

District Safeguarding Policy



2024 - 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children and adults is everyone’s responsibility. The Methodist Church is required to have local policies and procedures, adhere to statutory local authority safeguarding policies and ensure that ministers and office holders receive safeguarding training.

1.0 STATEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

The South West Peninsula District recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible.

The South West Peninsula District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and ‘adults at risk’, and those adults who may be considered vulnerable under the Methodist Church definition. And recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional (including spiritual abuse including the use of social media), sexual, financial, discriminatory, domestic abuse and violence (including stalking, harassment, honour based violence and forced marriage), organisational abuse (previously known as institutional abuse), neglect, human trafficking (modern slavery) and radicalisation (Prevent).

The District acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and faith development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities, and those who care about them.

Our church communities aim to be safe and welcoming places for all. The District strives to create places and spaces where all are safe and protected from abuse, and all can live life to the full.

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is about the action the District takes to promote a safer culture. We affirm that safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play.

In its commitment to safeguarding the Methodist Church acknowledges the value of every person, and that we all have a duty to treat every individual with respect and dignity and protect all children and adults from harm.

This means we will:

1. **Promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults who are vulnerable.
2. Work to **prevent** abuse from occurring.
3. Seek to **protect** and respond well to those that have been abused.
4. Take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risk through a risk
5. Do all in our power to improve our systems to protect children, young people and adults from abuse within the life of the Church and on Church premises, and to review them diligently on a regular basis.

2.0 **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure that procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and adults who are vulnerable in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance ¹. This policy takes account of the statutory requirement to follow statutory Local Authority safeguarding policies for relevant safeguarding concerns for adults and children. ²

¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

² https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall_scilly/index.html
<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-care-services/safeguarding-adults/>
<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/fvbknt32/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf>

The full implementation of these policies should ensure that:

1. The Church (and all associated activities) is a safer place for everyone.
2. Communities we serve have confidence that children and 'adults at risk' and those adults who may be considered vulnerable under the methodist church definition, are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life of the Church.
3. People in the church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them.
4. Office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.
5. People who have experienced abuse are accepted, empowered and supported in maintaining control over their lives and making informed choices without coercion.
6. People who abuse are held accountable to the law and the risk they pose is managed while they are supported and challenged to address their motivations and behaviour.
7. Safeguarding concerns about Office holders / Ministers will be referred to the statutory local authority safeguarding polices for managing allegations and people who hold a position of trust³
8. Follow General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as required for personal data related to safeguarding, those impacted by abuse and people of concern.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all Circuits, Churches, Ministers, Local Preachers, Employees and all Office Holders within the District.

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from their creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians have a duty to value, understand and respect the rights of children and adults as people of faith in the life of the church.

³ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/zsuadgqe/allegations-against-people-in-positions-of-trust-april2017.pdf>

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=d4f17e8f31421156JmltdHM9MTY2NjY1NjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0yMTUyZmQ0NS1kOGZlTY1Y2MtMGUxMS1lZGFhZDk4NDY0NjcmaW5zaWQ9NTE5NA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=2152fd45-d8fb-65cc-0e11-edaad9846467&psq=Cornwall+child+safeguarding+policy+managing+allegations+position+of+trust&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY29ybndhbGwuZ292LnVrL2xhZG8&ntb=1>

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<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=60232c876d884736JmltdHM9MTY2NjY1NjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0yMTUyZmQ0NS1kOGZlTY1Y2MtMGUxMS1lZGFhZDk4NDY0NjcmaW5zaWQ9NTE4Nw&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=2152fd45-d8fb-65cc-0e11-edaad9846467&psq=working+together+to+safeguard+children+2021&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ292LnVrL2dvdMvYybm1lbnQvcHViGjIyXzRpb25zL3dvcmtpbmctdG9nZXRoZXltdG8tc2FmZWd1YXJkLWNoaWxkcmVulS0y&ntb=1>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-act-factsheets>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-and-support-statutory-guidance-changes-in-march-2016>

The South West Peninsula District is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and firmly believes that the needs of children or of adults when they are vulnerable are paramount.

The South West Peninsula District will ensure safeguarding is an integral part of the life and ministry of the church. Working within the principles of the Connexions Policy for Safeguarding the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015⁴ and the Care Act 2014, care and support statutory guidance, 2016⁵.

In accordance with the Connexions policy the District is committed to:

1. Promoting a Safer Environment and culture.
2. Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church
3. Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
4. Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
5. Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
6. Responding to those that may present a risk to others

Promote a safer environment and culture

The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is the responsibility of everyone within a church community. The church community, including all its members, must be alert to risks and dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action as and when necessary.

The child's welfare is the paramount consideration in matters of private and public law. The District will apply this principle in all areas of its work undertaken with children. Where a conflict of interest occurs between the welfare of children and that of adults, it is the welfare of children that will be the clear priority⁶.

Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church

The District is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all Church officers (ministers, volunteers and employees) and accepts and follows the Methodist Safer Recruitment Policy⁷. A key element of safer recruitment practice includes effective use of references and role outlines/descriptions as well as use of the Disclosure and Barring Service when required. The suitability of an individual, whether paid or volunteer, to work with children or adults at risk is never solely dependent on the outcome of a DBS check.

⁶ S.1 Children Act 1989

⁷ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-including-dbspvg-ddc-forms-policy-and-guidance-documents/safer-recruitment-policy-and-practice-guidance/>

Those who work with children and/or adults, and those who supervise those workers as well as those in positions as trustees who are eligible for a DBS check will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role whether employed or voluntary as well as the complete Safer Recruitment process.

Those who are working in a role that is not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited in line with Safer Recruitment practice including the use of applications forms, references and interview where applicable.

Suitable induction, training and supervision will be provided to all those working with children and vulnerable adults.

Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation and work with the statutory authorities as necessary

The District accepts that it has responsibilities, through its workers, to take all reasonable steps to safeguard children and adults at risk when on church grounds, taking part in church led activities off site and when traveling between sites when organised by the Church. The District cannot be responsible for incidents or concerns arising outside of church or church led activities but will, nevertheless, endeavour to provide appropriate advice and to refer any concern raised to the appropriate authorities in order to ensure that the community as a whole is safeguarded appropriately.

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church / District, will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the required threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the DSO to the appropriate statutory authority. The District and all church officers therein will fully co-operate with the statutory authorities in all circumstances.

Where allegations of abuse concern church officers the District will always act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil constitutional practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church. Respecting and upholding the rights and safeguards within the law as they apply to both individuals who are victims/ survivors of abuse and individuals who are subject of concerns or allegations relating to abuse.

The District will only investigate allegations of harm or abuse of an adult at risk or an adult who is vulnerable where a statutory authority requests that this action is undertaken

The District does not (and should not) investigate current allegations of

abuse or harm of children itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory authorities for investigation in line with multi agency safeguarding children procedures. The District may complete internal investigations once statutory authorities have completed their own investigations.

The District will only investigate allegations of harm or abuse of an adult at risk of an adult who is vulnerable where a statutory authority requests that this action is undertaken or where the allegation does not meet the criteria for a referral to police or Local Authority. The District may make inquiries to gather information in order to be able to provide accurate information to the relevant statutory authorities or assess risk.

If it comes to the attention of the District that a child has experienced abuse in the past that information will always be passed to the statutory authorities. If it comes to the attention of the District that an adult has experienced abuse in their past, the adult's wishes will be taken into consideration and that adult encouraged to report the matter to the statutory authorities. Where there is a reasonable belief that others may be at risk of harm the District will refer the matter to the statutory authorities within the guidance provided by GDPR.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

The District is aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church, as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse. Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children (under 18) by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as well as other statutory bodies as appropriate, and investigated in accordance with his/her advice.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to adults (18 and over) by church officers will be referred to the police and/or Local Authority where appropriate and investigated in accordance with their advice. Where appropriate allegations of this nature will be managed according to the Methodist Church Polices and or the appropriate disciplinary and or complaint procedures.

Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons;

The District will always endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, where it occurred or by whom it was perpetrated. The District, in conjunction with the Church as a whole is committed to continuing to learn how best to respond in a supportive, sensitive and healing way to needs to those who have suffered and experienced abuse. Anyone who has suffered and experienced abuse within the church will be listened to, taken seriously and treated with compassion. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support – according to the agreed need. Disclosures of abuse will be responded to effectively and in accordance with Safeguarding Policy.

For other affected parties (Family, congregation etc.) an appropriate pastoral response will be considered, with due regard to the right to privacy of all directly involved and the administration of justice.

Care for those who are subject to concerns or allegations.

Where it comes to the attention of the District or one of its Circuits, that an individual is subject of an allegation of abuse or there are concerns regarding their suitability to work with children or adults at risk of abuse, the District will respect their rights under criminal, civil and constitutional practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

There will remain a legal presumption of innocence during the statutory or internal processes. Those who are the subject of allegations or concerns may be asked to voluntarily step down or in some circumstances, suspended, from their role whilst the necessary inquiries and investigations are completed by statutory authorities or the District/Connexion.

Additional assessment, therapeutic support and pastoral support services will be offered. Where there are concerns regarding an individual who is considered to pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults the District will take the necessary steps to protect others. This may be done by working to mitigate any identified risks through the implementation of a safeguarding contract.

Individuals who are subject of concerns or allegations of abuse also belong to a family, congregation and wider church community. The District will remain mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, circuits and congregations who are also affected by an allegation against an individual.

Responding to those that may present a risk to others.

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, or anyone who seeks to become a member of a church community who may present a risk of harm to others due to:

- having a conviction or caution for offences against children or vulnerable adults
- who has been barred or prohibited in some way from working with children or adults.
- Is considered to present a risk to either group but the outcome of an investigation is yet unknown
- Is considered to present a risk because of information received

We will respond to those who may pose a safeguarding risk to other people and support the investigation / risk assessment procedures of the Methodist Church. We will apply the restrictions to appointment laid down in Standing Orders, as required.

Where an individual comes to the attention of the District we will implement a safeguarding contract, where it is safe to do so and where required, in line with advice from the local Statutory Agencies. Any agreement will contain safeguards for the individual and children and/or adults at risk and the District.

The District will work with statutory authorities where appropriate to ensure adequate risk assessment and management of any contract are consistently implemented supported by a Monitoring Support Group (MSG)

Legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

This policy and all following procedures and guidance will be regularly reviewed and updated in order to reflect current legislation, guidance and best practice.

The District is committed to positive information sharing practice including appropriate seeking of consent to share, confidentiality, sharing of information internally and with statutory bodies.

The District also undertakes to retain, store and destroy records in line with current best practice.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Charity Trustees for The South West Peninsula District

The responsibility for implementation of safeguarding policy lies with the District Trustees. It is the relevant trustee body and the Chair of District, who are responsible for ensuring:

1. All workers with children, young people and adults for District events and projects are safely recruited, appointed by the District Trustees and supported in and trained for their roles.
2. All allegations are responded to immediately and according to the procedures of the Methodist Church, including referral to the statutory authorities where necessary.
3. Standing Orders and the Methodist Church *Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures (Nov 2021)* are implemented by completing the required DBS checks⁸.
4. Standing Orders and the Methodist *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance (Feb 2022)* are implemented when somebody is being considered

⁸ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

for an appointment to a role or responsibility (or is already holding such a position) to which Standing Order 010(3) applies. This includes where the person has a conviction or caution for an offence under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) or an offence mentioned in Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) or the person has been subject to risk assessment under Standing Order 237 and as a result, the Safeguarding Committee deem that they present a significant risk of serious harm to children or adults who are vulnerable.

5. Good practice is followed, and pastoral care provided in all instances of child or adult abuse and trauma. This includes pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children.
6. A Serious Incident Report is made to the Charity Commission (in England and Wales) if serious safeguarding concerns arise as part of the District's work (this should always occur in those cases involving possible reputational or financial risks)
7. Relevant statutory polices for managing allegations and person in position of trust polices are followed where there are safeguarding concerns/allegations against ministers and office holders and others.
8. The relevant insurance company is notified in respect of serious safeguarding concerns.
9. The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice is notified where a report has been made to the Charity Commission or the relevant insurance company.
10. Trustees must seek the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer for all safeguarding concerns.
11. To audit the implementation of the policy and practice by speaking with the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO), the DSG and the Chair of District and a sample of Circuits annually and will report to the March meeting of DISTRICT Policy Committee (DPC).
12. To make recommendations about the District Safeguarding Policy based on the audit.
13. To audit the implementation of the Connexional Standards & Criteria for DSGs (Annex 2)

District Chair

The District Chair provides leadership and accountability within the district, including for safeguarding and within this, in consultation with the DSO and DSG, and through the DSO, the District Chair will:

1. Appoint an independent chair for the DSG.
2. Attend the DSG meetings or ensure a representative is present at all meetings.
3. Support Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policy.
4. Ensure Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding through appropriate training, and the inclusion of the DSO in Superintendents' meetings as appropriate and at least annually.
5. Ensure Superintendent supervision includes a record of discussion about safeguarding, update on safeguarding training – date last course, date of renewal.
6. Support the work of the DSO, provide objective support for any complex cases i.e., allegations against ministers and office holders requiring use of other policies and procedures in addition to safeguarding policy.
7. Ensure arrangements are in place for the provision of a prompt response to all safeguarding concerns/incidents/allegations in accordance with good practice.
8. Work in consultation with the DSO, the DSG and the Connexional Safeguarding Team when responding to any safeguarding concerns/incidents/allegations.
9. Ensure the District Safeguarding Policy is implemented at District Meetings and events and that safeguarding is an item on the agenda of the District Policy Committee (DPC) at least three times a year.
10. Ensure the Safer Recruitment Policy is followed for all District appointments.
11. Ensure that the District website and all social media comply with safeguarding guidance about electronic communication and the use of photographs and videos.
12. Ensure Superintendents are aware of and maintain the Single Central Record detailing training, DBS, and role profiles records.
13. The District Chair (or their deputy) is an ex officio member of the DSG and will attend all meetings of the DSG.
14. The District Chair supports the activity of the DSG, in line with the Terms of Reference for the group.

District Safeguarding Group (DSG)

Alongside the DSO, the DSG will:

1. Hold planned meetings with agenda and minute taker.
2. Appoint an independent chair with relevant professional safeguarding background.
3. DSG membership should be made up of a balance of professionals with safeguarding background and those with links to the Methodist Church that are aware of the pastoral mission of the church and its processes.
4. DSG will cover both child and adult safeguarding.
5. DSG members will be expected to undertake safeguarding training
6. Ensure that the victims/survivors voice is heard.
7. DSG should include a trustee of the District among its membership and that trustee provided a link between the two
8. DSG supports the DSO to report annually or as required to **Synod/DPC**
9. Give a strategic direction to the safeguarding work of the District.
10. Annually review its work as through use of the Connexional Standards and Criteria for DSGs (Annex 2).
11. Respond to requests for help, advice, information and training.
12. Provide support and guidance to the DSO, including confidential advice and discussion on complex cases.
13. Ensure good practice is followed and that all incidents/concerns/allegations are followed up as appropriate.
14. Support and seek assurance of the implementation of Safeguarding Policy in the churches, Circuits and District via the annual safeguarding audits, Safeguarding case scrutiny group, review of charity serious incident forms.
15. Attend and promote a regular programme of Creating Safer Space Advanced Module Training and initiate programmes of awareness and good practice as the need arises.
16. Ensure that the District Chair, DPC and Superintendents are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
17. Organise at least one meeting annually with circuit safeguarding officers.

18. Organise a District Safeguarding Conference annually.
19. Implement a subgroup of the DSG for safeguarding case scrutiny to facilitate learning and sharing of good practice
20. Offer independent scrutiny and act as a critical friend providing challenge where necessary.

District Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Direct contact information for DSO's -

Ms Chrissie Slaney

Email – chrissie.slaney@swpmethodist.org.uk

Mobile - 07794133797

Mr David Cross

Email - david.cross@swpmethodist.org.uk

Mob – 07925353553

In order to support all office holders and the work of the Churches, Circuits and District, the DSO will:

1. Provide a first point of contact for safeguarding issues – all safeguarding concerns, queries, and incidents **MUST BE REPORTED to the DSO**;
2. Conduct appropriate safeguarding enquiries/investigations into raised concerns or support the circuits/churches. Ensure standard 6 of DSO Standards is followed in all cases where allegations require reporting to other agencies including and not limited to the LADO/PIPOT, police and local authority. The DSO should take the lead in these enquiries including the gathering of information from person raising or reporting concern and subsequent risk assessments.
3. Through administrative support ensure the Single Central Record is maintained, and that appropriate safeguarding records are maintained through the use of MY Concern or another means.
4. Seek advice as appropriate and respond to every issue reported according to good practice guidance, working with statutory authorities as necessary; liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as

necessary

5. Where required take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Churches/District in multi-agency meetings with external organisations.
6. Relevant statutory polices for managing allegations and person in position of trust polices are followed where there are safeguarding concerns/allegations against individuals.
7. Undertake Investigations / Enquiries or Safeguarding Risk Assessments as directed by the District and Connexion. Support churches and Circuits on implementing procedures/risk assessments for those who may pose a safeguarding risk of harm, and were required engage with Connexion Safeguarding Advisory panel.
8. Manage/review any notified DBS blemish across the district.
9. Oversee all situations of concern, including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts and the training and support of all Monitoring and Support Groups (MSG) within the District.
10. Carry out annual reviews of those subject to safeguarding contract or sooner if there is a change in circumstances
11. Receive regular casework supervision by the Connexional Casework Supervisor.
12. The DSO is an ex officio member of the DSG and attends meetings to report on safeguarding activity
13. Work alongside the Chair of District and the District Safeguarding Group to support the implementation of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy and the South West Peninsula District Safeguarding Policy the Connexional Standards and Criteria for DSO's (Annex 1) and DSGs (Annex 2) and other relevant policies.
14. Ensure the Chair, Superintendents and DPC are updated on changes to safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance.
15. Carry out an annual safeguarding review/audit
16. Report annually to Synod and DPC either direct or through the DSG. This report will include details of the annual safeguarding review of the District.
17. Work collaboratively with safeguarding professionals and ecumenical safeguarding partners to ensure safer Churches/Circuits/District.

18. Advise churches and Circuits on pastoral care for victims and survivors of abuse.
19. Check appropriate pastoral care is in place for those subject to concerns or allegations.
20. Work with the Learning Network in order to provide advanced creating safer space safeguarding training across the District.
21. Support the District in other Safeguarding training that is required such as Foundation Training in Creating Safer Space, Train the Trainers, Domestic Abuse and MSG training.
22. Assist the District in the implementation of safe recruitment including DBS applications, this will include carrying out enquiries linked to DBS Blemish as directed by the Connexion.
23. Engage in continued personal development in order to maintain professional standards and be well informed in the changes in legislation.

Superintendent Ministers

In order to support the implementation of safeguarding policy in the Circuits and churches, and in accordance with the District Safeguarding Policy, Superintendent Ministers will;

1. Ensure that the Circuit has a Safeguarding Policy.
2. Ensure role profiles are in place and have been circulated to role holders
3. Ensure each Circuit has a written protocol for DBS checks that are carried out across their Circuit. In practice Superintendents will verify their circuit ministers' DBS checks and it is for circuits to determine who will verify DBS checks for all lay staff, local preachers, and others within the Circuit. Advice can be found on the District Website⁹
4. Ensure Safeguarding Training requirements for all within the Circuit (Annex 3 and Annex 4) is provided and maintained.
5. Support colleagues, the Circuit Meeting, the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, and all office holders in good safeguarding practice including safer recruitment in the churches and Circuits and consult with the DSO.
6. Support the DSO in the case scrutiny DSG sub-group, providing information / attending meetings when required.

⁹ SWPMethodist.org.uk

7. Ensure safeguarding is a regular part of the conversation at Circuit staff meetings.
8. Ensure **ALL** safeguarding allegations/concerns/incidents, which come to their attention, are reported to the DSO and advice from the DSO is followed.
9. Work with the DSO and colleagues to care pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse.
10. Support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer by conducting an annual review confirming safeguarding policies in the Circuit and churches are implemented and reviewed annually.
11. Ensure Circuit projects, events and activities are planned according to safeguarding best practice.
12. Engage with the District annual safeguarding review/audit.
13. Ensure that the Circuit maintains their section of the Single Central Record.

Ministers and those in pastoral charge

In order to implement safeguarding policy in the churches, and in accordance with the District Safeguarding Policy, ministers and those in pastoral charge will -

1. Undertake safeguarding training as required
2. Support the Church Safeguarding Officer, office holders and Church Council in good safeguarding practice in the churches and consult with the DSO as necessary.
3. Along with the Superintendent, ensure that all safeguarding allegations/concerns/incidents, which come to their notice, are reported to the DSO and that advice from the DSO is followed.
4. In consultation with the DSO, care pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse.
5. Ensure safeguarding policies and their effective implementation are reviewed annually.
6. Ensure all work carried out in the name of the church implements safeguarding best policy and practice, including safer recruitment.

Circuit Safeguarding Officer

This role includes but is not limited to -

1. Support and advice to the circuit superintendent and the circuit stewards regarding safeguarding matters.
2. With the support of the circuit superintendent, prompt recording and reporting of any safeguarding concerns of which they are made aware. This will include appropriate referral to statutory agencies and DSOs, as required by Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
3. Making appropriate arrangements for the secure storage, retention and appropriate sharing of safeguarding information held by the circuit.
4. Ensure that safeguarding is a standing item on the Circuit Meeting agenda and where appropriate report significant events (noting the need for confidentiality regarding specific cases) to the Circuit Meetings.
5. Attending the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.
6. Liaising with individual church safeguarding officers to offer guidance and check they are complying with Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance. This should include at least one annual meeting.
7. Working with the superintendent minister, ministers and the DSO regarding safeguarding concerns.
8. Reviewing safeguarding policies for each church in the circuit prior to presentation to the Circuit Meeting.
9. Supporting the circuit superintendent with the annual review of the circuit safeguarding policy and sending a copy to the DSO.
10. Under the direction of the Superintendent, ensure the Single Central Record is maintained of all people within the Circuit who have completed (and not limited to) safeguarding training (Foundation and Advanced), hold a DBS or a role profile.
11. Ensuring that training is offered to those working with children and vulnerable adults, holding an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in Appendix III of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
12. Assisting the DSO with setting up Monitoring and Support Groups for those subject to safeguarding contracts and reminding the chairs of groups when reviews are due.

Where a circuit safeguarding officer carries out the above activities, there is a requirement for supervisory oversight, which will be arranged by the superintendent minister and carried out by them or a nominated substitute. Records of oversight meetings will be signed and agreed. Supervision will include consideration of wellbeing and discussions of the areas of activity included within the role on a regular basis.

Church Safeguarding Officer

This role includes but is not limited to –

1. Provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
2. Ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.
3. Record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
4. Promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
5. Identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training and updating the Singel central Record.
6. Work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
7. Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings.
8. Inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.
9. Advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.

There is no requirement to have two church safeguarding officers one individual may agree to undertake safeguarding of both adults and children

5.0 KEY CONCEPTS / DEFINITIONS

The purpose of this document is to attempt to clarify what constitutes a safeguarding case for the purpose of the District.

The definition of vulnerability the church uses is wider than the statutory definition, and the everyday use of the word “safeguarding” can encompass a wide range of wellbeing issues, that do not always fall within the remit of the District Safeguarding Officer and may be better addressed by others. And it is also important that we don't use safeguarding to deal with conduct issues that may fall under the Methodist Church Constitutional Practice and Discipline.

The District Safeguarding Team has limited resources, so it is important that their caseload is prioritised, so that resources can be allocated based on risk. And it is hoped that this section of policy will provide some clear guidance on what constitutes a Safeguarding Case and needs to involve the District Safeguarding Team.

Initial Assessment

In an ideal world the use of the referral form, which can be accessed on the District Website, is the route that referrals and advice can be sought from the DSO, or used by Circuits and Churches to record and maintain records of safeguarding concerns. But it is important Churches and Circuits feel free to call and seek advice and that will continue with the DSO performing a triage, to decide if it is a safeguarding case and if it meets the threshold for referral to statutory services or that further information is needed to make a decision.

Safeguarding Vulnerability Definitions

Children

All children, under 18, are considered to be vulnerable. Any allegation of abuse or neglect of a child should be referred to the District Safeguarding Team.

Adults - Care Act Definition

Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 (14.2) by the Department of Health uses the term 'adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect' to assess eligibility to statutory social care services.

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Any allegation of abuse or neglect of an "adult at risk" should be referred to the District Safeguarding Team.

Adults - Church Definition

While the term "vulnerable adult" is not used in the statutory sector since the introduction of the Care Act 2014, the Methodist Church continues to use the term in recognition that any person can be vulnerable and therefore in need of support at any time, accepting the following –

Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some way and at certain times, some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others.

Some of the factors which increase vulnerability are:

- a sensory or physical disability or impairment or a learning disability
- a physical illness
- mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties in old age
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

It is important to remember that:

- vulnerability is often not a permanent state

- vulnerability is not always visible
- a person with apparently visible vulnerabilities may not perceive themselves as such
- anyone can be vulnerable at different stages of life
- vulnerable people may also pose risk and cause harm.

As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection, it is important to recognise that the factors such as physical impairment or emotional distress, of themselves, do not mean that a person is vulnerable to abuse or neglect. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

In cases where the adult is not “at risk” under the statutory definition but maybe considered “vulnerable” under the Methodist Church definition it will be necessary to consider whether their ability to protect themselves is “significantly impaired”.

The Safeguarding Team will be able to help with this assessment.

The types of abuse are:

Physical abuse

- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
 - Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Any concern about an adult, whose ability to protect themselves is significantly impaired, being abused should be referred to the District Safeguarding Team.

Dated**25th September 2024**.....

Signed  District Chair

Date for Review**25th September 2025**.....