

## DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING OFFICER STANDARDS

### Introduction

These standards are intended to work in parallel with the standards developed for District Safeguarding Groups. These standards have been developed to ensure that there is consistency of approach to the provision of safeguarding arrangements and activity across all Districts within the Connexion.

The district safeguarding officer (*hereafter referred to as DSO*) works closely with the District Chair and the District Safeguarding Group in providing leadership for good safeguarding practice throughout the churches and circuits within the District. This is achieved by:

- supporting development of, and compliance with, the policies and guidance of the Methodist Church;
- advice and consultation in relation to safeguarding matters;
- effective and safe responses to safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse;
- the development and delivery of effective safeguarding training and other learning opportunities;
- supporting churches to manage those who may pose a risk to others to continue to engage positively with the church within the policy mandated Safeguarding Contract process; and,
- the management of offenders within churches.

#### **Standard 1 - Policy and Procedural Oversight and Compliance**

The DSO oversees church, circuit and District compliance with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and ensures that good practice in relation to safeguarding across Districts is consistently promoted.

##### **There is evidence that:**

- The DSO undertakes audits of safeguarding arrangements and activity across the District and reviews compliance with Methodist Church policy.
- The DSO supports circuits in the development of action plans in response to audit outcomes.
- The DSO reports to DSG/District Council/Synod as and when required and appropriate.

#### **Standard 2 – Provision of advice and Consultation to Churches and Circuit Personnel**

The DSO is accessible and available for consultation by churches in relation to all safeguarding issues, and provides timely and appropriate advice in relation to situations of concern, which is consistent with Connexional Safeguarding Policy and Practice and relevant government guidance and legislation

##### **There is evidence that:**

- There is clarity about the DSO's contact details and availability.

- The DSO engages regularly and shares information with church and circuit safeguarding officers, superintendent ministers, presbyters and deacons and other relevant stakeholders e.g. changes to policy or guidance via emails, newsletter, website.
- The DSO develops and maintains effective relationships and networks with and partners in external agencies ensuring referrals to statutory agencies are timely.

### **Standard 3 - Casework Management**

The DSO will manage individual cases in the District

#### **There is evidence that:**

- There is a prompt and respectful response to all concerns about abuse
- The DSO maintains records of contact and information sharing as required and appropriate e.g. meetings with external agencies, DBS blemishes, risk assessments, safeguarding contracts, supervision records.
- Promote a culture of respect and inclusivity, where diversity is valued such that children and adults are listened to and safeguarding is taken seriously.
- Safeguarding contracts, compliance with safeguarding contracts, monitoring and support arrangements, and other situations of concerns are regularly reviewed.
- Opportunities are taken to help churches to understand the experiences of survivors and consider how they are made welcome and supported.

### **Standard 4 - Learning and Development**

The DSO is supportive of and actively promotes the provision of safeguarding training, learning and development and good practice initiatives across the District.

#### **There is evidence that:**

- There is record of training events that are planned or have taken place including number of sessions planned, number of attendees, response to issues identified in feedback.
- Circuits are encouraged and supported to keep up to date records of safeguarding training attendance, which are reported to the DSG and District Council.
- The DSO facilitates the provision of bespoke learning and development opportunities for circuits and districts in liaison with colleagues from the Learning Network.

### **Standard 5 - Safer Recruitment Practice**

The DSO promotes the adoption of safer recruitment procedures within the District.

#### **There is evidence that:**

- Data relating to DBS certificates is maintained and is accurate and up to date.
- The processes for safer recruitment for all roles (paid and voluntary) are adhered to in line with Methodist Church policy.
- The DSO reviews any safeguarding concerns that arise from the recruitment of a volunteer or paid member of staff, e.g. a disclosure on a Safeguarding Declaration Form and/or a blemished DBS checks.

### **Standard 6 - Safe Working Practices**

The District Safeguarding Officer promotes safer working practices within churches and circuits in accordance with the good practice guidance set out in the Connexional Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance so that events and activities are subject to appropriate risk assessments and delivered safely.

#### **There is evidence that:**

- Awareness of the need to have local and specific risk assessments in respect of church events and activities, including specific risk assessments for some ad-hoc activities such as holiday clubs, all off-site events e.g. residential activities site.
- Post-event reviews to identify any lessons learned and good practice is disseminated and celebrated.
- The DSO reviews risk assessments and provide advice where it is necessary and appropriate.

### **Standard 7 – Recording**

The DSO is responsible for ensuring robust record storage and data management systems are in place.

#### **There is evidence that:**

- The DSO undertakes data gathering to enable the Connexional record system to be accurate and up to date.
- District safeguarding records are well maintained, up to date and are compliant with record- keeping standards in accordance with GDPR and TMCP guidelines.
- All safeguarding information is held and stored securely e.g. paper and electronic records, security and encryption provision on laptops.

### **Standard 8 - Personal Development and Support**

Along with the District Chair and the Connexional Safeguarding team, the DSO has responsibility for ensuring their continuing personal and learning development needs are met.

Reflective supervision is provided to allow the DSO space for evaluation and analysis of casework activity.

#### **There is evidence that:**

- There is a learning and development plan in place, which includes mandatory training, induction packages and an individual development plan.
- The DSO keeps abreast of developments in government guidance and legislation as well as national Church policy and procedure.
- The DSO attends regular line management meetings with the District Chair and is prepared to fully engage in casework supervision and access external supervision if required.