safeline – www.safeline.org.uk/what-can-friends-and-family-members-do-tosupport-survivors-of-sexual-abuse

SupportLine – www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape_sexual-assault.php

Victim Support – www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/childhood-abuse

For links to the resources and templates mentioned in this handbook, go to : www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding

AllHouse of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy andGuidance can be found at: www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding/policy-practiceguidance.

In addition, please see the safeguarding pages of the Newcastle diocesan website: https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/

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Code of Conduct

The Code of Safer Working Practice expresses our commitment to placing the highest priority on the safety of those with whom we work. It sets out what we expect from anyone who operates within The Roost, in both paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do.

Upholding the Code

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the DSL or the Leader of the BMO. Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency.

All those working on behalf of The Roost with young people and young adults must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity;
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy;
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful;
- Ensure that young people and young adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern;
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or the DSO or the Leader of The Roost. All written records should be signed and dated;
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

In addition, those working with young people aged 16-18 must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around;

- Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

All those working on behalf of The Roost with young people and young adults must not:

- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group;
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking;
- Allow unknown adults access to young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person;
- Allow strangers to give lifts to young people and young adults who may be vulnerable in the group;
- Befriend young people and young adults who may be vulnerable on social media;
- Take photographs without permission on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

In addition, for young people, must not:

- Give lifts to young people you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity);
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people;

- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by young people and young adults. Some physical contact can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the person themselves, and kept to the minimum. In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- Ask permission before you touch someone;
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention);
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive;
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors;
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.

Making a Complaint

It is the intention of The Roost, that if someone wished to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so. Our policy is therefore to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, and improve who we are and what we do. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously.

The intention of this complaint policy is not primarily so that blame can be apportioned, (although necessary action will be taken if further inquiry requires it), but to note that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems and dissatisfaction. Most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out amicably and with positive resolutions for both parties.

Our aim is to ensure that this complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that complainants feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

AIMS:

- That people are aware of how to complain to The Roost, and that we provide easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the complaints procedure (see below).
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within three working days.
- Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days.
- All complaints are responded to in writing.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause, and also with awareness to the impact on post-holders and the wider community within The Roost.

Complaints Manager

The named trustee, with responsibility for dealing with complaints is:

Mrs Tara Russell.

Email: tara@roostcommunity.org

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Oral Complaints

All oral complaints should be taken seriously. Staff should be open and welcoming of this feedback and there is no need to take defensive postures in discussing an oral complaint.

- Roost post-holders (whether voluntary or paid) who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible. They should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other employees. This is to ensure that appropriate steps are taken at all times. If individuals or the organisation need to accept fault, we will do but in the appropriate manner.

- If Roost post-holders cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to refer the matter to the complaints manager to deal with the problem.

- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic. At all times Roost post-holders should remain calm and respectful.

- If a complaint is reviewed, then a suggested plan of action is put in place and offered to the complainant. If this does not satisfy, the Board will review the complaint and offer next steps within three days.

- All steps should follow the complaints procedure and be recorded.

Written Complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the named complaints manager who should record it in the complaints file and send an acknowledgment letter within three working days.

- If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is made on behalf of someone else, then the consent of the person about whom the complaint is being made, must be obtained, preferably in writing.

- A copy of the complaint's procedure will be given to the complainant.

- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor.

- Upon receipt of the complaint The Roost should launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.

- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.

Unresolved problems

- Where issues are raised which are unresolved and require legal support, we will work with legal support and commit at all times to continue to learn and resolve problems.

- Where required we will work with independent Ombudsman Services in order to ensure resolution

Training

Staff are trained regularly in The Roost's code of conduct, safeguarding procedures, and other HR matters including complaints and whistleblowing policies. At all times we commit to being kind, to listening seriously and to taking every action we can, within reasonable steps, to ensure those who interact with The Roost are satisfied. Furthermore we commit to continued learning of which we recognise responding to complaints is part of the process.

Policy review

This policy is reviewed annually.

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Whistleblowing Policy

The Roost is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, volunteers and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organisation's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

What Is Whistleblowing?
Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns **within** the organisation rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation.

Who Does The Policy Apply To?
The policy applies to all employees and all volunteers.

Policy Aims

- provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.

- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.

- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

What Type Of Concerns Are Covered?

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- disclosure related to miscarriages of justice.
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- damage to the environment.
- the unauthorised use of public funds.
- possible fraud and corruption.
- sexual or physical abuse of clients.
- other unethical conduct.

This policy also connects with other policies of The Roost such as Safeguarding, and the post-holders handbook. All staff should be aware of all these policies, and all staff and volunteers will be regularly briefed and trained on these policies.

Safeguards for whistleblowers
The organisation recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service. The organisation will not tolerate any harassment of victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality
All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- must disclose the information in good faith.
- must believe it to be substantially true.
- must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations.
- must **not** seek any personal gain.

How To Raise Your Concern
As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that one of the trustees is involved, you should go to the chair of trustees. If it involves them, or the Leader of The Roost you should approach the office of The Bishop of Newcastle. They can be contacted here: Bishops House, 29 Moor Road South, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE3 1PA.
Tel: 0191 285 2220 bishop@newcastle.anglican.org

Financial allegations require that the Treasurer and Board shall be notified of all financial or accounting irregularities or suspected irregularities.

For independent advice please call:

Public Concern At Work
Website: www.pcaw.co.uk
Helpline: 020 7404 6609
Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Policy review
This policy is reviewed annually.

Partnership Working

As The Roost seeks to serve and support wellbeing and spirituality with young adults in Northumberland, we often work in partnership with other agencies, such as in 6th forms in Schools, colleges, churches and other institutions. Where this occurs, a partnership agreement similar to the following template will be put in place to ensure safeguarding and good practice around a project. These will be agreed and signed into being by the leaders within the institutions. Both The Roost and the other party will keep a record of the agreement.

DRAFT PARTNERSHIP WORKING AGREEMENT FOR WORKING WITH THE ROOST

Name of project/workplace:

Primary contact:

Name and contact for designated safeguarding officer within the project/workplace:

Name and contact for designated safeguarding officer within the project/workplace:

Activity:

Leader for The Roost for the activity:

To undertake this activity, The Roost post-holder has undergone all safeguarding training within The Roost, is insured for this work, and in this setting:

- Has undergone additional safeguarding training if required Y/N/NA
- Is aware of Health and Safety requirements Y/N/NA
- Has a risk assessment agreed and signed by both parties Y/N/NA

Any other information to be agreed upon by both parties:

Signed & Dated: (Leader of The Roost)

Signed & Dated: (Representative of the workplace/institution)

Signed: & Dated: (Activity Leader for The Roost)