

Chapter 12: Glossary of definitions

The policies and procedures for safeguarding in Joymount Presbyterian Church are written so that they are accessible to as many as possible.

They are written in 'layman's terms' as much as we are able to ensure that all can engage as closely as possible with the ethos and values of our approach.

The policy and procedures are written in line with, and under the spirit of, the regional legislation of ROI, Human Rights approaches and other good practice guidance.

Reference: Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership, July 2015 (DHSSPS and DOJ)

The risk of harm occurs in all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups, regardless of gender, age or sexual orientation. All adults at risk must be supported and empowered to minimise their own exposure to risk and to find their own balance between taking risks and making the most of the strengths in their own life circumstances.

The definition of an 'adult at risk of harm' takes account of a complex range of interconnected personal characteristics and/or life circumstances, which may increase exposure to harm either because a person may be unable to protect him/herself or their situation may provide opportunities for others to neglect, exploit or abuse them. It is not possible to definitively state when an adult is at risk of harm, as this will vary on a case-by-case basis.

The following definition is intended to provide guidance as to when an adult may be at risk of harm, in order that further professional assessment can be sought.

An '**adult at risk of harm**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics

AND/OR

- b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An '**adult in need of protection**' is a person aged 18 or over whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics

AND/OR

b) life circumstances

AND

c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests

AND

d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c) and (d).

Harm is the impact on the victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect. It is the result of any action whether by commission or omission, deliberate or as the result of a lack of knowledge or awareness that may result in the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional or mental health or well-being.

The full impact of harm is not always clear from the outset, or even at the time it is first reported. Consideration must be given not only to the immediate impact of harm and risk to the victim, but also the potential longer-term impact and the risk of future harm.

Harmful conduct may constitute a criminal offence or professional misconduct.

A number of factors will influence the determination of the seriousness of harm. A single traumatic incident may cause harm or a number of 'small' incidents may accumulate into 'serious harm' against one individual, or reveal persistent or recurring harm perpetrated against many individuals.

Abuse is "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights.

"Abuse is the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. Abuse may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, including those who are usually physically and/or emotionally close to the individual and on whom the individual may depend and trust. This may include, but is not limited to, a partner, relative or other family member, a person entrusted to act on behalf of the adult in some aspect of their affairs, a service or care provider, a neighbour, a health or social care worker or professional, an employer, a volunteer or another service user. It may also be perpetrated by those who have no previous connection to the victim."

Statutory authorities in Northern Ireland refers to local Trust areas and PSNI.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI or ‘the denomination’) is part of the universal Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, He is the King and Head of the Church. It consists of congregations of persons who are associated for the administration and observance of ordinances according to the Bible, under a common government. It was established in 1840 with the coming together at that time of different strands of Presbyterianism, and has congregations across the island of Ireland.

The Minister, also known as teaching Elder, exercises oversight of the church in conjunction with the ruling Elders. The special calling of the Minister is the ministry of the Word, in public and in private, the conduct of public worship, the administration of the sacraments, the instruction of the young and the pastoral care of souls. The Minister’s calling is exercised in the service of others. The Minister is not an employee, but a remunerated, called office-holder in the Church.

The Presbytery is primarily responsible for corporate oversight of the congregations and causes assigned to it by the General Assembly, and of the Ministers and Elders connected with it, and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom generally within the geographical area for which it is responsible. The Presbytery shall observe the laws and directions of the Assembly and, so far as lies within its powers, ensure that those subject to its jurisdiction and within its fellowship do likewise. There are 19 presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Elders, also known as ruling Elders, acting together as the Kirk Session, work together with the Minister (teaching Elder) in the oversight and government of the congregation, for the upbuilding of God’s people in spiritual fruitfulness and holy concord, and for the extension of Christ’s kingdom among all people.

The Clerk of Presbytery is appointed by the Presbytery from among the Ministers or ruling Elders under its jurisdiction, and is responsible for the administration of the Presbytery, especially the recording of minutes of the meetings of Presbytery – in a minute book kept by the Presbytery for that purpose – and for the safe custody of the minute books of the Presbytery and its other records.

The Clerk of the General Assembly is appointed by the General Assembly as one of its officers. The Clerk of Assembly is responsible for the administration of the Assembly, especially the recording of minutes of the meetings of the Assembly. The Clerk of Assembly also acts as General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The Moderator of Presbytery is a Minister who is a member of the Presbytery, and presides over the meetings of Presbytery as first among equals. The Moderator normally serves for one year.

The Kirk Session is the name given to the body of Elders [teaching and ruling] who together oversee and govern a congregation in its Christian calling. The Elders [teaching and ruling] are the charity trustees of the congregation. Each Kirk Session is under the immediate jurisdiction of the Presbytery.

GLOSSARY END