



Hope Church Network Serious Incident Reporting Policy

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Statement

Hope Church Network is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for its beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, congregation and visitors. This Serious Incident Reporting Policy is designed to ensure that any serious incidents affecting the charity's operations, reputation, or the well-being of individuals are promptly and effectively reported, investigated, and managed in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

The policy operates using the biblical principle found in Matthew 22:39

“Love your neighbour as yourself”

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, congregations and visitors of Hope Church Network.

Definition of Serious Incidents

Serious incidents are defined as any adverse event committed by the charity that causes or has the potential to cause significant harm to individuals, damage to property, loss of funds, or harm to the charity's reputation.

For the purposes of this guidance, “significant” means significant in the context of the charity, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.

Categories of Serious Incidents

The main categories of reportable incidents are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering
- large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using the charity's funds
- other significant financial loss
- links to terrorism or extremism, including ‘proscribed’ (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze, or kidnapping of staff
- other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches/losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect the charity.

It is the responsibility of the charity trustees to decide whether an incident is significant and should be reported to the Charity Commission.

Reporting Procedure

Immediate Action

In the event of a serious incident, the primary concern is to ensure the safety and well-being of people or persons involved in the incident.

If the incident involves potential harm to a person, immediate assistance should be sought and emergency services contacted if necessary.

If the incident involves serious injury or death, financial irregularities, fraud or criminal activity, contact the appropriate authorities such as the police, regulatory bodies or relevant agencies. A list of agencies is contained within [Appendix 1](#).

Internal reporting

Trustees, Staff, volunteers, congregations, visitors or contractors must report any serious incidents promptly to the designated person for serious incident reporting or designated Safeguarding coordinator.

The designated person responsible for serious incident reporting is Stuart Lowe. The deputy designated person responsible for serious incident reporting is Steve Read.

The designated person responsible for safeguarding concerns is Kerrie Elsom. The deputy designated people responsible for safeguarding concerns reporting are Gemma Moore (Petersfield) and Clare Shaw (Greatham). The safeguarding coordinator will process the incident in line with the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Booklet.

Completion of Incident Form

A Serious Incident Report Form must be completed as soon as possible following the discovery or occurrence of a serious incident. There is a designated form for Safeguarding incidents.

The [form](#) is located on ChurchSuite

The form requires details such as the date, time, location of incident, the individuals involved, a description of the incident and any immediate actions taken.

Internal investigation

Upon receiving the report, the designated person will initiate an internal investigation, ensuring confidentiality and impartiality.

The investigation will identify the root cause, assess the impact and propose remedial actions.

External reporting

If required by law or regulation, Hope Church Network will report the serious incident to the appropriate external authorities, such as, the Charity Commission, police, HSE or the Information Commissioner's Office. A list of agencies is contained within [Appendix 1](#).

The Charity Commission has extended guidance regarding [serious incident reporting](#).

Report a serious incident to the Charity Commission [here](#).

Record keeping

All incidents and outcomes will be recorded on the charity's Serious Incident register and will be held for three years.

Review and Improvement

This policy will be reviewed every three years and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Related policies

- Protecting from Spiritual Abuse
- Safeguarding booklet
- Financial Management policy
- H&S policy

Appendix 1 – Relevant agencies who must be notified of an incident

If a reportable incident involves actual or alleged criminal activity, serious injury or death, then you must also report it to the relevant agencies:

- **safeguarding incidents:** report allegations or incidents of abuse or mistreatment of people who come into contact with the charity through its work to:
 - the police and obtain a crime reference number (call 101 or make a report at a local police station), and
 - the local authority and other relevant agencies,
- **fraud and cyber-crime:** report allegations or incidents of fraud and cyber-crime to [Action Fraud](#) via its online reporting tool, ensuring a crime reference number is obtained and making clear that the reporter is representing a charity.
- **theft:** report allegations or incidents of theft to the police (call 101 or make a report at a local police station) and obtain a crime reference number
- **links to terrorism and extremism:** report links or alleged links to terrorism and extremism to the police and obtain a crime reference number. If this is not done immediately, the charity may be committing a criminal offence under Section 19 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Incidents can be reported to the police in the following ways:
 - via the [National Crime Agency website](#)
 - call the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
 - call 101 or report it at a local police station
- **criminal activity overseas:** report any actual or alleged criminal activity that takes place overseas to local law enforcement authorities and/or safeguarding organisations in the location where this occurred. There may also be circumstances where it is necessary to report this to UK authorities. For further guidance on this, see the Charity Commission's guidance on criminal reporting.
- **Health and Safety Executive:** report certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. Further information on what we need to do in these circumstances is provided at: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm.