



FAITH COMMUNITIES

January 2008

1. Role of Faith Communities

1.1 Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and young people. They are some of the largest providers of children's and youth work, and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Religious leaders, staff and volunteers who provide services in place of worship and in faith-based agencies will have various degrees of contact with children

1.2 Like other agencies that work with children, churches, other places of worship and faith based organisations need to have appropriate arrangements in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All faith communities should be encouraged to develop and maintain arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people own child protection procedures, consistent with the BSCB procedures.

1.3 In order to fulfil these obligations private and voluntary sector organisations should ensure that they have:

- A nominated senior member of staff to lead on safeguarding matters
- A nominated senior manager to whom allegations against staff and volunteers should be reported
- Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures consistent with BSCB procedures, including the management of allegations against staff and volunteers
- A nominated senior member of staff to take responsibility for drawing up and maintaining the policy and procedures
- Guidelines about the care of children in the absence of parents, which respect the rights of the child and responsibilities of the adults towards them
- A commitment to promote and maintain links with local statutory agencies in relation to both general and specific child protection and safeguarding matters.

1.4 The organisation must also ensure that staff and volunteers:

- Have been checked, where appropriate to their role, for their suitability for working with children (including CRB checks) and understand the extent and limits of their roles
- Are sensitive to the possibility of child abuse and neglect in all environments in which they have responsibility for children
- Have access to training opportunities to promote their knowledge of safeguarding children
- Know how to report any concerns they have about possible abuse or neglect
- Are aware of safe practice guidance and are vigilant about their own actions so they cannot be misinterpreted