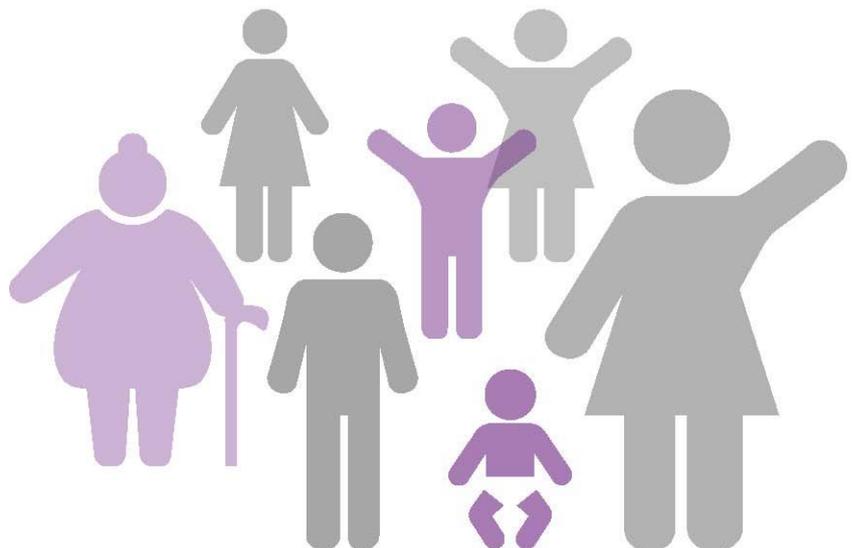




Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain



Policy Review

| Last Review Date | Type of Review | Approved by | Next Review Date |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| April 2019 | Full Policy | Methodist Council | |
| July 2020 | Minor Amendments | Safeguarding Committee | Safeguarding Committee January 2021 |

In this edition, ***text in bold and italic*** differs from that of the previous edition (April 2019) and ***[...]*** indicates a deletion.

Context of Changes

1. Following update of the Creating Safer Spaces: Foundation Module references throughout the policy and procedures have been updated to reflect the issue date of material.
2. A new reporting process for serious incidents has been agreed with the Charity Commission.

Table of Amendments

| Page Number | Section | Update |
|-------------|---------|--|
| 21 | 3.1 | Clarification on minister in pastoral charge holding safeguarding role and shared safeguarding roles |
| 24 | 3.4 | Update to reflect inclusion of barred lists in Standing Order 010 (Conference 2020) |
| 29 | 4.1.2 | Additional considerations in emergency situations |
| 29 | 4.1.3 | Additional considerations of risk relating to those undertaking safeguarding work. |
| 30 | 4.1.4.1 | Clarification about referral prior to all relevant information becoming available |
| 33 | 4.1.4.3 | Inclusion of previous flow chart for vulnerable adult reporting with new links |
| 34 | 4.1.4.6 | New format for areas for consideration by the DSO on receipt of a concern or allegation |
| 35 | 4.1.4.7 | Further clarity about cases which are required to be reported to the Connexional Safeguarding Team and data that may be requested. |
| 39 | 4.4 | Additional information relevant to risk of contact with other parties, relevant to modern slavery. |
| 40 | 4.4.1 | Additional information reflecting modern slavery |
| 41 | 4.5.1.1 | Confirmation of the role of DSOs in suspension |
| 43 | 4.5.3 | Further information about the requirement to notify insurers. |
| 43 | 4.5.4 | Update of content on reporting to charity regulatory bodies |
| 45-48 | 4.5.6 | Expanded information about character references |
| 51 | 4.6.3 | Update to reference to training materials |
| 59 | 4.7.3 | Reflecting views of survivors when preparing for a safeguarding contract. |
| 60 | 4.7.4.1 | Reference to health and safety risks in planning meetings with those who present a risk |
| 67 | 4.7.8.1 | Additional reference to 4.7.4.1 |
| 68 | 4.7.8.3 | Information sharing channels reference future meetings of MSG |

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| 69 | 4.7.8.5 | Information sharing reference changes of circumstances |
| 70 | 4.7.9.1 | Confirmation of requirement to contact statutory supervisor prior to referral of change/removal of safeguarding contract to Safeguarding Director. |
| 72 | 4.7.9.3 | Dormant contracts – information supplied previously via the DSO bulletin. |
| 93-96 | 6.3.6 | Additional provisions relating to unaccompanied children and church activities |
| 102 | 6.7.1.1 | Additional procedures for 16-17 year olds relating to photographic consent |
| 103 | 6.7.2 | Reworded section for clarity |
| 103 | 6.8 | Acceptable use notice for locations where public access to wifi is advertised on church premises |
| 105 | 6.8.1 | Updated reference to social media guidance |
| 110 | 6.10.6 | Retention period for registers of children's activities |
| 114 | 6.17 | Updated references to training programmes |
| 115 | 6.17.2 | New section on outcomes where there is a failure to attend training |
| 130 | 7.1.2.3 | Additional indicators relating to modern slavery |
| 140 | App I | Note on new revised safeguarding standing orders |
| 141 | App II | Forms and Information Lists (previously separate section of main policy) |
| 150 | App IV | Safeguarding Training Attendance list – clarity on leaders of other groups attendance at Foundation Module and rearrangement with Foundation Module displayed first in the section |
| 155 | App V | Model church policy – clarification on minister in pastoral charge holding safeguarding role and sharing of roles. Clarification on escorts in line with main policy. |
| 157 | App V | Cross reference to main policy on driving/escorting |
| 162 | App V | Confirmation of role sharing provision in more than one location. |
| 175 | App VI | Additional cross reference to main policy |
| 176 | App VI | Retention period for registers of children's activities |

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SECTION 1

Introduction

1.1 Status of policy, procedure and guidance

This document sets out the policy, procedures and guidance relating to safeguarding within the Methodist Church. The provisions outlined are informed by current legislation and accepted good practice from within the Church, statutory agencies and other community organisations with safeguarding responsibilities.

Sections designated as policy and procedure are mandatory while those clearly identified as 'guidance' are regarded as good practice. Therefore, it is highly advisable, although not compulsory, to adhere to these guidelines.

The policy, procedures and guidance in this document have been reviewed and agreed by the Methodist Church Safeguarding Committee on behalf of the Church's trustees, under their responsibilities designated in standing order 232 (2) v of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church. Amendments which correspond to changes required to the Church's governance provisions are approved by the Methodist Council, in addition to the Safeguarding Committee and will be reviewed by the Law and Policy Committee.

The Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Connexional Safeguarding Team. Changes and amendments will be considered by the Safeguarding Committee on an annual basis, as a minimum requirement.

1.2 Foundations

In developing and implementing this policy, the Methodist Church is guided by the following foundations:

- the gospel
- human rights, international and national law.

The Church fully supports the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It recognises that safeguarding work is undertaken within a British legislative and associated government guidance framework which sets out a range of safeguarding duties and responsibilities.

1.3 Societal context and legal framework

Legal arrangements and requirements vary between England, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, Gibraltar and Malta. This section covers the general principles as applied to England. Much of this is the same in all locations but please check with the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for specific differences in your legislature.

There has been widespread coverage in the media of the failure of various organisations and individuals to adequately prevent, and protect children from, abuse – including the high profile cases of Jimmy Savile and the Rotherham Report. In recent years, there has also been a growing understanding of the importance of recognising abuse against adults who are vulnerable, whether inflicted deliberately or as a consequence of neglect. Since the start of the millennium, a broad spectrum of legislation, guidance, research and reports from all sectors has led to the development of policy and procedures in the safeguarding arena. Closer working partnerships have been forged through both children and adult safeguarding boards and a growing commitment to all those who work with vulnerable groups is leading to improved working practices.

Relevant reports and legislation relating to safeguarding practice with adults and children include:

The Data Protection Act 2018 & General Data Protection Regulation

Regulation of the possessing of information relating to individuals, including obtaining, holding, using or disclosing such information. Provisions including those relating to processing information about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Independent Safeguarding Authority established (later to become Disclosure and Barring Service)

The Human Rights Act 1998

Article 8 Respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
Article 9 Freedom of thought, belief and religion
Article 10 Freedom of expression

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Act to make provision for preventing antisocial behaviour with references to children

Serious Crime Act 2015

Includes offences relating to child cruelty, sexual communication with a child and female genital mutilation (FGM) and coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship

Relevant reports and legislation relating to safeguarding practice with children include:

Children Act 1989

Introduced comprehensive changes to legislation in England and Wales

Children Act 2004

Result of Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié

Bichard Inquiry 2004

Inquiry into the Soham murders resulting in a registration scheme for those working with vulnerable groups and the introduction of safer recruitment principles across the voluntary and statutory sectors

Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced 2005

Statutory guidance on protecting children where carers or parents fabricate or induce illness in a child

Safeguarding children from abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession 2007

Non-statutory good practice guidance intended to help practitioners and line managers apply *Working Together* (see below) to the particular needs of children who are abused or neglected because of a belief in spirit possession

Safeguarding children and young people from exploitation 2009

Statutory guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation

Munro review of child protection in England 2011

Report sets out proposals for reform to focus on child-centred system

Children and Families Act 2014

Practice guidance

| | |
|--|---|
| Keeping children safe in education 2018 (originally published in 2016) | Guidance to give greater protection to vulnerable children |
| What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015 | Guidance to help practitioners identify the indicators of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take |
| Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (originally published 2010) | Updated guidance for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; requires faith organisations to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children |

Relevant reports and legislation relating to safeguarding practice with vulnerable adults include:

| | |
|--|--|
| No Secrets 2000 | Department of Health document developing and implementing inter-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults and create local authority safeguarding boards |
| The Mental Capacity Act 2005 | Identifies principles for the purposes of the Act including issues around capacity and decision-making |
| Action on Elder Abuse Report 2005 | Report on the project to establish a monitoring and reporting process for adult protection referrals made in accordance with <i>No Secrets</i> |
| Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 | Defined a vulnerable adult ISA established |
| The Mental Health Act 2007 | Amends the Mental Health Act 1983, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 |

| | |
|---|---|
| The Care Act 2014 | Introduces well-being principle and the term adults at risk of abuse or neglect |
| Care and Support Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 | See bit.do/careactguidance2014 |
| Local responsibilities for sharing information under the Care Act 2014 | States local authorities must set up safeguarding boards and cooperate with relevant partners |

In addition, the following government documents and guidance have been reviewed in the preparation of these procedures and policies:

National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (2012)

This deals with concepts of child abuse linked to witchcraft and possession of children by evil spirits to make children to create fear and compliance with other forms of abuse. It may include making a child or young person with difficult behaviour or disability the scapegoat for other sources of difficulties within the family context.

1.4 Learning from the Past Cases Review

In 2010, the Methodist Conference agreed the need for a review of past child and adult protection cases. This took place between 2013 and 2015 and the results were published in *Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review 2013-2015*.

Key findings from the review of past cases identified ten themes, which overlap and interconnect in many ways. In summary, these are:

THEME 1

Abuse and risk are still not always recognised

- Behaviour which might be of concern is still not recognised.
- In particular, behaviour which is potentially grooming behaviour is not recognised.
- Patterns of worrying behaviour are not recognised.

THEME 2

The huge and ongoing impact of abuse on those who have been harmed

“The ongoing pain and distress of victims/survivors is deep and lasting. It is amplified when they feel they have not been listened to. It is still not always recognised/responded to well.”

Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review (p. 30)

THEME 3

Abuse which has occurred in a church setting is even more distressing and a devastating breach of trust

THEME 4

There is a need for a further development of listening skills

THEME 5

People in the Church are still not responding well to serious situations

- Well-meaning people can be naïve.
- There are still ‘lone safeguarding rangers’ who think they can manage situations on their own.
- Ministers can be very anxious about safeguarding. This may lead to concerns not being shared and sometimes safeguarding is not seen as a team activity.

THEME 6

People find it difficult to put respectful uncertainty into practice

There is a lack of skill in dealing with contradictory information and a discomfort with challenging situations in which colleagues and friends who have done good things have caused harm.

THEME 7

Responding well to the congregation in difficult safeguarding situations continues to be a challenge

Ministers often struggle to deal with conflicts and tensions within congregations.

“The impact of abuse within a Church community is often deep and lasting and sometimes cannot be resolved by those enmeshed in it.”

Courage, Cost and Hope: the Report on the Past Cases Review (p. 35)

THEME 8

Recording

Practice has improved but record-keeping is still not consistent.

THEME 9

Effective working with other agencies still requires development

THEME 10

There has been and remains, insufficient understanding of the significance of safeguarding concerns about those who hold leadership roles in the Methodist Church

There are many instances of people, other than ministers, who are in roles of church leadership (for example, local preachers, worship leaders, stewards) and who have behaved in a way that is not consistent with safeguarding. Yet among some in the Church, there is limited appreciation that this

- may present a risk to others
- presents an inappropriate role model.

1.5 Ecumenical context

In the churches, there is a continuing growth in ecumenical agreement and cooperation on safeguarding, especially between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, as part of the outworking of the Covenant. Our continued participation in the Christian Forum for Safeguarding is of great benefit in building and maintaining relations with all churches, especially the Baptist Union of GB and the United Reformed Church, the Society of Friends, the Catholic Church of England and Wales (CSAS), the Salvation Army, the Church of Scotland, the Assemblies of God and the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service. Furthermore, these bodies enable and enhance our participation in discussions with government departments and agencies.

In a local ecumenical partnership (LEP), the governing body of each constituent church should decide which safeguarding policy is to be followed by the joint LEP. The policy chosen should remain consistent across all activities. The DSO should be informed of the agreed safeguarding lead in each partnership.

SECTION 2

Safeguarding Policy Statement

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.

Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.

There are no distinctions regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/ beliefs, pregnancy/ maternity and gender reassignment; As a result, everyone has the right to protection from abuse and to be treated no less favourably than others, irrespective of any personal or protected characteristic.

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- **promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to **prevent** abuse from occurring
- seek to **protect** and respond well to those that have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to reduce such risks. The Methodist Church affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable has a role to play, supported by consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church.

The Church and its individual members will undertake all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment. It will practise fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to help keep them safe from harm.

2.1 Commitments

Based on the foundations above, the Methodist Church commits to:

- Promote a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the church.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Care pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse and other people who have been affected.
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns of allegations of abuse and others who have been affected.

- Carry out risk assessments and put safeguarding measures in place where individuals pose a present risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

This will be done in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance.

2.1.1 Promote a safer environment and culture

Church officers will respect all children, young people and adults and promote their well-being.

The Church will create and maintain environments that:

- are safer for all
- promote well-being
- prevent abuse
- create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and adults.

It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning and quality assurance processes.

The Church will challenge any abuse of power within church communities by ensuring church officers adhere to safe working practice, and are supported in challenging bullying and abusive behaviour. It will ensure that children, young people and adults will be listened to, supported and will know that they will receive care.

2.1.2 Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the Church

The Church will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the Church, in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

It will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care for and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by providing consistent and accessible safeguarding training.

2.1.3 Respond promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or former abuse to the notice of an officeholder within the Church will be responded to respectfully and actively.

All safeguarding work will be recorded with clarity and detail. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported.

This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All officeholders and employees within the Church will work in partnership with the statutory authorities.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to ministers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal and civil law and the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

2.1.4 Pastoral care for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

The Church will offer care and support to all those who have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and believed. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support, according to their expressed and agreed need, as they seek to rebuild their lives.

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, local church, circuit and wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

2.1.5 Respond to those who may pose a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults

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 of the church community who may present a risk.

The Church will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding contract in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies, in accordance with criminal and civil law and Standing Orders.

2.1.6 Pastoral care for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

In its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, the Church will respect the rights of those who are subject to allegations, regardless of role or position.

As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and church inquiry processes. The Church will ensure that steps are taken to protect others when any church officer and/or minister is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be

done by working to mitigate any identified risks with a safeguarding contract or other appropriate measures.

The Church will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, congregations and wider communities affected by the church officer/minister's changed situation.

2.2 Putting the policy into action

Churches and circuit and district bodies need to ensure that these commitments are integrated into a local safeguarding policy. Model safeguarding policies have been provided at Appendix IV, which can be amended for use in churches and circuits.

Safeguarding policies throughout the Church are active statements underpinning safeguarding work. All churches and circuits are required to:

- display a copy of the local church or circuit policy, reviewed and updated during the last 12 months in a location where it can be easily viewed by those entering the church
- display the name of the person responsible for safeguarding and other useful contacts should be provided for those using church premises and seeking safeguarding assistance
- ensure that all officeholders have access to a copy of the relevant church and/or circuit policy and can view the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance online
- promote and publicise the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance of the Methodist Church
- communicate the Church's safeguarding message as outlined in local and connexional policy documents
- develop processes to assess how well the policy is being implemented, lessons that are being learnt and what difference it is making
- undertake and record an annual progress review.

2.2.1 Case Review Process

A case review may be undertaken in relation to any safeguarding case or allegation about which significant concerns have been raised in relation to the application of current policies procedures or practice.

The Safeguarding Director will refer a request for a review to the chair of the Safeguarding Committee for authorisation to initiate a review and to agree the means by which this will be undertaken and its scope. This may include an internal or external reviewer.

Reviews will be undertaken in partnership with the relevant district chair and DSO (as applicable) and will include consultation of those who have raised the relevant concern and other parties involved in the process. The focus of any case review will be learning and development of

safeguarding practice.

The outcome of such a review may be:

- amendments to policies and procedures
- communication of required practice change to relevant audiences
- guidance or advice issued to the relevant district from the Safeguarding Committee
- a recommendation that a safeguarding improvement board be set up within the district to explore areas of concern and to deliver an action plan to address identified issues
- referral of individuals to other church processes to address relevant matters.

SECTION 3

Safeguarding organisational structure and responsibilities

The ethos behind the structure of the Methodist Church remains true to the original values of its founder, John Wesley: valuing consultation, shared decision-making and responsibility across the Connexion. An outline of the Church's structure can be found on our website: www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/structure

In line with the values of cooperation and consultation, all members, employees, office holders and volunteer workers at all levels of church life play a significant role in implementing safeguarding procedures.

The Charity Commission and companies insuring the Church require all local bodies to have a safeguarding policy in place. Each district, circuit and local church will produce a Safeguarding policy, related to work with both children and adults. Model policies are provided in Appendix IV *Model safeguarding policies*. These should be reviewed annually and displayed.

It is important to recognise that it is people who protect – not just procedures. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in the Church.

The Methodist Church as a connexion has an obligation to support churches and those working with children and adults in exercising their primary responsibility for those entrusted to them.

Based on the foundations above, the Methodist Church commits to the following key safeguarding roles and responsibilities:

3.1 At local church/circuit level

The Superintendent Minister and the Circuit Safeguarding Officer shall provide support and oversight for local churches and ministers in implementing safeguarding as stated above and ensure that activities with children and adults, both within the circuit and local churches, are provided according to good practice and safeguarding procedures.

Local churches and circuits may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures, but it is important to remember that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the members of the Church Council. It should be noted that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable and care should be taken to implement the policy in full.

It is recommended that the local church or circuit safeguarding officer be a member of the Church Council and Circuit Meeting or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. They should also have the right to attend the circuit staff meeting to discuss urgent confidential concerns and report to the circuit superintendent.

Where an individual holds the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings of the relevant bodies (Church Council/Circuit Meeting) to report on safeguarding in each location (see Appendix V – Model Circuit and Church Safeguarding Policies).

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to hold safeguarding officer roles, because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities. It is acknowledged that to avoid any disruption in safeguarding provision, it may be necessary for the minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to hold some or all of the responsibilities temporarily as an interim arrangement while other arrangements are made. However, this should only be for a very short period to enable the sharing of the role with another church or circuit or the appointment of a replacement.

3.2 District level

The Chair and the District Policy Committee must provide support and oversight for all ministers in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures in local churches and circuits.

In particular, each district must:

- provide a structure to manage safeguarding issues and practice with a suitably qualified and experienced multi-disciplinary district safeguarding group (DSG), including an independent Chair. The District Chair or their nominee shall be a member of the group and attend meetings regularly. The members of the group do not have to be members of the Methodist Church, but the majority of the team should be either Methodists or members of a church which is a member of Churches Together in Britain.
- support risk assessment work whether conducted locally or by the Connexion on individuals so that the Chair, the Director of Safeguarding or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals and their work or activities within the church (see Section 4.5.8 for further information on risk assessment procedures).
- provide access to training and support on safeguarding matters to local churches, circuits and districts in collaboration with the training officers.

The DSO is responsible for advising and following through safeguarding concerns within the district, supported by the DSG.

The DSO has a professional background in work with children or adults (or both) and/or significant experience in this field. They are the main contact point within the district for all safeguarding matters and are supported through the Connexional Safeguarding Team. They work with colleagues from the Learning Network (LN) to ensure that core safeguarding training programmes

are provided in order that all relevant church workers have the required training and support to deliver the Church's approach to safeguarding in all its work.

The DSG is made up of professional or ex-professional members drawn usually from agencies such as the police, probation¹, education, children's and adults' services, health services, law and related services. They meet on a regular basis to support the DSO, advise on policy, practice and training developments within the district.

3.3 At connexional level: Director of Safeguarding and Safeguarding Team

The Connexional Safeguarding Team, led by the Director of Safeguarding, undertakes support, investigation and development activities in relation to a broad remit of safeguarding areas working with Connexional Team members, the Methodist Conference and Methodist Council, DSGs, DSOs and district chairs.

Safeguarding Casework Supervisors (SCS) were introduced in September 2018 in order to further strengthen the provision of safeguarding support and guidance across the Connexion. They have a professional background and significant experience and skills in safeguarding and are managed by the Director of Safeguarding.

SCSs support DSOs and provide face-to-face and telephone supervision. They support DSOs in the management of ongoing safeguarding concerns and give advice and guidance. SCSs cover particular districts.

SCSs commission and organise Connexional Risk Assessments. They coordinate and facilitate Safeguarding Panels and act as professional advisers. SCSs administer blemished DBS certificates and consider whether it is appropriate for clearance to be granted. They work with Ministers, Superintendents and District Chairs to ensure people are recruited safely.

As part of their role, SCSs contribute towards the development and review of safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance and have a specific lead area in safeguarding practice. They coordinate the collation of documentation for Subject Access Requests. In addition, SCSs provide consultation and training to those both internal and external to the Methodist Church to help support others and promote the church's commitment to safeguarding.

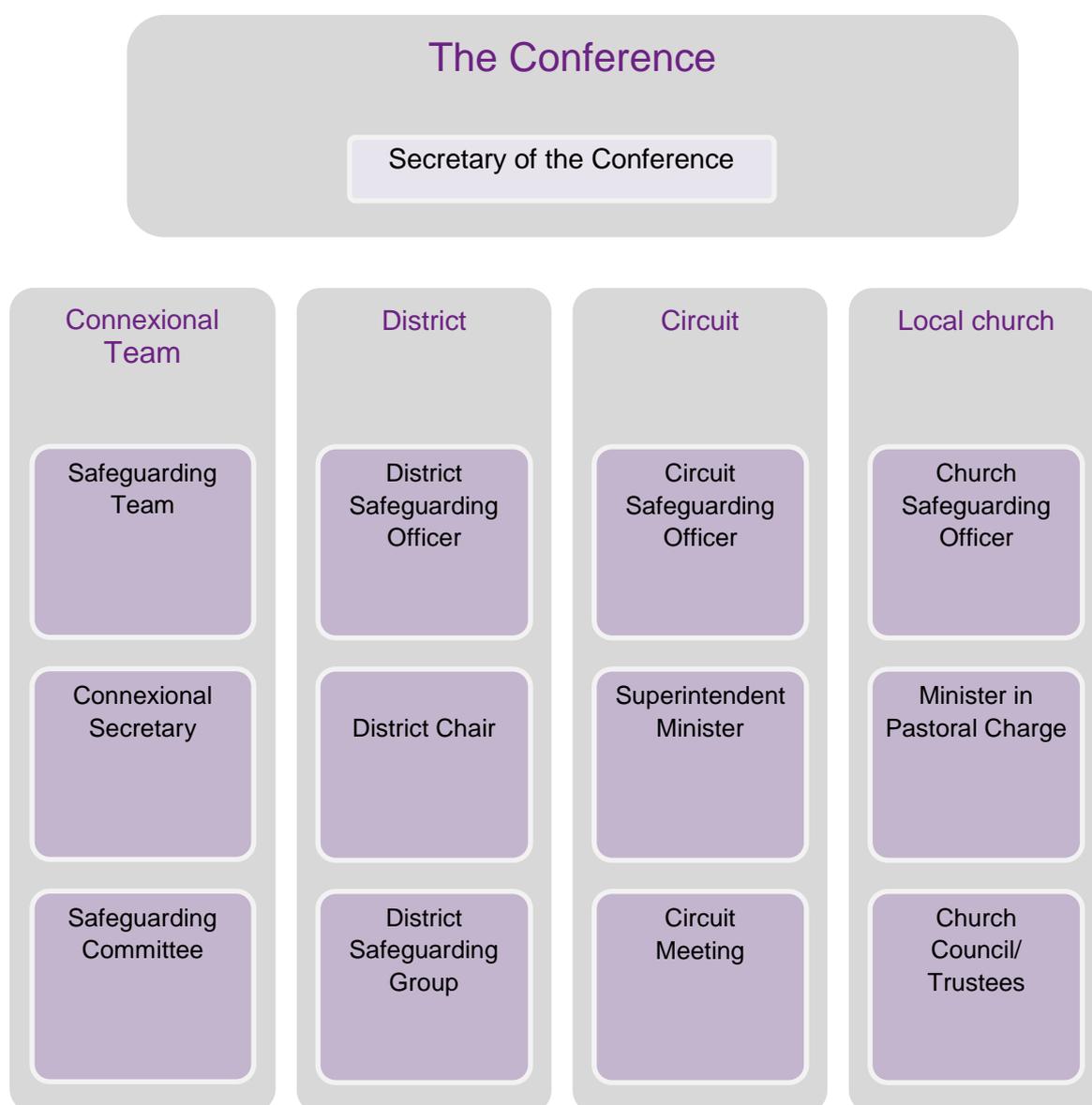
Current safeguarding best practice is promoted via an annual conference for professional development and networking, maintaining the safeguarding section of the Methodist Church website and oversight of connexional safeguarding training strategies. The Safeguarding Policy and

¹ It is noted that probation services are now provided by both the National Probation Service and community rehabilitation companies. 'Probation' is used to encompass both types of organisation and 'offender manager' used to denote those with oversight of offenders across probation services

Development Officer in the Connexional Safeguarding Team facilitates the development of safeguarding policies and procedures through consultation and partnership with the wider Church, the Connexional Team, relevant agencies and other voluntary sector organisations.

There is no requirement for *anyone* coordinating and advising on safeguarding matters to be members of the Methodist Church. This gives scope for the most appropriate people, with relevant professional backgrounds, to be appointed especially when considering the appointment of an independent Chair of the DSG and the DSO.

3.3.1 Diagram - Safeguarding Structure of the Methodist Church



3.4 Responsibilities of charity trustees

The responsibility for implementation lies with the relevant charity trustee body: the Church Council for a local church and Circuit Meeting for the circuit. It is the relevant trustee body and the minister in pastoral charge or superintendent, who are responsible for ensuring that allegations are responded to immediately and according to the procedures of the Methodist Church including referral to the statutory authorities.

- Safeguarding good practice should be 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.
- Reports of abuse (including allegations) are referred to the statutory authorities according to Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and with reference to guidance provided in this document.
- Standing Orders and the Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures are implemented by completing the required DBS checks.
- When somebody is being considered for an appointment to a role or responsibility to which Standing Order 010(3) applies or is already holding such a position and one of the following circumstances applies:
 - the person has a conviction or caution for an offence under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) is mentioned in Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) **or is included in a list barring them from working with vulnerable adults or children held by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).**
 - 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 vulnerable adults,
the relevant permissions must be sought as provided for in Standing Order 010(5). See guidance in Book VI Part 1 of CPD.

Tracing Rainbows through the Rain, Methodist Conference, 2006

www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf06_Safeguarding_pcfull.doc

In respect of these responsibilities, the Church Council or Circuit Meeting should also take advice from the DSO and/or the Connexional Safeguarding Team about:

- referring cases to the DBS or Disclosure Scotland where allegations lead to disciplinary action or someone resigns pending this. The DSO should make the referral.
- making a report to both the Charity Commission (in England and Wales) or **OSCR (in Scotland)** and the relevant insurance company in respect of serious safeguarding matters. [...] See 4.5.4

for further details on when and how to report incidents to the regulatory bodies.

- notifying the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice for further advice.

3.5 Church schools

The Methodist Church oversees a family of over 80 schools in both the state and independent sectors.

For the 66 schools in the state sector, the Methodist Council exercises appropriate oversight for Methodist-only schools. For Anglican-Methodist schools, oversight is shared with the relevant diocese of the Church of England. The Council's oversight in all cases is delegated to the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST). The MAST schools are considered as part of the mission of the local circuit with a close relationship through the school governors.

In relation to safeguarding, these schools are bound by the policies and procedures of the relevant local authority and are inspected by Ofsted. Those that are part of academy groups have their own safeguarding policies for which their trust is responsible, and they too are subject to Ofsted inspection.

The MAST schools may deal with safeguarding matters independently of the Church, based on the requirements of their policies and procedures. Where any issue involves a member of the Methodist Church working within that school, close cooperation will be undertaken with the Connexional Safeguarding Team, the district (via the chair and DSO) and the Conference Office.

Safeguarding concerns in relation to MAST schools should, in the first instance, be directed to the head teacher of the school. If a superintendent or minister with pastoral responsibility becomes aware of a safeguarding issue relating to a Methodist member who is involved in any way in a school, they should consult their DSO at the earliest opportunity. Following this, contact should be made with the head teacher and MAST should be informed.

Methodist independent schools are under the overall supervision of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST). They have their own safeguarding policies which draw upon national guidance for education and/or local guidelines, dependent on the individual oversight arrangements for each school. The safeguarding procedures and policies of these schools have to conform to statutory requirements (e.g. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* - KCSIE); the schools work closely with the local safeguarding children boards (LSCB) and are subject to routine inspection under arrangements approved by the Department for Education (DfE) and administered by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

The independent schools may deal with safeguarding matters internally based on their policies and procedures. Where any issue involves a member of the Methodist Church working within that school, close cooperation will be undertaken with the Connexional Safeguarding Team, the

relevant Methodist district (via the chair and DSO) and the Conference Office. DSOs may be invited by independent schools in their areas or via MIST to support the development of safeguarding practice. The district chair is an ex-officio governor of any MIST school in their district.

In the first instance, safeguarding concerns relating to Methodist independent schools should be reported to the head teacher of the school or to MIST's General Secretary.

3.6 Methodist Homes

MHA is a charity providing care, accommodation and support services for more than 16,000 older people throughout Britain. MHA is a group structure comprising the charity, Methodist Homes, the Methodist Homes Housing Association and MHA Auchlochan.

Methodist Homes Group is regulated by the guidelines and requirements of the Care Quality Commission (England), the Care Inspectorate (Scotland) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (Wales). It has a common policy relating to safeguarding for all its homes and schemes, which has been drawn up in line with each of the regulators' requirements.

The Connexional Safeguarding Team and Methodist Homes will work in close cooperation where a safeguarding issue arises and the subject of that concern is a member of the Methodist Church. Safeguarding concerns relating to Methodist Homes should be reported in the first instance to the manager of the home in question. Safeguarding is overseen by the Director of Quality and issues are centrally monitored and reviewed by the charity's quality committee.

SECTION 4

Procedures for responding well to safeguarding incidents

The safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance of the Methodist Church have been created in order to:

- **PROMOTE** the well-being of children and adults through a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding within clearly assigned roles.
- **PREVENT** harm through best practice and the creation of a culture of informed vigilance.
- **PROTECT** through responding effectively when safeguarding concerns arise.

This section identifies actions that should be taken when a safeguarding concern is raised. This may relate to allegations made about an officeholder, employee, member or volunteer or someone not connected with the Church where anyone is seeking help or support from someone in the Church.

The concerns may be about current or past events, but the response should be the same. Past events can still give rise to current safeguarding concerns.

Allegations that do not fall into the above categories but still amount to inappropriate conduct within the Church may mean that consideration needs to be given to invoking disciplinary processes or handling it by way of advice, supervision and training. In these situations, the employer/supervisor/line manager will need to decide the course of action.

Where the concern that has been raised relates to domestic abuse, the relevant section should be read in addition to the procedures outlined in this section.

4.1 Responding well

There are many situations about which a member of the Church may have concerns, or be made aware of concerns, regarding a child or adult. Such a person must consult the minister, church or circuit safeguarding officer and DSO within one working day. The only exception to the above is if one of them is the subject of the concerns. If that is the case, then they will be excluded. Under no circumstances, should the person who is the subject of the allegations be informed until after the allegations have been discussed and agreement reached with the statutory authorities. Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires that privacy notices are supplied to those about whom information is received by the Church. This includes direct disclosures from the

parties involved and third party reports about others (see 5.1.4). Sample privacy notices may be found on the Methodist Church website. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

There is provision for the processing of data for safeguarding purposes without consent under Schedule 1, Part 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (see 5.1.5).

4.1.1 Listening to those who raise concerns

If approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow the basic guidelines below:

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate for you to listen with care and security. Do not defer listening, but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully, showing you are taking seriously what you are being told. Do not pass judgement, minimise or express shock or disbelief at what you are being told.
- Listen with undivided attention and help the other person to feel relaxed. Do not put words into their mouth.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding. It may be appropriate to ask if they mind you taking notes while they talk or at the end so you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly – but only if it is appropriate.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain what you will do with the information (see Section 5 *Procedures for information sharing and confidentiality*).
- Find out what the person hopes for.
- Reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm you have understood what has been communicated.
- Provide a privacy notice and explain in a clear and simple manner the information contained in it. (See 5.1.4)
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make notes of what was said, including the date, time, venue and the names of people who were present. Sign the record.
- The DSO should always be advised when a referral is made to Children's Services/the police.
- Provide the person with the means to contact you and be clear about how and when you will give feedback. Be prepared to continue to be there for the person. Be dependable.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.

4.1.2 Emergency situations

The person receiving the information will need to assess whether the subject of the concern is at risk of immediate harm and, if so, take any immediate action necessary to safeguard them including contacting statutory authorities such as police, child or adult services.

The following questions should be considered:

- ***Does their initial presentation and any information provided suggest physical, emotional or psychological harm or imminent serious risk?***
- ***Is there any indication of control, intimidation or fear being applied by another connected party? This could be someone present with them, waiting for them or in control of domestic or work circumstances or their associates.***
- ***Are they in safe accommodation or at risk of homelessness?***
- ***Do they have enough to eat?***
- ***Do they need urgent medical attention?***

4.1.3 Assessment of risk

The following risks should be reviewed regularly in regard to any concern raised:

- to the victim/survivor
- to members of vulnerable groups within the church and involved with church activities
- to the person believed to be responsible for the issue and their family
- to the wider congregation or attendees at church activities
- ***to the wellbeing or safety of clergy, employees and volunteers in responding to the situation***
- loss of information/records
- to the reputation of the Methodist Church.

It is the responsibility of everyone to consider the risks presented by any situation from the moment they become aware of a possible safeguarding concern. Direction may be given by police/Children's Services or Adult Social Care as to how to respond to certain risks when a referral has been made. Advice may be sought from the DSO in relation to measures that may minimise specific risks in any case.

Measures to manage risk could include suspension, an interim safeguarding contract, specific arrangements for activities or church attendance and liaison with others within and outside of the church. Following the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance outlined in this document may assist in managing risks that are identified. Specific procedures are laid down for certain

forms of risk assessment (e.g. a safeguarding contract) and particular parties are responsible for undertaking those assessments. In most cases, the ongoing consideration of risk should be an integral and continuing part of responding well to an incident.

4.1.4 Referring to statutory agencies

In most situations, a referral to the Designated Officer (formerly LADO)/Children's Services (depending on local provision) or adult safeguarding (local authority) in adult services should occur within one working day. It is preferable for the DSO to do this but if the DSO is not available, anyone can do it. The church must follow the advice given by statutory agencies (Children's Services, Adult Social Care/police) in determining what can be said and when to the subject against whom allegations have been made. While this may be uncomfortable for those who know the person concerned, failure to follow this advice could result in:

- risk to the safety of children or adults
- loss of evidence which may hinder any investigation
- increased anxiety for the subject of allegations before adequate information is available about the situation and next steps
- damage to the Church's reputation for appearing to collude with a subject of allegation.

4.1.4.1 Information for a referral to statutory agencies

The following information should be collated to support a referral to statutory agencies. However, where items are not available, the referral should not be delayed and further updates can be provided as the situation progresses.

For all referrals:

- the name, date of birth and address of the person at risk
- names and addresses of parents or carers
- names of other significant people within the household (including all names and ages of those under 18)
- any other contact details (e.g. others who may be at risk of harm)
- any other professional known to be involved with the person at risk or family (where appropriate)
- the date, time and context of the disclosure
- nature of the alleged abuse/concern including details of the disclosure
- what impact the alleged abuse is having on the person including their wishes and feelings about the situation and possible outcomes

- any known or previous issues of concern
- your knowledge of personal circumstances
- any work undertaken by the Church with the person at risk or family
- names of those who are aware of the referral (person at risk, family, alleged perpetrator etc.)
- what the person disclosing the concerns has been told will happen next
- name and contact details of the DSO
- your name and contact details.

In addition, for adult referrals:

- whether consent for referral was given and your view on the adult's capacity
- what the adult has been told will happen next.

Once a decision has been made to make a referral to the statutory agencies, the information listed above will need to be passed on whenever possible.

If you don't have all the above information, pass on what you do have. If you are passing on information via telephone, you will need to follow up in writing by noon the following day at the latest. 'In writing' includes email correspondence or use of the local authority online referral form, as required.

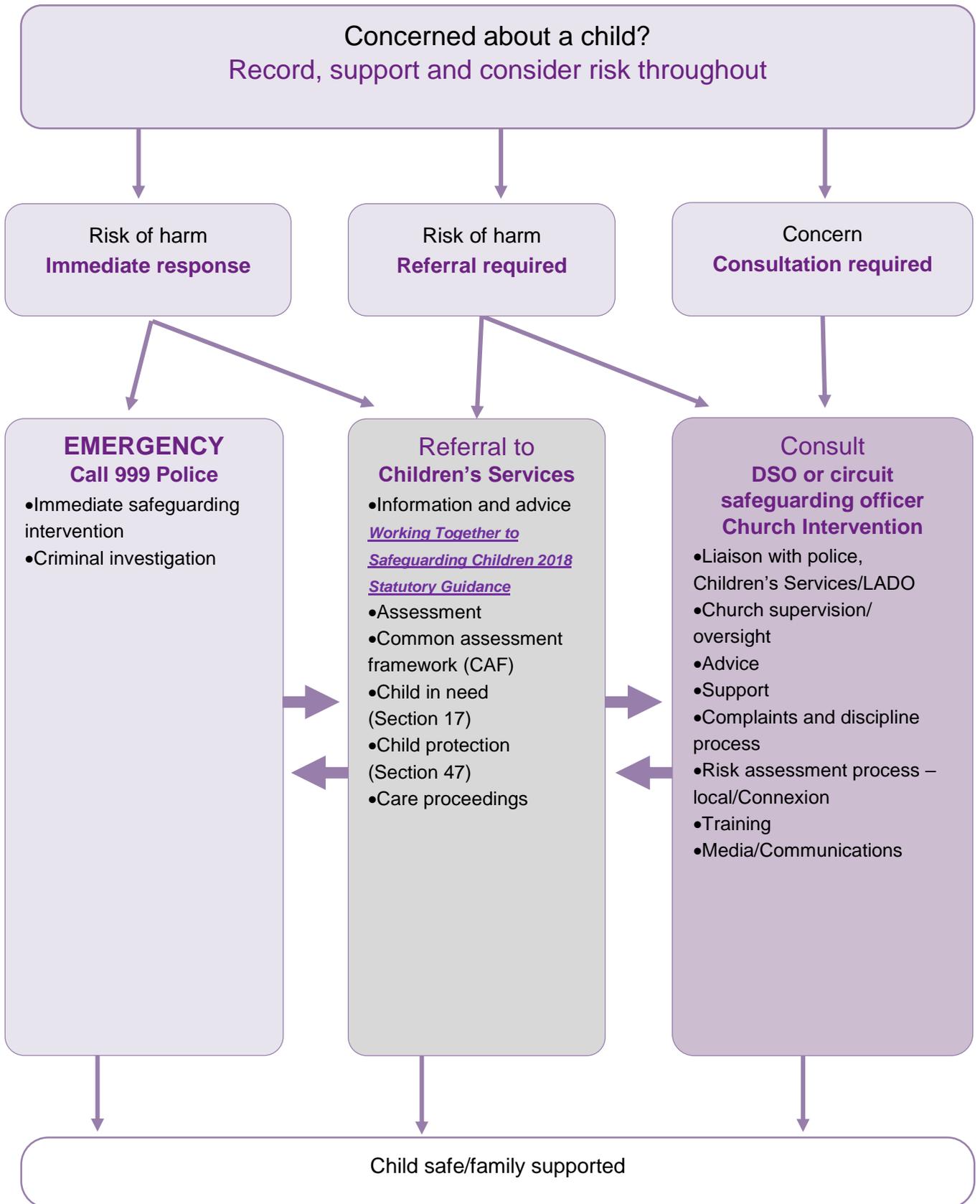
The child/young person's or vulnerable adult's safety is the priority and there must not be a delay.

4.1.4.4 What can you expect from Children's Services/ Adult Social Care/police?

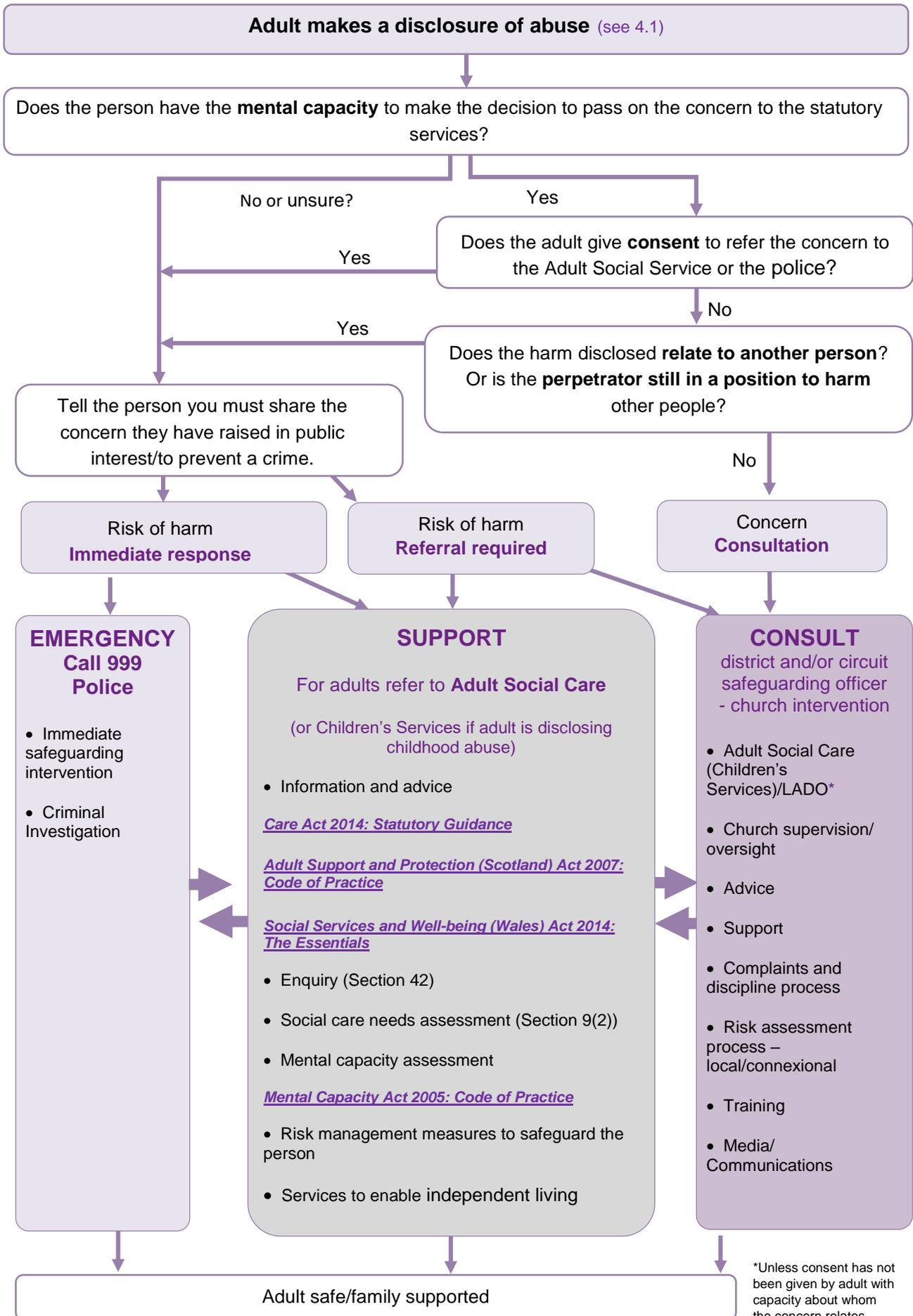
- they will check previous records to determine what action to take
- they have a duty to ensure the person is safe from harm and aim to progress an enquiry as soon as possible, including seeing the person
- their name and contact details
- what action they intend to take and when
- advice to you on what to do next
- a timescale for action and an update on action taken (where confidentiality permits).

Statutory agencies have been advised that personal information from referrers who are members of the public should only be disclosed to third parties (including subject families and other agencies) with the consent of the referrer. Some church workers with children will count as members of the public for this purpose and so the details will not be shared routinely. However, a person in a role of responsibility within the church cannot expect anonymity. If you have concerns about the disclosure of personal information, discuss this at the time of the referral with your DSO or the agency to which the referral is being made.

4.1.4.2 Flow chart – Response to concerns about a child



4.1.4.3 Flow-chart – Adult makes a disclosure of abuse



In each local authority there are published procedures for use by anyone in the area dealing with the possible abuse of a child or adult. Those procedures are usually available online. No one should be deterred from making a referral because they are unsure about the formal procedure. Everyone should find out which local authority they need to contact in the event of a referral being necessary.

What will happen next?

Outcomes open to statutory agencies following referral include assessment, strategy meetings, case conferences, investigation and longer term interventions. Ministers and other church members may be asked to attend meetings, provide statements or give evidence in legal proceedings. In this case, the DSO needs to be consulted and the District Chair and superintendent must be informed.

4.1.4.5 When do you have to inform the DSO and the local minister?

Remember to inform the DSO as soon as possible, and within 24 hours at most, that you have made a referral and record the information.

Some examples:

- a) An adult member or child has been or is being abused or mistreated by someone connected with the church, such as a member of staff, volunteer or charity trustee.
- b) Someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the church.
- c) Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened, regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place.
- d) There are grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred.
- e) There is a current allegation of abuse against a child or adult.
- f) Someone in a local church has been suspended or dismissed from work or investigated or arrested for allegations of abuse against children or adults.
- g) One or more children or adults are considered to be at risk of harm.
- h) A member or regular attendee is known to have been convicted of sexual offences against children or adults, is currently or has been subject to investigation for an offence against a child or adult in the past year or there have been investigations or convictions for domestic violence.

4.1.4.6 Areas for consideration by the DSO following receipt of a concern or allegation

| <i>Areas for consideration by the DSO</i> | <i>Further information</i> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Immediate safety of victims and survivors</i> | |
| <i>Support needs of the victim/survivor, family/close friends and those affected</i> | <i>4.3-4.4</i> |
| <i>Safeguarding risks arising from the situation</i> | <i>4.1.3</i> |
| <i>Appropriate safeguarding measures</i> | <i>4.58, 4.7</i> |
| <i>Referrals to police, LADO or social care (see 4.1.4)</i> | <i>4.1.4</i> |
| <i>Privacy notices to relevant parties; if appropriate and outstanding</i> | <i>5.1.4</i> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Notification of relevant church leaders and officers, as appropriate</i> | |
| <i>Support needs of the subject of the concern and their family</i> | |
| <i>Liaison with Conference Office and relevant clergy/line management in relation to suspension of the subject of the concern, where appropriate</i> | 4.5.1 |
| <i>Connexional Safeguarding Team notification</i> | <i>(see next section for criteria)</i> |
| <i>Advice on communications from the Connexional Media and Communications Team (see 4.5.2)</i> | 4.5.2 |
| <i>Information sharing with other churches and organisations</i> | 5.2, 7.3 |
| <i>Referrals to relevant insurance company</i> | 4.5.3 |
| <i>Support to trustees to refer to the Charity Commission where appropriate</i> | 4.5.4 |

4.1.4.7 Cases which should be referred to the Connexional Safeguarding Team

The following circumstances must be referred to the Connexional Safeguarding Team:

- any ***safeguarding*** concern relating to ministers (***including poor safeguarding practice***)
- any ***safeguarding concern relating to role holders which has been referred to the LADO or equivalent local authority officer (including poor safeguarding practice)***
- cases where a connexional risk assessment will be needed
- where a church or district has been requested to respond to a review undertaken by a statutory body following a serious incident (e.g. Serious Case Review, Domestic Homicide Review)
- any case where there is or has been a statutory investigation of someone holding a position of trust in the church
- disclosure of non-recent abuse
- ***introduction of a safeguarding contract, annual and three yearly amend/remove review***
- ***any safeguarding case that fits the serious incident criteria for reporting to a charity regulatory body***
- ***any case that has or is likely to come to the attention of the media or may impact the reputation of the Methodist Church.***
- ***any case that has been or is going to be referred to an insurance company in relation to a claim for compensation regarding a safeguarding matter***
- ***any case for which a complaints and/or discipline process has been initiated which includes a safeguarding concern or poor safeguarding practice.***

The following details (where known) may be requested by the Connexional Safeguarding Team relating to any case fitting the above criteria:

- *name, date of birth and contact details for the subject and survivor*
- *an outline of the circumstances of the concern including the location, time period, connection to the Church of the parties involved, nature of behaviour or actions causing concern and actions taken in response.*
- *confirmation that pastoral support and/or counselling has been offered where parties are known to the Church*
- *confirmation of the date of supply of privacy notices to survivor and subject or relevant circumstances, if they have not been provided*
- *date of first contact with statutory authorities (police, children and adult services, Charity Commission, LADO, as applicable)*
- *details of referrals to insurance companies regarding compensation claims related to safeguarding matters, where appropriate.*
- *copies of safeguarding contracts and related documentation (SGC/1-5 forms) and confirmation of contracts with dormant status*

The sharing of such information is proportionate, necessary and legitimate to manage safeguarding risk within the Church and provide appropriate oversight of safeguarding practice.

The data is processed for the following purposes:

- *casework supervision and guidance by members of the Connexional Safeguarding Team*
- *the production of management information to inform church wide decision-making on safeguarding*
- *management of cases where there is involvement of Conference Office or other church processes*
- *evaluation of compliance with the requirements of statutory legislation, safeguarding policy procedure and guidance on a connexional basis.*

The data shared with the Connexional Safeguarding Team is used to collate records on the current digital system for managing safeguarding records on the Connexional Team server. Access to this system is limited to safeguarding officers and a limited number of role holders within Conference Office who oversee the management of safeguarding concerns and related processes. The data will transfer onto a shared safeguarding recording system for DSOs and members of the Connexional Safeguarding Team when this becomes available.

Where there are concerns about the disclosure of data, these should be discussed with the Casework Supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Where necessary, issues may be referred to the Safeguarding Director for consideration.

4.2 Recording

In a church context, safeguarding records are needed in order to:

- ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers
- promote the exercise of accountability
- provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity or formal proceedings
- allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel.

All records must be kept in a secure place and only shared in accordance with legislation, government guidance, Methodist Church policy, procedure and guidelines (see Section 5 *Procedures for information sharing and confidentiality*).

When making records the following practice should be followed:

- Wherever possible, take notes during any conversation (or immediately after if more appropriate).
- Ask consent to make notes, taking age and understanding into account.
- Explain why you want to take notes, and that they can have access to the information they have shared with you.
- Include:
 - who was involved: including any actual or potential witnesses
 - what happened: facts not opinions. Where possible exact quotations of what was said, identified by quotation marks, are helpful, particularly when recording something that has been said of significance.
 - where it happened: Record specific details of the location and context.
 - when it happened: Be specific about the timing and frequency of the situation, where possible.
 - how it happened: Describe how actions were carried out including the nature and level of any force used, the period over which the behaviour was experienced.
 - the context in which it took place: Note any connections between the parties, particularly where the connection resulted in a power differential between one party and another.
 - the impact on any party: If the survivor or other party shares how they felt about what happened, record this information.
- Keep a log of all actions you have taken and details of referrals to statutory agencies.
- Make sure your notes are legible, clear, concise, relevant, through and jargon free.

- Use the person's own words and phrases. Do not attempt to sanitise language or improve grammar.
- Ensure the notes are up to date, signed, dated and timed.
- Ask the person to review the notes and confirm that they are accurate.
- Pass records to the DSO as soon as possible but at the latest by noon of the next day.

NB: As part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse led by Professor Alexis Jay, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to child protection and allegations of child abuse made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the duration of the inquiry.

4.3 Caring for those who have suffered abuse

The Methodist Church recognises that abuse of an individual by someone within a church can have a negative impact on not only the survivor, but their family, the perpetrator's family and the church community. The impact will be different for different people and assumptions cannot be made about the severity of the impact and its perceived seriousness. The Church aims to respond to those affected by abuse in accordance with legislation and guidance but also with respect and compassion, providing pastoral support and additional support where appropriate.

The policy and procedures apply to:

- children and young people under 18 alleging abuse by someone within the Church
- adults alleging abuse as a child by someone within the Church
- adults alleging abuse by an adult within the Church
- families of those affected by allegations of abuse within the Church
- members of the local church where an allegation of abuse (such as against a minister) has had an impact on them.

The Church will always aim to provide appropriate pastoral support to those in need, particularly where there may be survivors of abuse from the congregation. However, those receiving or dealing with reports of abuse should also consider whether other forms of support may be appropriate in addition to or instead of pastoral support within the Church (see 4.4). This may particularly be the case where the person is actively involved with another church or faith or has disengaged from the Methodist Church as a result of abuse.

4.4 Principles and procedures for providing support

The Methodist Church has commissioned a service in order to be able to offer short-term counselling to survivors and those affected by abuse in the Church. This may be accessed via District Safeguarding Officers who will liaise with the Connexional Safeguarding Team.

- If an allegation has resulted in a referral to the statutory agencies, then the provision of support will be discussed and agreed with those agencies.
- Whether or not a referral is made, the support needs of all those affected by the allegations (including the individual and family members, the accused and their family members, the minister and other church workers) must be considered and should be coordinated by the DSO.
- Support for historical allegations will be treated in the same way as for current allegations.
- Pastoral support will always be offered but there may be times when additional support is identified or requested, such as counselling or financial help. Any such requests must be referred to the DSO and district safeguarding group and the insurers consulted. The DSO/district safeguarding group will be responsible for communicating with the insurers.
- Pastoral support should not be provided by parties who are directly involved in the management of the case or who are supervising or overseeing of anyone about whom there is a concern.
- Where additional support is agreed, the DSO together with the local church will make the necessary arrangements and a written agreement will be drawn up clarifying the terms of the support offered.
- Where support is offered, it will be provided in a way that respects race, culture, age, language, religious beliefs, gender and disability.
- Any support offered will be decided by focusing on the best interest and welfare of the children and adults involved.
- ***Careful consideration will be undertaken about encouraging contact with groups of a similar language or culture if there is any indication that this may be relevant to the abuse being suffered or may increase the level of risk to them.***

4.4.1 Helping recovery and responding well

Recovery after any form of abuse is complex and will vary among individuals.

The following aspects may be important for survivors:

- the opportunity to tell the story (to name the sin and share the experience)
- for someone to hear their story (that is, to believe and acknowledge the harm done and the fact that the victim is not to blame)

- receiving a compassionate response to the victim (that is, to 'suffer with' is to walk with the person rather than try to 'problem-solve' immediately)
- an effort to protect the vulnerable from further harm (both the victim and any others who may be at risk)
- the community holding the perpetrator to account
- an act of restitution in as far as this is possible (though this does not necessarily include institutional or financial liability)
- unambiguous vindication: what a victim of abuse expects at any time when he or she shares his or her experience
- ***being made aware of support groups so they have the choice to engage with others who have had similar experiences if they feel this is helpful.***

It is important to be clear about what a survivor of abuse expects when they share their experience. Those in authority may be anxious about any suggestion of institutional culpability, but this should never eclipse our higher duty to provide pastoral care or additional support if appropriate.

It is essential for survivors to know that they can trust those who are supporting them and it may take time to build up this trust. Many survivors will not readily disclose their experiences. Those who are affected by modern slavery or who have experienced difficult or damaging outcomes from statutory agency engagement may fear and mistrust their involvement. They may fear their involvement due to past experience in the UK or other home countries. Survivors can lose contact with family, friends and community whether through feelings of shame, manipulation or fear of reprisals. Social isolation can represent an additional source of vulnerability and anxiety. The absence of suitable support may result in survivors returning to damaging situations or, in the case of modern slavery, further trafficking.

4.4.2 Disagreement

If there is any disagreement about the support to be offered, the person affected must put their views in writing to the DSO who will share and discuss it with the district safeguarding group. Following such a consultation, the insurers may need to be consulted before a reply is sent.

The decision of the district safeguarding group and the insurers will be final.

4.4.3 Caring for the congregation

Consideration must also be given to the impact of an allegation on the congregation. The DSO

should discuss the provision of support with the superintendent who will be responsible for coordinating it. This should be done in consultation with the statutory authorities and the media office and the following areas considered:

- what information can be shared
- when and how information can be shared - this may include a statement to the congregation delivered by the agreed minister (local, superintendent or District Chair)
- where and to whom people can go for support.

After an investigation or actions taken to deal with an issue which has had a significant impact on the church, consideration may be given to a visit by one or more of the following: DSO, district chair and superintendent. It can be difficult to define the right moment for this as the church may continue to manage the situation and the subject's involvement in the church for many years to come but it is good pastoral practice to review the differing needs within the church and its wider community.

The aim of the visit is to acknowledge people's pain and listen to how they are feeling, identify support, enable recovery and support future ministry.

4.5 Additional actions

Whether an allegation is made about a minister, member or volunteer, the Church Council will need to consider what additional action, aside from a referral to the statutory agencies, may be necessary to safeguard other people from potential harm.

4.5.1 Suspension of ministers, probationers, students or lay office holders

4.5.1.1 Suspension under Standing Order 013

Suspension is expected during any inquiry, irrespective of role. However, there are some differences in procedure if the person is a minister or officeholder, an employee or a volunteer.

Standing Order 013 sets out the process for suspension of a minister, probationer, student and lay office holder. This Standing Order should be considered and guidance taken before any suspension takes place.

No one other than the responsible officer can suspend under SO 013 and those who can undertake this role are identified in the standing order. ***This responsibility cannot be delegated to DSOs and their position is to advise the responsible officer in relation to safeguarding matters relevant to suspension and not to make suspension decisions or carry out suspension on that officer's behalf.***

Suspension of lay employees

Any lay employee who is a member of the Church and holds an office to which SO 013 applies can be suspended under SO 013. Any such suspension should only be undertaken following legal advice on the employment contract.

A lay employee who is not a member of the Church cannot be suspended under SO 013. They can only be suspended by their line manager on the basis of the employment contract and after consultation with the district lay employment secretary.

4.5.1.2 Resignations

When someone resigns, the Church remains responsible for investigating any safeguarding concerns and reporting these to the statutory authorities. This applies whether it is a lay office holder in the Church who resigns from their role, a member who stops worshipping at the local church or an employee.

Every effort must be made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of a child/adult, even if the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.

The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

Lay employees – disciplinary action

If a risk assessment raises concerns about a lay employee continuing in their current role, legal advice must be obtained before any steps are taken to address the concerns. The same applies to the conclusions of a Safeguarding Panel through misconduct or disciplinary proceedings.

4.5.2 Notifying the Connexional Media and Communications Team

It is the role of the DSO to discuss communicating about the matter with the media office and designated officer/adult safeguarding (local authority)/police. The Connexional Media and Communications Team can help with preparing a range of communications including:

- statements to be prepared in advance and issued if there is an approach by media
- statements to the congregation by ministers
- responses for individuals within the church who may be affected by specific situations.

To ensure that any information provided is coordinated, and to benefit from ongoing support, the DSO will alert the Connexional Safeguarding Team about any matter that may be of media interest or need sensitive communications. Statements delivered to the congregation will be made by the minister deemed most appropriate to deliver them following consultation with those managing the case at district level.

A member of the Connexional Media and Communications Team is always available to provide support during and outside working hours (via email mediaoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk and out of hours telephone 020 7467 5170). The Media and Communications Team should be made aware of matters as soon as possible to allow suitable statements to be prepared.

4.5.3 Notification to Insurance Companies

If there is a likelihood of a claim against a church insurance policy for compensation regarding a safeguarding issue, relevant insurers should be notified. While many parts of the Church have policies with Methodist Insurance, this is not always the case so confirmation should be sought to confirm the relevant insurer. A claim may overlap various insurance policies, dependent on the allegations being made and so may affect both a local insurance policy and that of the Connexional Team, district or other parts of relevant organisations. For this reason, all safeguarding cases where there is likely to be a compensation claim must be notified to the Conference Office and the Connexional Safeguarding Team who will provide support.

Referrals to the Church's counselling service or offers of pastoral support should go ahead without delay and are not affected by the existence or likelihood of a related compensation claim. This is in line with the 2015 Rehabilitation Code and is supported by insurers.

4.5.4 Reporting to Charity Regulatory Bodies

Trustees have a duty to report serious incident to the Charity Commission in England and Wales. District safeguarding officers and others providing specialist support and advice may assist in drawing up reports and updates to the regulatory body. These are referred to as notifiable events in Scotland and are reported to the OSCR. Both bodies provide extensive guidance via their website, in addition to online reporting for initial notification of all relevant incidents. All reporting is done on a case by case basis.

The DSO should be made aware of any serious safeguarding incident that is known to trustees so that support can be offered to manage the issue in line with safeguarding policy and procedure. They may also be called on to assist in preparing a referral to the relevant regulatory body or an update. The DSO will notify the Connexional Safeguarding Team of any safeguarding case that is likely to result in a referral to a charity regulator as part of casework supervision.

In most cases, submissions to the charity regulator do not include personal data, other than that of the reporting person, in the first instance, to protect confidentiality. However, details of the charity, the circumstances, their impact on the charity, the connection to the charity of those involved and action taken will need to be reported.

Further guidance on reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

Further guidance is available from OSCR:

www.oscr.org.uk/media/2155/2016-03-15_guidance-for-notifiable-events_web-version.pdf

4.5.4.1 Serious incidents and Notifiable Events

A serious incident report (England and Wales) or notifiable event (Scotland) is a notification made by or on behalf of the trustees to the relevant charity regulatory body.

A serious incident includes any adverse event whether actual or alleged which results in or risks the following circumstances to a significant extent:

- *harm to beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the charity through its work*
- *loss of the charity's money or assets*
- *damage to the charity's property*
- *harm to the charity's work or reputation*

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

It should be noted that breaches of procedures or policies of a high profile nature or that suggest widespread or systematic abuse or risk may be deemed significant and therefore reportable. The guidance below should be consulted to assist in deciding whether the incident is reportable.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

The Commission provides a helpful list of examples to assist in identifying whether an incident should be reported.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752170/RSI_guidance_what_to_do_if_something_goes_wrong_Examples_table_deciding_what_to_report.pdf

The OSCR guidance for notifiable events provides similar guidance in reporting relevant incidents in Scottish charities.

https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2155/2016-03-15_guidance-for-notifiable-events_web-version.pdf

4.5.4.7 Next Steps

The Commission or OSCR will assess the nature and level of any risks and look at how the matter has been dealt with. They may contact the person who submitted the report if they need more information or feel the following may apply:

- ***The Local Church needs regulatory advice and guidance***
- ***The Commission needs to use its legal powers to protect your Local Church and/or the people who come into contact with your Local Church through its work***
- ***Further updates are required for example on the outcome of an investigation***
- ***Monitoring by the Commission is necessary to support progress in dealing with the incident.***

4.5.5 Action prior to any court case

There may need to be an interim safeguarding contract (see Section 4.7.2) when people are facing statutory investigation. This may also apply when a formal complaint about them has been made to the Church).

Statutory agencies will expect that such a contract considers if it is possible for the alleged abuser still to attend church. The DSO will ensure arrangements are put in place.

4.5.6 Requests for character references

4.5.6.1 Definition of a character reference

A character reference is a statement in which a person with knowledge of another, provides comment about their personality or behaviour. This is likely to include drawing conclusions about their disposition or presentation. This is different from an ordinary request for a statement of fact, such as when a police officer takes a statement to evidence a crime. The defining difference is that between known fact of circumstances and personal judgement of character.

4.5.6.2 Situations where a character reference might be sought

Lay office holders, employees or ministers in the church may receive requests for

references in relation to employment, to give evidence in court proceedings or to attend meetings as a representative of the church with statutory agencies (e.g. police, Children's Services or Adult Social Care) relating to safeguarding.

In the majority of cases, defence solicitors will be seeking character statements to try to provide evidence of good character. The aim is to balance the prosecution case in court or to influence sentencing if the person has already been found guilty.

However, you may be called to provide character references for employment tribunals, immigration processes (e.g. applications for citizenship or right to remain in the UK) or in relation to employment matters or proceedings. Some parties have also been requested to provide character references during meetings with statutory agencies such as social care relating to safeguarding adults and children.

When called to court as a witness, there is a legal requirement to attend in order to confirm a factual account. This is different from being asked to provide a character statement. It is important to clarify on which basis involvement is being sought.

4.5.6.3 The impact of character references

The impact on survivors

The desire to stand by those who have long association with the Church and are known personally to congregations can be a strong call to action. However, survivors should be able to expect that the Church stands by them in public and private. The words and actions of the Church should clearly acknowledge the impact of abuse on survivors and condemn those acts, rather than seeking to counterbalance what has been suffered and minimize the impact of the application of justice. Many survivors in congregations feel unable or do not wish to share publicly the harm they have suffered. They may suffer further pain and isolation if character references are made by those connected to the Church in a public arena, which seek to present those who are alleged to have carried out abuse in a positive light.

The impact on the individual giving the statement

While character statements are given with the best of intentions, they are often not based on fact and may over-emphasise positive attributes or behaviours. These comments may not be borne out by very limited interaction with the subject of the statement. Those who give character references should expect that they might be called to provide further detail in court or other environments to evidence what they have said. They may also expect an impact on their personal credibility if they have made public judgements about character, which are later found to be contrary to the known facts. The evidence of someone connected to the Methodist Church might be given greater weight due to the moral expectations of the public. Great care should be given in providing any public statement of this nature.

The impact on the congregation

The Past Cases Review identified many cases where congregations were torn apart or people damaged by failing to apply appropriate respectful uncertainty to circumstances where safeguarding allegations are made. Where a crusade to support an individual goes beyond appropriate pastoral support, divided opinions may damage communities and isolate individuals. The provision of character references can play a part in this.

The impact on the Methodist Church

Those who have recently viewed the BBC's series on the Peter Ball case in the Church of England will be aware of the reputational damage to the Church and the monarchy that is likely to result in over-optimistic statements being made about the character of those facing abuse allegations. The perception of survivors and the wider public is that the Establishment supported abusers and colluded to avoid the scrutiny of public authorities. While welcoming everyone and making provision for those who may present a safeguarding risk, the Methodist Church condemns abuse and recognizes the devastating impact that may be suffered by survivors who are harmed by engagement in church activities.

The provision of character statements can risk diluting this message and counter the efforts of all in the Church to build trust and confidence.

4.5.6.4 Responding to character reference requests

Many people feel uncertain about how to respond when a reference is made relating to a character reference, particular where a safeguarding concern may be linked to that person. It is important to understand what is expected and whether attendance is requested in a support role or to contribute to planning or assessment of the situation. When representing the church, it is important to provide material only about what the attendee knows or reasonably believes first hand, while ensuring, as far as possible, that what is said cannot be interpreted as support for one side or another in a legal dispute.

Clearly define with the person requesting you to provide a character reference what they expect of you and whether this is as a representative of the Methodist Church. Find out whether it may be linked to formal proceedings, attendance at a meeting or the submission of a written report. Confirm whether they are seeking a factual account of circumstances e.g. someone's attendance at church or your personal judgement. Avoid agreeing your involvement before you have taken further advice.

Always contact your District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, regardless of who has made the request. They will be able to provide guidance about current policy and procedures and give support. They will also be able to help you explain the Methodist Church's policy on character references.

The Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2019) notes that lay office holders, employees or ministers should only give character statements in exceptional circumstances and then only with the input of the DSO and/or lay employment adviser (where applicable).

While members who are not office holders, employees or ministers may make personal decisions about the provision of character statements in a personal capacity, they are advised not to do so and to take guidance from the DSO. It is important that careful consideration be given to the potential impact on themselves and others before taking action. If giving a statement in a personal capacity, it should be clearly stated in the statement that it does not represent the opinion of the Church and is done so in a personal capacity only.

The Church will always work in partnership with statutory agencies to support safeguarding processes. The content in this section does not affect those situations where a party connected to the Church is legally required to provide information or attend proceedings in order to confirm a factual account.

4.5.7 Notifying other churches and community organisations

Where the subject has involvement with another organisation, those from that organisation may need to be informed of the concerns. The nature of the person's involvement at the current time should be established before disclosing information.

See Section 5 *Procedures for information sharing and confidentiality*. Further advice can be obtained from the DSO or via the local authority designated officer/Children's Services/Adult Social Care.

4.5.8 Risk assessments

The Methodist Church initiates various forms of risk assessment in a response to safeguarding matters. These may be commissioned by the Connexion, completed by the DSO or conducted at church or circuit level dependent on the circumstances. Proportionality is a fundamental principle in considering the appropriate form of risk assessment. Further details of policies, procedures and guidance is included in the *Methodist Church Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures*:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

In any case, where risk assessment is being considered, a privacy notice should be provided to the subject of the assessment and any other party about whom information is received. Even where a privacy notice has already been provided, a new version should be supplied which addresses the

specific issues relating to the risk assessment, particularly with regard to information sharing, clarification of the lawful basis for processing and consent (where applicable).

Sample privacy notices may be found on the Methodist Church website.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

An interim safeguarding contract may be put in place while a police, Children's Services or Adult Social Care initial assessment or investigation is ongoing. This should also be considered when the Church becomes aware of external employment disciplinary procedure relating to a safeguarding matter that may impact on roles and activities undertaken by church members, staff, ministers or volunteers. However, detailed risk assessments which include in-depth inquiries and interviews with related parties should not be initiated until the statutory or external employment processes are concluded. This is to ensure that actions undertaken in the course of the risk assessment do not contaminate evidence or affect such proceedings or assessments.

4.5.9 Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS helps employers to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups. It replaced the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Referrals are made to the DBS when an employer or organisation has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups. An employer or volunteer manager is breaking the law if they knowingly employ someone in 'regulated activity' with a group from which they are barred from working.

For a fuller explanation of the duty to refer, click on the following links:

DBS referral chart:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502089/DBS_referral_flowchart.pdf

Guidance about regulated activity with children: [bit.do/regulatedactivity](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulated-activity)

Guidance about regulated activity with adults: [bit.ly/1T9BJ8u](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulated-activity)

Making referrals to the DBS – *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018*:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707761/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_-_September_2018.pdf

4.6 Domestic abuse

This section should be read in conjunction with *Practice Guidelines to Support the Report* –

Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church – Taking Action 2010 (currently being updated):
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

4.6.1 Domestic Abuse Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Methodist Church to encourage all:

- to raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community
- to ensure that teaching and worship reflect awareness of gender justice, use appropriate language and say clearly that domestic abuse is wrong and must be condemned and affirm the Methodist Church stance that all human relationships are to be cherished
- to ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority and to be aware of the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good safeguarding practice
- to consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help
- to encourage discussion of how the Church might ensure that those who feel marginalised are made welcome
- to inform discussion on implementing the good practice guidelines and the underpinning of theology and principles.

4.6.2 Responding well

All forms of domestic abuse are intrinsically damaging and the safety and protection of those involved must be paramount. Those responding to reports of domestic abuse should ensure that they identify whether any of the following circumstances apply:

- children are living in the household
- children are regular visitors to the household
- the victim is an adult who lacks capacity
- the victim is dependent upon their partner for care.

Procedures relating to children and adults in the previous section should be followed in all cases.

The following actions should be taken where domestic abuse is suspected:

- If you suspect someone is experiencing domestic abuse but they have not said anything to you, do not be afraid to ask, but ask gentle, non-direct questions, such as “How are things at home?”
- Reassure the person that it is not their fault.
- Consider their safety and yours as well as that of colleagues and if possible prepare a plan of

action to protect anyone disclosing abuse.

- Do not investigate.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Treat all conversations as confidential within the bounds of safeguarding. Seek consent to share information if you wish to discuss it with someone else, unless a child or vulnerable adult is at risk.
- Focus on the safety of the victim (and children, if any are involved).
- Provide information on resources/services available to them.
- Do not advise on a course of action but encourage them to explore options.
- Record the information and retain it securely.
- Take advice from a church, circuit or DSO prior to sending a privacy notice to anyone other than the party reporting the issues to ensure that the safety of the survivor, any children or other parties will not be compromised.

4.6.3 Related reading

Methodist Church *Creating Safer Space* Foundation Module **2020 [...] Handbook**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training/foundation-module-2020-edition/training-materials-foundation-module-2020/>

A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls: Action Plan 2014

HM Government – March 2014 bit.do/endviolence

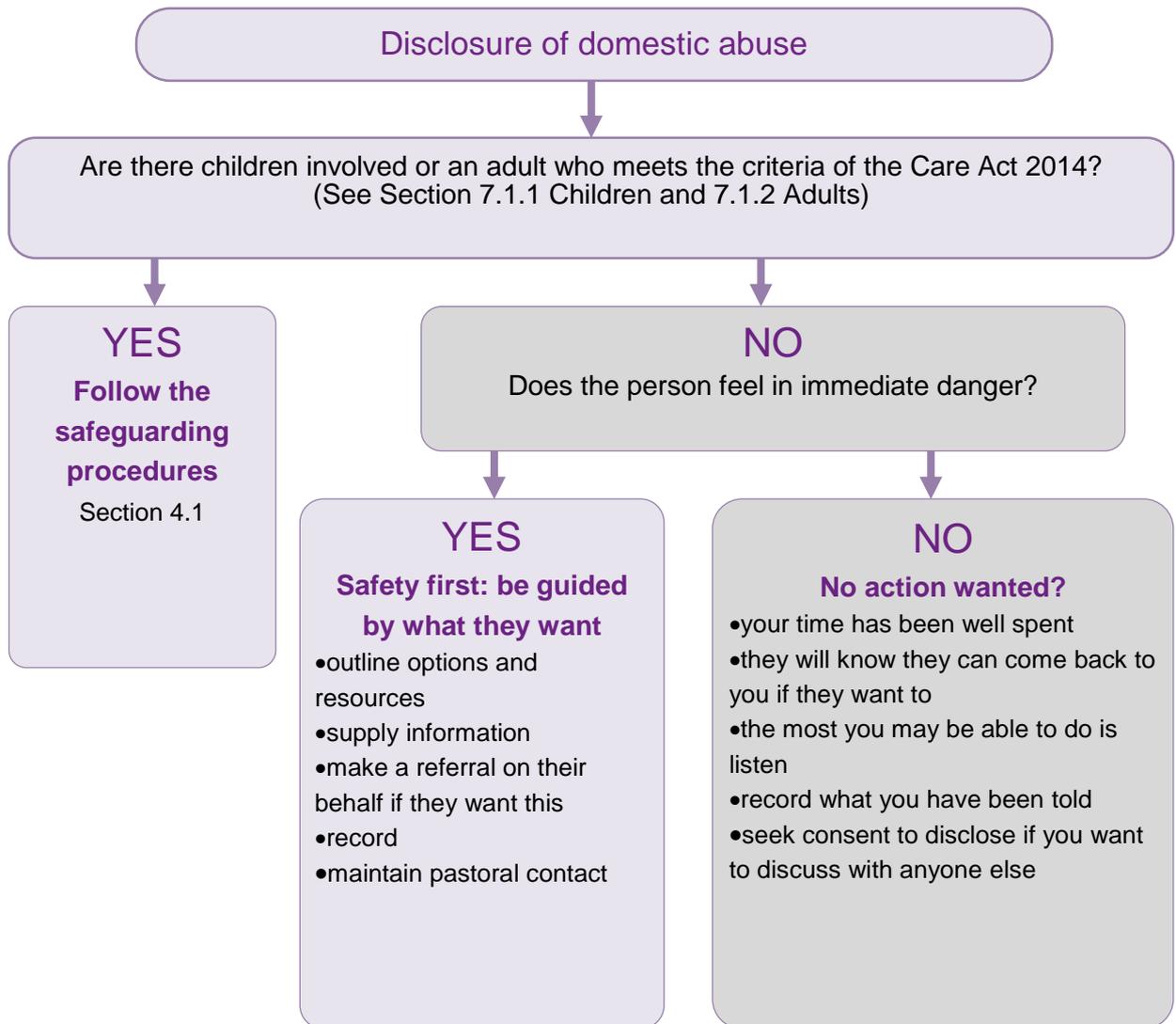
Domestic Violence and Abuse: Multi-Agency Working

NICE Guidance – 26 Feb 2014 www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50

Ending Domestic Abuse: A Pack for Churches

Restored (Charity) 2016 <https://www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51/>

4.6.4 Quick guide flow chart



4.7 Responding well to those who might pose a risk

This should be read alongside the section *Responding well to a safeguarding concern* (Section 4)

The Church aims to provide pastoral care for all its members, including those who are suspected of causing harm or have caused harm to others. However, in this context, such care must be provided in a way that prioritises the safety of other church members, while enabling the person who poses a risk to worship and be a part of the church community.

What is a Safeguarding Contract?

A safeguarding contract is an agreement made locally or following a Safeguarding Panel to facilitate involvement in roles, responsibilities or activities in the life of the Church or attendance at worship. This was formerly known as a Covenant of Care. A safeguarding contract will be put in place following risk assessment activity.

Interim safeguarding contracts are temporary arrangements put in place to address potential safeguarding concerns during an internal or external investigation, inquiry or process. This may include criminal investigations, assessments by child or adult social care services and internal inquiries undertaken under Methodist complaints, discipline or safeguarding procedures. Interim safeguarding contracts will be orchestrated by the DSO in consultation with relevant colleagues from within the Church or external agencies, as required by the circumstances. A contract of this nature will be kept under review by the DSO to ensure that it remains appropriate and addresses the changing nature of safeguarding risks, as the situation progresses.

When is a Safeguarding Contract Appropriate?

A Monitoring and Support Group (MSG) and safeguarding contract are required when a person:

- i) has been convicted, or has received a simple or conditional caution in respect of an offence referred to in Standing Order 010 (2); or
- ii) has been subject of a recommendation by the Safeguarding Committee that clause 2 below should apply.

Standing Order 690, Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

(Clause 2 relates to the setting up of a Monitoring and Support Group and safeguarding contract.)

The offences included in Standing Order 010 (2) are those under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Information Management

Where a safeguarding contract is being considered, there is a high likelihood that special category personal data and criminal data (as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation) may be processed. This brings clear responsibilities for handling data securely and the manner in which data is sent or shared must be considered carefully. At all times, information provided to the

Church must be managed, held and shared in line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. As part of this process, those collating information ***must*** consider carefully who is aware of the data they receive from other parties. It is easy to forget that in many cases, the general public may be less supportive of efforts to rehabilitate those connected to certain types of offending. The inappropriate release of information to an unauthorised source could put the person and their family at risk in the community. Further reference should be made to sections 5 & 7 of this policy in relation to the handling of sensitive data.

4.7.1 Preparing for a Safeguarding Contract

When it becomes evident that a safeguarding contract may be necessary for any of the above reasons, the DSO must be informed, if they are not already engaged in the process. This should be the DSO of the district in which the subject intends to engage with the Methodist Church but it may also be necessary to liaise with ministers and safeguarding officers from another district if there has been previous contact there.

The implementation of a safeguarding contract should follow a 4-stage procedure with all stages undertaken consecutively, as follows:

- a) collation of information from relevant sources
- b) identification of risks relevant to that information
- c) consideration of current safeguarding practices and mitigating factors
- d) drafting a contract, which addresses risks and makes provision for positive support in developing the person's engagement with the Methodist Church.

It can be tempting to rush ahead to get arrangements in place by using standard contracts which have been developed for other parties or circumstances. This must be avoided and each person and situation should be considered in their own right. Each stage of the contract development process (a-d) should inform the next. This is to ensure that any measures that are put in place are based on information known about the person or circumstances and address the specific risks that are presented by those activities or location.

The rationale for successful contract conditions should be easily comprehensible to the subject, safeguarding officers and members of the Monitoring and Support Group.

Conditions must be defensible and proportionate to the specific risks identified in each case. This can allow the subject and group to focus on moving forward and avoid unnecessary challenges as time progresses. It may not remove all sources of dispute or disagreement but it will assist in developing a clear and accountable approach from the start. The time and care taken to implement

carefully designed conditions will pay dividends in allowing trust and effective relationships to be built between the subject and group.

The DSO with the support of the minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent will need to oversee the following activities:

- arranging a meeting with the subject of the contract to provide relevant information
- identifying suitable people to become the chair and members of the Monitoring and Support Group and assembling them.

These activities may be undertaken by another suitably experienced and/or qualified member on behalf of the DSO and minister in pastoral charge with their agreement. However, in every case, the necessity and proportionality of disclosure of sensitive information should be considered.

The following activities will be undertaken by the DSO:

- liaising with statutory authorities and other relevant organisations
- producing (or overseeing) the relevant risk assessment activity
- initial briefing of the Monitoring and Support Group members
- training the Monitoring and Support Group members
- drafting a safeguarding contract.

Recording Requirements

Where a requirement for a safeguarding contract arises from a conviction or caution for an offence specified by Standing Order 010, the following forms should be completed:

SGC/1 Safeguarding Contract Information Summary

SGC/2 Safeguarding Contract Summary of Risks

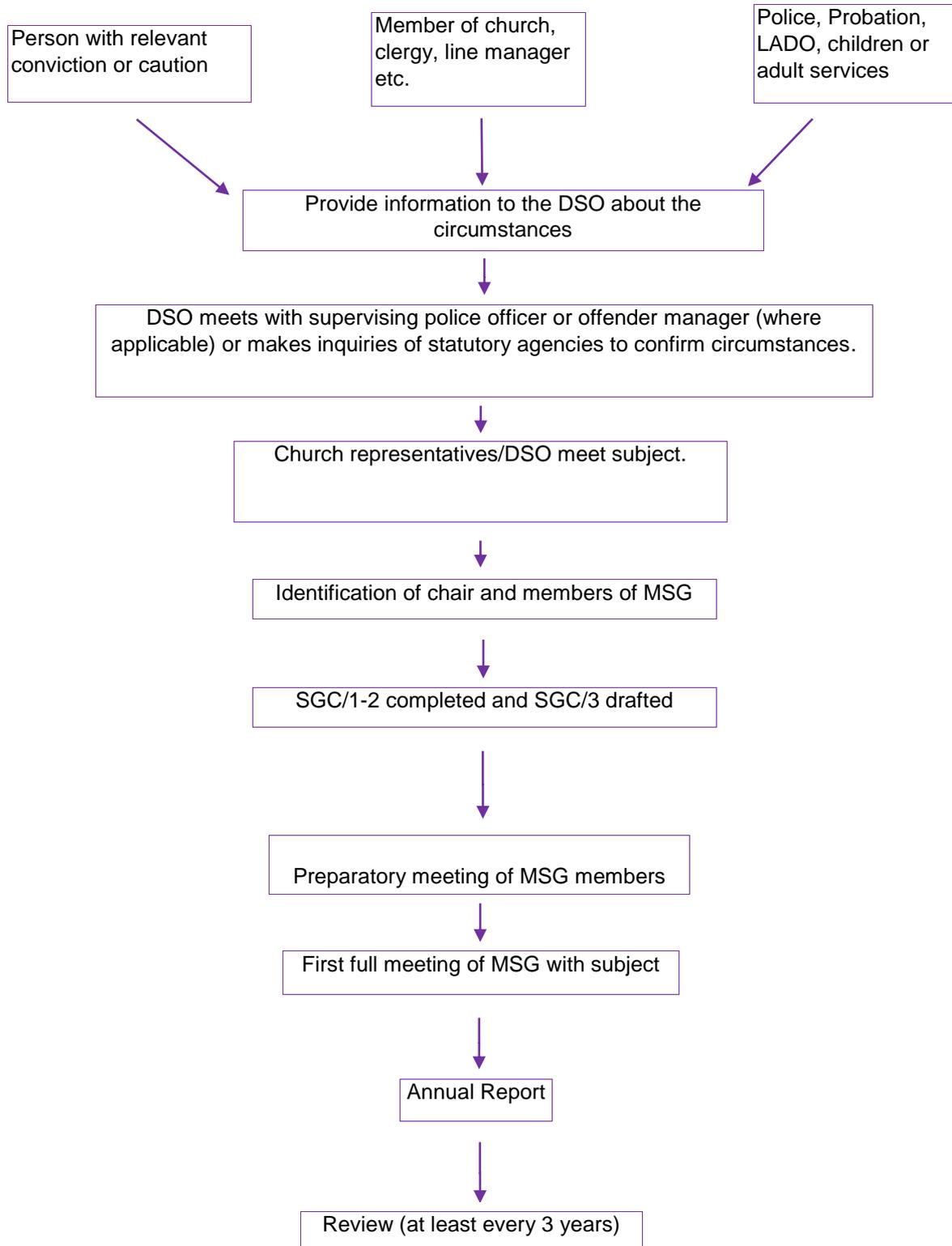
SGC/3 Safeguarding Contract Template

These forms are available via the Methodist Church website:

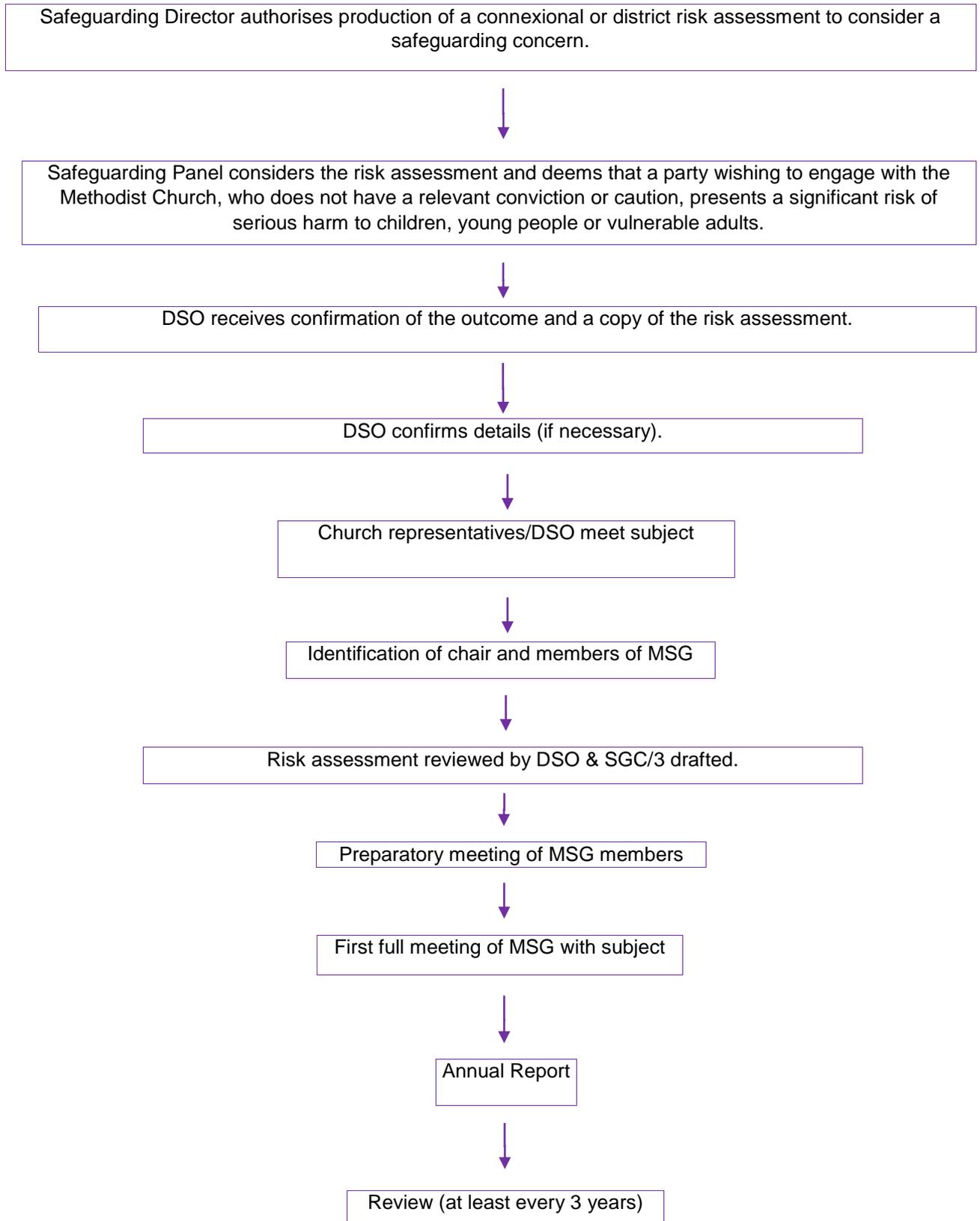
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

Where the requirement for a safeguarding contract arises from the decision of a Safeguarding Panel under Standing Order 010 2(ii), a connexional or district risk assessment will have been completed. This may provide sufficient information for the completion of the SGC/3 Safeguarding Contract Template, without the use of SGC/1 & 2. However, SGC/1 & 2 may still be used to summarise information and risks, if this is felt to be helpful.

4.7.1.1 Flow Chart - Setting up a Safeguarding Contract for a Person with a Relevant Conviction or Caution



4.7.1.2 Flow Chart - Setting up a Safeguarding Contract Following a Safeguarding Panel



4.7.2 Making contact with police or probation services

In some cases, contact may be initiated with the Church by a police or offender manager on the release of a party from custody or their arrival in the local area. It may be helpful to speak to a prison chaplain if it is known that the party wishing to engage with the Church has had contact with them. In other cases, the DSO will approach police or probation services when they become aware that a party wishing to engage with the Church has a conviction or caution for an offence specified in Standing Order 010.

Officers from statutory agencies, who are unaware of the Church's safeguarding provisions, may ask for confidential disclosure to one party. It is of critical importance that the Church's safeguarding structure is explained to ensure that the officer is aware of the need for appropriate information sharing within the Church.

Where the person is subject to supervision by probation services, the relevant officer should be contacted, before any contract is put in place. Where a person subject to a contract is on the Sex Offenders' Register, contact must be made with the police officer supervising that person, before any other arrangements are made. This should be in addition to any contact with probation services. Where the party is engaging with children and/or adult services, contact the relevant social worker should take place.

What information should be sought from police or offender managers?

- confirmation of any convictions or cautions including the dates of offence and sentencing
- the circumstances of the offence(s) such as age and sex of the victim, situation in which the offences took place, and how barriers to offending were overcome (e.g. victim's resistance, protective parties who might have intervened)
- details of police bail conditions where there is a police investigation in progress, or court bail conditions if the case has progressed to the courts
- information about any court orders in place, including conditions and the period of any order
- licence conditions or probation requirements
- confirmation of oversight by MAPPA, MARAC (where appropriate)
- details of police management on the Sex Offenders' Register, including regularity of home visits and assessed current risk level
- clarification of any relevant factors relating to the case where no prosecution or no conviction took place.

For further information about terms used in public protection in statutory agencies, please see the glossary at Appendix II.

Why is contact with statutory agencies (police, probation services, adult and child services etc.) so important?

a) To confirm information provided

It is often difficult for a person with sensitive convictions or personal circumstances to share the details of what happened fully and openly. There is a natural tendency to minimize the seriousness of what happened or to re-tell the events from a position that will evoke sympathy for the party speaking. This may be due to embarrassment, fear or regret. Some people will be engaging with the Church to set off on a new path and change their lives. They may fear being judged or being restricted in their involvement. Unfortunately, in some cases, those who seek to harm others try to hide past behavior. The person's relationship with the Church should be honest and open from the start so that any safeguarding risks are managed effectively, based on correct information.

b) To reinforce the Church's commitment to creating a safer organisation

As the Church is often a refuge for those who have suffered harm or are vulnerable, it is essential that risk assessment and management is as comprehensive and well evidenced as possible. Research evidence has shown that those who could cause harm may not do so if they perceive that the safeguarding environment is robustly managed. Therefore, if those who are setting up safeguarding contracts and Monitoring and Support Groups are confident and work effectively with statutory agencies, they can actively reduce the potential for harm. Some people may feel concerned that interacting with statutory agencies is a betrayal of trust placed in them by the subject of the contract. This is not the case, and the strongest relationships with the Church are based on transparency and clear boundaries. This often helps the person to follow a path that is safe for them and those around them.

4.7.3 Reflecting views of survivors when preparing for a safeguarding contract

Where a contract is being put in place following a safeguarding panel, a district or connexional risk assessment will have been undertaken using a template report format. The template includes a section for the comment of any known survivor who wishes to contribute as part of the assessment. The DSO must be provided with a copy of the risk assessment at the conclusion of the panel process and will review its contents prior to setting up a MSG. A summary of comments by survivors linked to the case should be included in the SGC/1 so that their reflections may be addressed in the consideration of risk. If there is no information in the risk assessment identifying contact has been made with survivors or they are not known, the DSO should request confirmation of this from the Casework Supervisor who oversaw the risk assessment and panel process.

Where there has been no prior risk assessment, the DSO will confirm in each case whether

survivors are known to the Church and whether they wish to make any comment. If survivors are not known, do not wish to contribute or provide reflections, this will be noted on the SGC/1.

4.7.4 Meeting with the subject

The meeting with the subject of a safeguarding contract may be undertaken by the DSO, minister in pastoral charge and/or circuit superintendent.

4.7.4.1 Planning the meeting

When planning a meeting with those who might present a safeguarding risk, the District Safeguarding Officer should share sufficient information with clergy who will be attending, to allow an informed discussion of any concerns in advance. This should include the structure of the meeting, topics for discussion and any potential risks to health or wellbeing that may be apparent.

In every case, safeguarding staff and ministers should put in place appropriate arrangements following this discussion to minimise known risks.

These might include:

- *meeting in a location and at a time where others can be called on if necessary*
- *ensuring that others are aware of the time and nature of any meeting if conducted in the party's home or away from church premises*
- *agreement about how difficult subjects or behaviours might be managed within the context of the meeting and the environment*
- *having sufficient people present to respond to any likely circumstances*
- *reflecting on the potential impact of the content of any discussion about the safeguarding concern or offending on the representatives of the Church involved*
- *discussing any issues affecting any party due to attend that may affect their ability to take part.*

Further contact may be necessary with statutory agencies to discuss any risk to those representing the Church.

4.7.4.2 Content of the meeting

The meeting should cover the following areas:

- information about the process of putting a safeguarding contract and Monitoring and Support Group in place

- arrangements for pastoral care
- provision of a privacy notice to the potential subject of a contract and completion of the form acknowledging receipt of information and providing communication preferences.
- an opportunity for the subject to explain their personal circumstances, allegations, and convictions
- an exploration of the nature of safeguarding risk and how this is handled in the Methodist Church
- consideration of the nature of any risks to those who are already engaging in the local church
- clarification of their wishes about the activities they would like to undertake and level of involvement with the Church.
- support networks available to the subject such as family and friends
- other positive aspects such as employment, voluntary work or activities.
- an opportunity for the subject to consider what positive outcomes they would like to work towards as part of their engagement with the Church
- how the Church can assist the subject with positive objectives.

It is helpful to initiate a conversation that allows the person to reflect on how they have arrived in their current situation. This will provide a clear understanding of the person's perception of past and current events and acknowledgement of any potential risk. This should be undertaken without judgement but with respectful uncertainty, so that the person is given a realistic idea of the opportunities that may be open to them. It may become apparent that the church the subject wishes to attend, cannot facilitate their engagement. This could be because of the presence of vulnerable members of the congregation or because there are insufficient members of the congregation to set up an MSG. In this case, it should be acknowledged as soon as possible and alternative options provided.

4.7.5 Identifying a Chair and Monitoring and Support Group (MSG) Members

In some circuits and churches, there is a great deal of experience of working with those subject to safeguarding contracts as part of MSGs. In other locations, this may be the first occasion on which a group is required. The DSO will work closely with the local minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to identify suitable people to undertake these roles. Where a safeguarding contract is requested by a Safeguarding Panel, there may be specific recommendations about the sort of experience or people needed for the MSG.

Appropriate safer recruitment procedures should take place prior to engagement with a MSG for the first time to ensure that both chairs and members are able to undertake the required

activities. The DSO or minister in pastoral charge should find time to discuss the demands of the role with all new volunteers before any commitment to join a MSG.

The DSO should not be a full member of any group, as their role is to provide ongoing support and advice from a position outside of the group. This is particularly important with regard to the removal of a safeguarding contract where the independent opinion of the DSO, among others, is an important contribution to the decision making.

The Chair

The chair of the Monitoring and Support Group may be the minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent in many cases but the value of an independent chair should not be underestimated. The circumstances of the local church, the availability of skills and confidence in managing safeguarding contracts are also relevant. Supernumerary ministers and others of similar standing living in the locality may be invited to undertake the role of chair. They can provide a valuable source of experience and independent leadership and close partnership with the minister in pastoral charge and DSO.

The key skills for the chair of an MSG are:

- ability to encourage all parties to engage actively, even where different perspectives may be held
- commitment to leading the group and personal resilience to manage sensitive and complex situations
- problem solving skills and an ability to face challenging situations
- willingness to extend current knowledge of relevant Standing Orders, policies and procedures and develop safeguarding practice
- ability to support the development of effective relationships and communication
- confidence to raise matters of procedure, policy or practice with relevant officers on behalf of the group or subject
- ability to provide the leadership necessary for the monitoring and support functions of the group to be balanced
- a supportive and open mind-set so that members of the group feel able to raise concerns whether they relate to the running of the group or their capacity to take part
- understanding of the importance of information management and data security.

Members of Monitoring and Support Groups

The following principles should be considered in identifying suitable members for Monitoring and Support Groups:

- The group should comprise about five people who may include the minister in pastoral charge and any person who has agreed to offer pastoral support or accompany the subject of the contract in worship or other church activities.
- There is no expectation that everyone taking part as a member will have had professional or voluntary safeguarding experience in the past. They will be given a clear briefing by the DSO before the first full meeting and additional relevant training opportunities to support this work.
- The majority of members usually come from the local church but at least one member of the local church must be included.
- It is helpful to include at least one person who has a safeguarding background, whether inside the Church or outside e.g. previous roles in teaching, youth work, social work, probation services, policing or health. This can bring confidence to the group as a whole.
- The group should be balanced in point of view so that considerations do not become unduly negative or unquestioningly supportive of the person subject to the safeguarding contract.
- It is always useful to include someone with an independent view from beyond a particular church or circuit. This could be in the form of a DSG member, retired supernumerary minister the relevant police or offender manager.
- Members may need a robust attitude both in terms of the nature of offending that may be discussed, and the likelihood of challenge by the subject of the conditions.
- It is not necessary that all members are in full agreement with each other at all times and a diversity of opinions is a healthy. The ability to listen to others and respond constructively to differences in opinion are key principles for successful engagement.
- Conflicts of interest should be carefully considered. The efficacy of any group may be harmed by vested interests or where independent consideration of issues is not possible.

4.7.6 Identifying Safeguarding Risks

Where there is a relevant conviction or caution, the DSO will complete form SGC/2 Summary of Risks on behalf of the local church. However, if another party feels able or has suitable experience to undertake this activity, they can do it with the DSO providing guidance and oversight.

The following risk areas should be considered when identifying specific risks:

- risks to survivors and those from vulnerable groups
- risks to those who engage with the Church and provide support to the subject
- risks to the subject and their family (disclosure, health etc.)
- risks to the wider community using church facilities.

- risks to the organisation (including compliance with legislation, policy & procedure, data protection, reputation etc.).

It may be helpful to undertake a physical walk through of relevant premises, request a rough sketch or obtain photographs of the location to help identify safeguarding risks. In many situations, there may already be measures that mitigate or remove a specific risk. It is important that these are considered first.

4.7.7 The Safeguarding Contract

While the Summary of Risks (SGC/2) focuses on concerns, the safeguarding contract has a much wider remit and therefore should include appropriate restrictions, agreed behaviours or actions, as well as commitment from all parties to work towards future goals. In order to achieve the maximum engagement with the MSG and the safeguarding contract, the subject must understand why restrictions are being put in place and feel that the Church wishes to help them move towards a more positive position.

Tips for creating an effective safeguarding contract

- 1) Consider carefully the location where the person will engage with the Church and make relevant provisions for toileting, refreshments and movement around the location.
- 2) Do not forget to include conditions that commit the MSG to following Methodist Church safeguarding policy, procedures and Standing Orders, safe information sharing and pastoral support. This will confirm that the MSG is working for the best interests of all parties.
- 3) The safeguarding contract needs to be signed and dated by the subject and by the members of the MSG.
- 4) The contract should involve the subject's family where possible, if they are engaging with the Church.
- 5) When creating conditions, you may refer to examples in the SGC/3. These should be adjusted to contain specific references to activities and engagement, relevant to the local situation. They are only appropriate where the example chosen can be directly connected to an identified risk in that specific situation. Local solutions, applicable to individual circumstances should always be considered.

Where possible, conditions and development activities should follow SMART principles:

Specific

Conditions should include details of the individual's circumstances and activities.

Measurable

Consideration needs to be made as to how the MSG can judge whether the conditions have been met. This will assist in recognising positive progress and dealing with issues fairly. It will also support review processes.

Achievable

Conditions should be proportionate and goals achievable to encourage participation.

Realistic

Safety should not be compromised or past history ignored when considering risk. False optimism may result in the subject not being provided with the boundaries they need to move them forward and may put those engaging with the Church at risk.

Time-framed

Timeframes for the achievement of specific actions are needed and must be clearly specified at the outset. This will ensure that all parties are clear when actions will be undertaken, by whom and the required dates. This will support the review process and ensure that groups and individuals do not drift off course.

Additional Issues that may need to be considered in the contract:

- residential events
- events in another church or church organisation, circuit or national events (a joint agreement is often desirable in these circumstances)
- finding another church, circuit or district when there are victims/survivors in the preferred area
- specific arrangements required in Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

The draft safeguarding contract should also be shared with the supervising police officer and/or offender manager who has had previous contact with the DSO. That officer should be requested to review the contract for suitability to address risks of which they are aware. This is an important step to developing partnership working. It will also make sure that someone who may have more information than it is possible to release to the Church, has oversight of the proposed arrangements.

Over time, the regularity of the meetings may be reduced if all parts of the contract are being fulfilled. The minimum provision would be an annual, recorded discussion between the minister, local safeguarding officer and DSO or the appointed DSG member and the subject.

4.7.8 Launching the Monitoring and Support Group

4.7.8.1 Preparatory Meeting of the Monitoring and Support Group

The subject does not attend the preparatory meeting of the MSG. The purpose of the meeting is to prepare the members for undertaking their role. This is for the group to become familiar with each other, to be briefed about the relevant policies and procedures and to ask questions or raise concerns, before formally meeting with the subject. This is usually led by the DSO, with the minister in pastoral charge or the circuit superintendent in attendance.

Copies of key procedural documents or relevant extracts may be provided before the meeting or at the time, as well as a verbal explanation. By the end of the preparatory meeting, the members should be clear about their responsibilities and feel confident about what they are undertaking.

The following items may be considered relevant material for briefing members of a MSG:

- **Standing Orders 690, 010, 232-237, Book VI Part 4**
- **Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy (particularly sections 4, 7 and the glossary)**
- **Information Sharing for Practitioners (2018) – government guidance**

Particular reference should be made during the briefing to information sharing and confidentiality requirements. All members of the Monitoring and Support Group should be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement and be provided with a privacy notice. These forms should be completed before any information about the subject and their circumstances is provided to any party. It may be helpful to show these documents or provide a copy if the subject is concerned about confidentiality or information handling. A standard confidentiality agreement can be obtained via the Methodist Church website.

All members of the MSG should be asked if they have any questions and encouraged to air their concerns about taking on this role. This will build open communication and support between group members and may prevent issues developing in future.

Information Sharing with the MSG

The DSO or minister in pastoral charge will provide a briefing about the safeguarding concerns that relate to the subject of the contract. If a connexional risk assessment has been undertaken, the summary of that risk assessment will be provided to the Monitoring and Support Group. Alternatively, if there has been no connexional risk assessment, a summary of the information contained in forms SGC1-2 (information and summary of risk) and a draft copy of SGC/3 (safeguarding contract) will be provided. This may take place before the meeting to allow members time to consider the documents in advance, as long as confidentiality agreements and privacy notices are already in place for those receiving the information.

It is not possible to manage a risk that is not understood and therefore sharing information with the MSG is necessary to allow appropriate responses and guidance to be provided. Sufficient information should be shared to allow the MSG to make reasoned and evidenced decisions and understand the risks that may be present. However, automatic, blanket disclosure of all known information is not advised.

DSOs are able to share extracts or the whole of a connexional risk assessment if they feel this is an appropriate, proportionate and legitimate course of action to inform risk management. If this is being considered, the DSO will record in the relevant case file the reasons why this was deemed necessary. The level of disclosure from the SGC/1 will be agreed via discussion with the chair prior to the initial briefing of the group. The DSO and the chair should keep the disclosure of information under regular review to ensure that sufficient information is available to the MSG to reflect changing circumstances.

It is important that sufficient information should be shared with the MSG to identify any known safeguarding risks, which may be relevant to the operation of the group and may affect members. The considerations in 4.7.4.1 should apply also to planning MSG meetings.

4.7.8.2 First Full Meeting of the Monitoring and Support Group

The first full meeting will include the subject and the MSG members. A note taker should be identified for this and all meetings. The DSO and circuit superintendent or minister in pastoral charge should attend where possible. They may provide an initial briefing, respond to queries and their presence will demonstrate unity of purpose and action.

The subject may have been provided with a copy of the draft safeguarding contract as agreed by the preparatory meeting of the MSG, prior to the meeting. The contents should be discussed and an opportunity provided for the subject to raise concerns or questions. Where possible, the safeguarding contract should be agreed and signed by all parties at this meeting.

Following this and all meetings, there should be a short period of time spent reviewing the outcome of the meeting after the subject has left and discussing any issues that may have arisen. This will also allow for questions that have been raised during the meeting to be discussed and arrangements made for them to be passed on to the DSO or District or Synod Safeguarding Group (as appropriate). Any disagreement between parties in relation to matters arising in meetings should be raised out of hearing of the subject of the contract. The chair will ensure that suitable time is allocated to discussing such matters and differences of opinion so that meetings with the subject of the contract are not diverted by the airing of different views within the group. Notes of the main meeting should be shared with attendees and sent via secure means.

4.7.8.3 Future Meetings

Following the first meeting, the chair of the Monitoring and Support Group will take responsibility for coordinating the group. If a District Safeguarding Group (DSG) member is allocated to the group, the chair will ensure they are invited to meetings. Arrangements should be made by the chair for feedback to the DSO after subsequent meetings. It is the group's role, with the support of the minister in pastoral charge, to provide appropriate monitoring and support of the subject in their engagement with the church.

At each meeting the following issues should be discussed:

- Provision of an opportunity for the subject to reflect on what is working well and what has not been so successful.
- Consideration of the safeguarding contract conditions including where concerns may have become apparent and where significant positive actions have been demonstrated.
- Clear challenge of any action that may be causing concern and agreement with the subject about steps to be taken to address the concern.
- Recognition of progress towards any agreed goals and objectives or next steps.
- Identification of any questions or queries about the contract or its operation that may need to be passed on to the DSO or DSG.
- Evaluation of support in place and consideration as to whether additional support is required.

It is expected that effective channels of communication between the DSO, minister in pastoral charge and MSG Chair will remain open on a continuing, informal basis. This will include additional information sharing relating to matters regarding the subject, which become known to the DSO and may affect the activities of the MSG.

4.7.8.4 Non-Compliance

The most appropriate way to deal with issues arising around compliance is to tackle the situation with transparency at the earliest possible opportunity. This can often prevent an escalation or continuance of the situation and bring the subject back on track and in line with their contract. It can also prevent ill feeling, if further action is required at a later stage. While it can be difficult and challenging to raise concerns about non-compliance, the subject of the safeguarding contract should be advised by the chair of the MSG or other nominated member of the group of the behaviour which is causing concern and any breach of the conditions. Information about any concern or breach must be clear and factual, with details about when and where the concern arose or the breach took place. This may be confirmed in writing or recorded *in* the notes of the next MSG, where appropriate. The subject should be encouraged to discuss the concern so they have an opportunity to clarify the circumstances and work with the MSG to resolve the issues, where possible.

The DSO must be advised of any concern around compliance at the earliest opportunity so that support may be offered to the MSG in dealing with the situation.

Where the subject is being actively managed by police or probation services, the relevant officer should be informed of any significant or continuing concern around compliance and must be informed of any breach of civil order, registration, probation requirement or criminal activity relevant to safeguarding in the Church or outside. The chair of the group should take advice from the DSO as soon as possible, if this occurs.

4.7.8.5 Changing Circumstances

It is important to maintain continuity of arrangements for pastoral support and monitoring by planning what to do if officers and ministers changes in the church, or a member of the group is unable to continue. Where any change to the membership of the group is necessary, the minister in pastoral charge must be informed and appropriate information passed to any new member to allow them to undertake their role fully. ***When the minister in pastoral charge moves on, they are required to pass over details of the existence and terms of any safeguarding contract to the new minister (Standing Order 692). Where possible, a verbal briefing should take place between the two ministers to allow questions to be asked and clarification to be sought about current arrangements. If there are no safeguarding contracts, this should be confirmed.***

If, due to exceptional circumstances, the new minister in pastoral charge does not receive information about safeguarding contracts in the Local Church from their predecessor, they must contact the District Safeguarding Officer and Circuit Superintendent to make them aware that this has not taken place and to seek confirmation of contracts in that location.

The new minister in pastoral charge should ensure that they are sufficiently aware of arrangements that are in place and any risks presented by the subject of a contract by liaising with the Chairs of Monitoring and Support Groups in the Local Church and if necessary, the DSO at an early stage.

If the subject is moving to worship in another circuit or at another local church, there is a duty upon the minister from the original church or circuit to inform the minister in the new location. It is for the minister in the new location to ensure that arrangements continue if the subject wishes to continue their involvement with the Church.

(See Standing Orders 691-2)

4.7.8.6 Review

At the end of each 12-month period, a review should be undertaken by the group and an annual review form completed (SGC/4) and forwarded by the chair to the Connexional Safeguarding Team via the DSO. This should be written with reference to the original risk assessment that was prepared at the start of the contract or any subsequent one undertaken. It should state whether the risks identified initially are still relevant, have become more or less likely to occur or there is an

increase or reduction in the severity of the likely outcome. If there are differing opinions within the group about issues, these may be recorded in the annual review.

At least every 3 years, the group should consider whether there have been significant changes by the subject, which warrant a change or variation **of** the contract conditions. In these circumstances, the chair of the MSG will write to the Safeguarding Director requesting a new risk assessment to consider strengthening or relaxing the conditions (including possible removal of the contract).

4.7.9 Removing or Changing a Safeguarding Contract

The Church recognizes that many people with support and guidance can change their lives to follow a positive path away from negative attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, following approval from the Methodist Conference in 2017, there is now a process by which the conditions of a safeguarding contract may be changed or removed (Standing Order 690A, Constitutional Practice & Discipline of the Methodist Church).

It is important that all aspects of the process are followed so that the situation is evaluated properly, and all those who may be affected have an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and perspectives, if they wish to do so.

4.7.9.1 Time frames for changes/removal

At least every 3 years, the Monitoring and Support Group can consider whether circumstances have materially changed. The group should meet (or arrange a teleconference) without the subject present to reflect and carefully consider the situation.

At the conclusion of this meeting, they can make one of the following decisions:

No change is required

The Monitoring and Support Group may come to the decision that no change to the safeguarding contract is appropriate at this time. The chair will then advise the subject and record the next date at which a removal/significant change of the contract will be considered. The DSO must be notified of this decision by the chair of the Monitoring and Support Group, so that an accurate record can be maintained.

Significant changes or removal of the safeguarding contract requested

If a significant change or removal of the safeguarding contract is deemed appropriate, the chair of the MSG will contact the DSO. The DSO will make a request to the Director of Safeguarding (via their Casework Supervisor) for a new risk assessment to review the changed circumstances. The Director of Safeguarding will then confirm **whether** the DSO is in support of this action.

Where the party subject to a safeguarding contract is currently under any form of statutory

supervision, management or legal restriction in relation to safeguarding matters, consultation with the relevant supervising officer, statutory agency or oversight body must have been undertaken by the DSO, prior to a recommendation for change being forwarded to the Safeguarding Director. The Safeguarding Director must be advised of the opinion of the party or body consulted.

The Safeguarding Director will ***review the request for a new District Risk Assessment to be undertaken and authorise the assessment, where deemed appropriate.***

4.7.9.2 District Risk Assessment

In most cases, a request to materially change conditions or remove a safeguarding contract will require a district risk assessment, carried out by the DSO. The Safeguarding Director may decide that it is more appropriate for a Connexional Risk Assessment to be undertaken, using an assessor from outside the district. In either case, the standard template (SGC/5), which is available via the Methodist Church website, should be used for the amend/change process. The SGC/5 risk assessment form template includes an opportunity for key parties to express their views. The risk assessor will seek to include the opinions of relevant parties, in addition to their own assessment of the situation. The assessment will be considered by a Safeguarding Panel who will provide direction as to whether change or removal is appropriate. There is no right of appeal following a risk assessment under the amend/change process and the subject must wait until the next opportunity for a review within 3 years and with the support of the Monitoring and Support Group.

4.7.9.3 Dormant Contracts

Where a safeguarding contract is considered to be dormant because the subject is no longer engaging with the Church for a period of 12 months, then the arrangements may be brought to a close.

The chair of the Monitoring and Support Group should inform the subject that the group will no longer be meeting and the reason for this. They should also confirm that the group may be re-started and arrangements renewed if they wish to return or circumstances change. It is preferable that written notification is provided by the chair but if this information is shared verbally, a note of the decision must be added to the file, prior to closure.

District safeguarding officers should be notified as soon as possible when a party subject to contract indicates they may wish to cease contact with the Church or this is likely to be the case. DSOs will notify the Connexional Safeguarding Team of any contract that is dormant so that records may be updated in line with GDPR requirements.

SECTION 5

Procedures for the management of safeguarding information

Careful attention should be paid to the storage, use and sharing of data held by the church relating to other people. This is critical to ensure that those who engage with safeguarding processes have confidence in the legitimacy and appropriateness of actions taken. The management of information is governed by law, statutory and government guidance including:

General Data Protection Regulation (2018)

ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf

Information Sharing for Practitioners (2018)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Care and Support guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 bit.ly/2bOUaho

Adult Safeguarding: Sharing information – SCIE Jan 2015 bit.ly/1cIHFBB

Data Protection Act (2018)

Further guidance in relation to information sharing can be found in Section 7.3.2 Information Sharing Guidance.

5.1 The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018) outline the rights of individuals regarding information that is held and used by organisations. Many of the provisions which were previously within the Data Protection Act 1998 are also present within GDPR and new Data Protection Act but the requirements for transparency have been increased, along with the sanctions for failing to comply. Everyone within the church should understand their responsibilities under GDPR and comply with its requirements.

The introduction of GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018) provide an opportunity for all those engaging in activities, which relate to safeguarding to review how they use information about

others and commit to the highest standards of data protection practice. This is in line with the Safeguarding Policy commitments contained in Section 2 and should form a part of all safeguarding activity.

Further information is available from the following sources:

<https://www.tmc.org.uk/>

<https://ico.org.uk/>

5.1.1 Key terms relating to data protection

There are several key terms relating to data protection and the GDPR, which need to be understood in order for those supporting safeguarding within the Methodist Church so that they comply with their legal responsibilities.

Personal Data is any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person, the 'Data Subject'. This could include details such as names, dates of birth and addresses relating to safeguarding. If the information is anonymous, it will still be personal data if it is possible to identify the individual through the circumstances.

Special Categories of Personal Data

- political opinions
- religious or philosophical beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetic data
- biometric identity data
- health information
- sex life
- sexual orientation

In most cases, safeguarding concerns will include special category personal data.

Criminal Offence Data is designated under a separate category with additional requirements relating to its processing. This is information relating to criminal allegations, proceedings or convictions.

The Controller is the legal entity that is responsible for ensuring compliance with data protection requirements:

- for churches, circuits and districts, this is the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

- for the Connexional Team, this is Methodist Council. They will also be the relevant Controller for safeguarding and complaints and discipline matters.

The Processor is any person who processes data on behalf of the Controller. This will include those who record and share personal and special category data within safeguarding contexts. GDPR confirms the responsibility of processors to comply with the provisions of GDPR. For this reason, all parties who are likely to process data within a safeguarding context are advised to gain familiarity with key concepts and definitions and raise any queries or requests for clarification with safeguarding officers.

A Data Subject is an individual about whom personal data is held by an organisation.

A Privacy Notice is a notice informing individuals about why their personal data is being collected, how it will be used, their right of complaint and access to that information.

Data Mapping is the process by which organisations assess the categories of information they process and record, how this information is used and for how long it needs to be retained. Retention schedules are available on the TMCP and Methodist Church websites confirming the length of time data should be held.

5.1.2 How must data be processed?

- fairly
- transparently
- for a specified, explicit and legitimate purpose
- adequate and limited to what is necessary
- accurately and kept up to date
- for no longer than necessary for the specific purpose
- securely

Undertaking the following activities will help to ensure compliance with the principles of data processing under the GDPR:

- take time to understand policies and procedures provided by the Methodist Church which address data protection
- be prepared to explain an individual's rights under GDPR if they raise questions during safeguarding processes

- provide privacy notices that clearly explain the lawful basis for processing and provide details of the data subject's rights
- ensure that data subjects have an opportunity to advise data processors of any inaccuracies and be proactive in making corrections within required timescales
- follow information provided in this Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance document about storage, retention and sharing of data, particularly with reference to security
- review practice to ensure that the retention of information is actively managed and time frames for retaining material are followed.

5.1.3 What are the rights of a data subject?

1. Right to be Informed

This is addressed by the provision of privacy notices (see 5.1.4) and information supplied by the Methodist Church from various sources.

2. Consent

Any consent must be true consent with a right to withdraw that consent. Consent must be explicitly provided and not assumed. Many safeguarding data processing actions are required by legislation, statutory or government guidance, in which case consent is not needed.

3. Right of Access

This is addressed by the Subject Access Request process through which information held about an individual may be obtained (see 5.1.5).

4. Right of Redaction

Inaccurate or incomplete data should be corrected within one month. This period can be extended to two months if the material is complicated. Third parties with which the information has been shared must be advised of the corrections.

This is done routinely within risk assessment processes where a draft copy of the assessment is supplied to the subject to allow them to identify inaccuracies and provide feedback before it is submitted to the Safeguarding Panel. Where inaccurate information has been corrected, a note should be retained to confirm that action has been taken, who made the amendment to the record and the date on which this was done.

If a factual inaccuracy is notified, then it is important to clarify whether it is erroneous information or an evidenced judgement from a risk assessor or other party with which that person is in disagreement. It may be helpful to discuss this in more detail with the individual reporting the error.

5. Right to Erasure or Right to be Forgotten

This is **not** an absolute right and may be requested in the following circumstances:

- the data is no longer necessary for the purpose for which it was collected
- consent is withdrawn
- there is no legitimate interest for the continued processing
- the data was unlawfully processed
- the data related to online services aimed at children
- if it causes unwarranted damage or distress.

A few exceptions exist to this right, such processing is in order to comply with statutory requirements or to defend a legal claim. Bearing in mind current requirements to retain information, advice should be taken from Conference Office and/or the data controller before deleting a record.

6. Right to Restrict Processing

Individuals can restrict processing activities where:

- the accuracy of the data is questioned
- there has been an objection to the processing and it is being considered whether there are legitimate grounds to override the objection
- processing is unlawful and the individual has requested restriction as opposed to erasure
- the data is no longer required but the individual requires it for legal purposes

Where it is believed that this right may be applicable relating to safeguarding information, guidance should be obtained from the relevant data controller and Conference Office, before any restrictions are put in place.

7. Right to Data Portability

This allows individuals to transfer their data from one organisation to another.

Further advice should be taken from the data controller in relation to this right.

8. Right to Object

If an objection is raised by an individual to the data processing, it must be stopped immediately unless:

- it can be demonstrated that there are legitimate grounds for processing which override the rights and freedoms of the individual; or
- is required to establish, exercise or defend a legal claim; or
- conducting research for the performance of a public interest task.

Further advice should be taken from the data controller where the right to object is raised as a matter of urgency.

9. Automated Decision Making or Profiling

This gives individuals the right to have a decision undertaken by a human, rather than an automated system. It is unlikely to relate to safeguarding within the Methodist Church.

5.1.4 Privacy Notices

Privacy notices are central to effective data protection practice within safeguarding and they should be supplied using standard documents for specific activities such as reporting a safeguarding concern, ongoing safeguarding case management and before undertaking a risk assessment. Standard documents are available via the Methodist Church website and should be used on all occasions as the basis for information provided to individuals. This is to ensure that all information required by GDPR is supplied. Sample privacy notices may be found on the Methodist Church website.

Children must also be provided with information about how their data is used in the same way as adults but it should be appropriate to the child's age and capacity to understand.

For further details of specific information that must be included in a privacy notice see section 7.3.7 Required contents for privacy notices.

5.1.4.1 When should information be supplied?

- a) If information has been provided by a person to whom it relates, a privacy notice should be supplied at the time.

However, safeguarding concerns may be raised at times and in situations where to provide an immediate notice is impossible. Disclosures are often made on the basis of perceived trust in an individual and do not relate to their role or familiarity with data protection. The person may be too distressed to receive this information and discuss the contents at the point of initial disclosure. In such circumstances, a church, circuit or DSO should be contacted at the earliest opportunity (within 24 hours) to provide support and assist with the provision of the required information. It will be helpful for anyone in this position to tell the person who is providing information and confirm when a privacy notice will be supplied.

- b) If information has been supplied to the church by a third party which relates to another individual, the person to whom the information relates should receive a privacy notice within a reasonable period of the data being received within one month.

The privacy notice should have been supplied at the first point at which contact was made or before the data is disclosed to another party. Where police, children or adult services are involved or likely to become involved, advice from the relevant statutory agency should be taken before disclosing any information to a party who is not already aware that the information has been passed to the church.

Where a privacy notice is supplied to a survivor of abuse or someone who is experiencing anxiety as a result of safeguarding processes, it may be appropriate to provide an explanation in person or via telephone to provide reassurance. This should be approached sensitively and explained with care. It will be helpful to make the point that the Methodist Church places great emphasis on ensuring that all parties are made aware of their rights and that details are provided as required by GDPR. The use of privacy notices will become familiar practice but may initially be unfamiliar and *cause* concern. Many people will be glad of this transparency though, some may feel concerned that clarifying circumstances, or making others aware of information they may not have been aware of previously, may cause unnecessary anxiety. Under GDPR, the provision of a privacy notice is now mandatory.

Even where processing is being undertaken without consent for safeguarding purposes, the Data Protection Act 2018, Schedule 1, Part 2 (see 5.1.5), still requires a privacy notice to be supplied at an appropriate time.

5.1.4.2 The Lawful Bases for Processing Personal Data

The basis for processing personal and special category data must be included in a privacy notice. Processing on the basis of consent or legal obligation may be the most relevant to safeguarding activities.

Where processing only relates to personal data, one of the following bases must be included in the privacy notice:

- a) Consent: the individual has given clear consent for the church to process their personal data for a specific purpose. This may apply where an application is being made for enhanced DBS clearance in relation to regulated activity.
- b) Legal obligation: the processing is necessary for you to comply with the law (not including contractual obligations). This is likely to apply where a safeguarding concern is reported and parties within the church are required to interact with statutory authorities or take action to address safeguarding risks.
- c) Contract: the processing is necessary for a contract you have with the individual, or because they have asked you to take specific steps before entering into a contract.
- d) Vital interests: the processing is necessary to protect someone's life (generally life or death situations only).
- e) Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

- f) Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data, which overrides those interests.

Where processing relates to special categories of personal data (see 5.1.1), the privacy notice must include the following:

- one of the six legal bases for processing personal data (above)
- AND one of the conditions below
 - a) Consent for one or more of the specified processes
 - b) Processing is required under obligations relating to employment, social security and social protection law.
 - c) It is necessary to protect the vital interests of the subject or another person where they are incapable of giving consent.
 - d) It is carried out in the course of legitimate activities with appropriate safeguards by a foundation, association or any other not-for-profit body with a political, philosophical, religious or trade union aim and on condition that processing relates solely to the members or to people who have regular contact with it in connection with its aims. Personal data is not disclosed outside that body without consent.
 - e) Processing related to data which is made public by the subject.
 - f) It is necessary in relation to legal claims or court requirements.
 - g) It is necessary in the public interest on the basis of a law which is proportionate to the aim pursued.
 - h) It is necessary in relation to preventive or occupational health or the provision of health and social care.
 - i) It is necessary for public health, cross-border threats to health etc.
 - j) It is necessary for archiving in the public interest (scientific or historic).

5.1.5 Specific Provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 relating to Safeguarding

While the General Data Protection Regulation provides for routine processing of data for church activities, the Data Protection Act 2018 makes specific provision for the release of information relevant to safeguarding situations.

1. The supply of information to investigations or inquiries conducted by statutory agencies such as police, adult or children's services.

In this case, the legitimate basis for processing is that it is in the substantive public interest for the prevention or detection of an unlawful act under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, Schedule 1, Part 2 (10). In all cases, a data protection form should be requested from the agency requesting the information which should be added to the safeguarding record. Concerns **about** the vulnerability of any party must be passed to the officer receiving information in writing.

2. Other safeguarding activities including recording information, making inquiries, risk assessment and the application of safeguarding measures.

The legitimate basis for these activities is that it is in the substantive public interest and necessary for the protection of someone of any age at risk from neglect, **or** physical or emotional harm, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, Schedule 1, Part 2 (18). This includes specific individuals and groups [...] (e.g. children or adults at risk). If there is reasonable suspicion that the individuals need care and support, are at risk from neglect, physical or emotional harm and unable to protect themselves, they are considered at risk for this legislation. Information can be shared without consent.

On occasion, concerns are raised that information sharing about safeguarding issues is a breach of the subject's human rights. Information Sharing for Practitioners (2018) provides the following guidance:

The provisions of the Human Rights Act and the common law duty of confidence must be balanced against the effect on children or individuals at risk, if information is not shared. Welfare of a vulnerable party is the most important thing and the need for disclosure should be assessed in every case on an ongoing basis.

It is possible that it is in the subject's overall interests, the public interest, or a legal obligation such as a court order may require disclosure. In the context of safeguarding a child or young person, where the child's welfare is paramount, it is possible that the common law duty of confidence can be overcome.

It can sometimes be helpful to share a copy of the government guidance to reassure those who may have concerns about the basis and legitimacy **of** information sharing.

5.1.6 Subject Access Requests

Where an organisation holds data about an individual, under the GDPR, they have a right of access to that information. This can be obtained via a Subject Access Request, which **is** free of charge. The person may apply to the data controller for a copy of the information held about them.

For routine data processing for all churches, circuits and districts, the Trustees for Methodist

Church Purposes act as the Data Controller.

For data processing relating to safeguarding, complaints and discipline the Data Controller is the Methodist Church in Britain. Subject Access Requests relating to safeguarding, complaints and discipline should be sent to the Data Protection Officer at

dataprotection@methodistchurch.org.uk

or

Data Protection

Methodist Church House

25 Marylebone Road

London

NW1 5JR

All other subject access requests should be sent to:

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Central Buildings

Oldham Street

Manchester

M1 MJQ

Further information is available from the TMCP website: <https://www.t MCP.org.uk>

5.1.7 Retention of Safeguarding Information

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

In March 2015, a government inquiry into child sexual abuse *in* statutory and non-statutory organisations was set up. The Chair of the inquiry wrote to church leaders outlining *its* authority to request information under Section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005. The Chair confirmed that it was an offence to destroy, alter or tamper with evidence with the intention of suppressing *it* or preventing its disclosure to the inquiry. Consequently, the Chair directed that that information relevant to child sexual abuse in organisations should not be destroyed during the course of the inquiry. Prolonged retention of records for this purpose will not be considered a breach of the current Data Protection Act. This is will also apply to GDPR.

Relevant safeguarding material includes the following documents:

- safeguarding casework files and records
- safeguarding referrals for advice, inquiries and support to other organisations and internally
- risk assessments
- documents relating to Safeguarding Panels

- safeguarding contracts
- quality assurance information e.g. safeguarding audits, data returns etc.
- files relating to education establishments, recruitment and safeguarding
- HR Staff files
- complaints and discipline material
- files on appointments to councils, committees and other bodies
- files and papers relating to Subject Access Requests
- safeguarding leadership and governance at a church, circuit, district and connexional level
- DBS checks
- records of safeguarding concerns about children and young people or about behaviour towards them
- policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children and young people

The following links contain documents that confirm this position:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/78/view/letter-to-religious-leaders.pdf>

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/115/view/2018-07-25-guidance-note-retention-instructions-data-protection-requirements-version-2.pdf>

Retention beyond the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

The following table provides information about retention periods relating to safeguarding data:

| Item | Record Keeping | Retention |
|--|---|---|
| Record of a safeguarding concern or allegation relating to a child or vulnerable adult. This may be a member, volunteer, employee, role holder or minister This includes risk assessments and safeguarding contracts and all related materials. | A record should be retained of the nature of the allegation or concern, actions taken and the outcome. | 75 years after the last contact relating to the subject or any survivor |
| Other material held as part of safeguarding records. | This may include data supplied from other sources which may be subject to shorter retention periods if not forming part of a safeguarding record. | 75 years after the last contact relating to the subject or any survivor |

Full Methodist Church retention schedules may be found on the TMCP website.

5.1.8 Data storage

The following measures should be put in place if material containing special category or criminal data is retained:

- Access provision should be carefully planned

Only those that are required to see and use records should have access to them. A written protocol listing who has access should be drawn up with clear provision for emergency access. Data held on personally owned computers can be lost if unforeseen personal circumstances arise. This should never be the sole source of safeguarding records.

- Digital files should be subject to regular back-up.

If the data is stored on a stand-alone computer. The provisions for back-up should be away from this source to ensure that there is another copy if hardware is lost or corrupted beyond recovery. A secure server is the best option for back-up, where available but again access to safeguarding files should be limited to personnel listed in the access protocol.

- Pen drives or removable media must be encrypted if they are being used to store safeguarding records. However, the risks of loss of such items are higher than less mobile storage so great care should be taken in use.
- Software which identifies viruses, malware and phishing must be installed on systems storing safeguarding records. It must be regularly updated and the provision must include a regular scanning facility.
- Hard copy material must be stored in lockable cupboards or cabinets. Where available, these should be fire-proof.
- If material is scanned for digital retention, care should be taken to ensure that all parts of the document are contained in the scan, particularly the edges of documents. It is important to retain the integrity of the document, in case it is needed for proceedings at a later date.
- If plans are made for archiving safeguarding material with another institution, that organisation must be informed of the Methodist Church's requirements relating to retention of safeguarding records to ensure that records are not destroyed in error at a later date.
- Passwords must not include personal data which is easily identifiable e.g. a name, address, place or date of birth. Choosing three random words for a password can be easily remembered by visualisation of the items together and will create an appropriately secure password. This can be enhanced further by using a capital letter, number and symbol.

5.1.9 Data Security & Breaches

Careful consideration should be given to data security when storing, using and sharing information. Methods used to secure data should be reviewed on a regular basis. Data relating to safeguarding cases should always be handled with the utmost care. It is likely to include the most sensitive forms of data and any breach of data security is likely to have a serious impact on the parties involved. Safeguarding officers within the Church are committed to building trust with those whom they deal by ensuring that data security measures are in place to protect information. This includes following guidance about the secure transmission of information and protecting data that is retained e.g. the storage of hard copy material in locked cupboards or cabinets. All parties holding safeguarding data electronically must ensure that their computers have virus, malware and anti-phishing software, which is regularly updated.

The General Data Protection Regulation identifies that a data breach **as** the unlawful or accidental

- destruction
- loss
- alteration or
- unauthorised disclosure of any personal data.

What sort of issues could cause a breach of safeguarding data?

- A password on a computer becomes compromised so a third party gets access to safeguarding records.
- An email including personal data is sent to the wrong person via the auto complete address feature in an email.
- A tablet or laptop is lost or stolen.
- A computer crashes, or a virus infects data and records are no longer accessible.

What action should be taken if a breach of data protection takes place?

- Establish the extent of the breach and the impact that is likely on others, including emotional distress and physical/material damage.
- Contact a line manager or person in oversight.
- Advise the Connexional Safeguarding Team.
- Consider what measures will be needed to contain and manage the situation e.g. taking specialist advice, reporting to Police. Action should be taken as soon as possible.
- Record details of the nature of the breach and the action taken.

- If it is likely that the breach will result in a significant impact on the data subject, data controller to report it to the Information Commissioner within 72 hours. Where full information is not available, limited details can be reported in the first instance.
- Contact the data controller and data protection officer for further details and guidance as to what is required, including whether the subject of the information should be informed.

What type of data protection breaches must be reported to the Information Commissioner?

High risk situations are likely to require a report to the ICO. These are where there is the potential for people suffering significant detrimental effect such as discrimination, damage to reputation, financial loss, or any other significant economic or social disadvantage or where this has already happened.

5.2 Step-by-step guide to sharing information

Taking into consideration the above documents and the guidance provided in [...] section 7.3 *Information sharing guidance*, the following procedure should be adopted when receiving a request for personal data or making such a request.

1. Validate the person requesting information

Before supplying any information to a third party, check their identity and that they are in a role or position, which is entitled to make such a request and **to** receive the information. If you have prior personal or organisational knowledge of the person concerned you will not need additional validation. However, it can be tempting to be helpful and respond directly, particularly to calls which suggest they may come from a statutory agency or another church member, or are said to need urgent action.

The following actions may be taken to validate the person requesting the information:

- requesting confirmation of the request via an organisational email
- calling the person back via a main switchboard number to ensure that the number is linked to that organisation
- speaking to a manager or other key individual who may be able to verify that person's role or involvement
- doing an internet search to identify information about an organisation or individual
- checking with someone else you know who might be able to verify the person's role and identity.

If making a request for information, offer to provide evidence of your validity to the holder of the

information by any of the methods above.

2. Validate the nature of the request

Think carefully about whether there is a legitimate reason to disclose the information that you are thinking of sending and only disclose what is relevant and proportionate in the circumstances, *which* could include:

- current risk to a child
- current risk to a vulnerable adult
- request to provide information in relation to a statutory investigation (Police, Children's Services or Adult Social Care etc.)
- court order
- subject access request under the General Data Protection Regulation.

If there is any doubt about whether there is a legitimate reason for providing information, ask the DSO.

If you are making a request for information, say why you believe there is legitimate reason for the other party to disclose it, identify any risk posed by not doing so, and say how *it* will be used. If the third party is not aware of safeguarding processes in the Methodist Church, it is often helpful to explain the procedures.

3. Consider whether it is appropriate to gain consent

People often feel concerned about asking or telling someone that information about them is going to be disclosed to another party, particularly when it may not give a positive impression. Be prepared to identify at the outset information may be shared if there is believed to be a safeguarding risk. This often leads to greater acceptance, as the person sharing the information is perceived as acting in an open and honest way.

Explain:

- why the information is being shared
- what will be shared
- how it will be shared
- with whom it will be shared.

It may not be appropriate to gain consent or make the person aware that information is being shared if it will:

- prejudice the prevention or detection of a crime
- risk the health or safety of a vulnerable adult or child.

Where consent for information sharing has been refused by an adult believed to be at risk of harm, consider the following questions:

1. Does the person have capacity to provide the consent?
2. Could they be under duress or in fear of harm if they consent?
3. Are children at risk through the adult's refusal of consent?

If lacking capacity to provide consent, under duress or in fear or where there are children at risk, it may be necessary to share information without consent.

4. Consider the most secure way to provide the information

While no method of sending personal information is completely *infallible*, due regard should be given to the security *of* personal data.

If using standard mail:

- Use recorded delivery, registered delivery or a courier.
- Do not write "Private and confidential" on the outside of the envelope, as this may draw attention to the contents.
- Avoid window envelopes that may allow the contents or name to be viewed from the outside.
- Ensure that the envelope is addressed to an individual.
- Confirm that the address is current and appropriate.
- If it is a residential address and a multi-occupancy premises, confirm that the mail is delivered to a secure place such as an individual mailbox, rather than being left in an open hallway.

If using electronic mail, the following options may be used:

- an encryption system
- a password-protected attachment with the password sent via *separate means (i.e. not by a further email to the same email address)*
- an email with anonymous content with a key sent separately
- check that you have the correct and current email address. Ask the recipient **to** confirm receipt, and follow up if this is not received

5.2.1 Make a record

When sharing personal information, you should make a record of the following information:

- what was shared
- with whom
- when
- why it was felt to be legitimate to share (or why not).

SECTION 6

Procedures promoting safer practice

6.1 Policy on promoting safer practice

The aim of safeguarding within the Church is to create safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

Critical to good safeguarding is safer recruitment and safer working practices. The Church has developed procedures for both these areas, informed by legislation and government guidance. As such, we aim to:

- carefully select and train all those with responsibility within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles
- ensure that any church activities are organised in such a way to avoid the risk of harm to everyone participating
- promote safe spaces that are inclusive and welcoming.

The following procedures are intended for use by anyone involved in the recruitment of people working with vulnerable groups and for those responsible for organising and running activities with vulnerable groups. They are not exhaustive and members will sometimes have to include additional safeguards. Advice can always be sought from the relevant DSO or the Connexional Safeguarding Team.

6.2 Safer recruitment and DBS

The Methodist Church in Britain **offer** guidance on carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks as part of safer recruitment <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>

6.3 Code of safer working practice with Children and Young People

Every local church and circuit working with children. Appendix V should be used to produce a local version of the document.

6.3.1 Appropriate conduct (children)

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy.
- treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination, prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult
- ensure **that** another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks should be organised for young children)
- ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to or **contact** if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern and encourage them to speak out if they feel uncomfortable or concerned. They should be made aware of organisations that can provide support.
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices (**see 6.7.1.1 for full details**)
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader in the first instance. Although you must also contact the church, circuit or district safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- initiate physical contact and if this is initiated by the child, do not pull away abruptly but do so gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time
- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or toileting
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games

- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
- allow abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one child or group
- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is clearly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts.

6.3.2 Appropriate dress

You should dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.

6.3.3 Receiving Gifts

There may be occasions when children give you gifts. It is polite to accept a gift but your group leader should be informed. If you receive any gift of significant value, e.g. more than £15.00, you should talk with your group leader about whether it is appropriate to accept it. As a general rule, expensive gifts should not be accepted.

6.3.4 Anti-bullying

Bullying can take place in any environment where there is an imbalance of power and control.

This can have a devastating effect on those who are bullied and others inside and outside the church community. It may affect individuals of any age and circumstance. The Church is committed to responding effectively to any safeguarding concern resulting from bullying. The following resources provided further information about this subject:

Positive Working Together: The Methodist Church: www.methodist.org.uk/positiveworkingtogether
Positive Working Together: A Short Guide: www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/guidance-for-churches/positive-working-together/introducing-positive-working-together/

6.3.4.1 Peer on peer abuse and contextual safeguarding

The Methodist Church recognises that as children move towards their teenage years, their circles of influence change. Peers and other external influences in the community and online may become more significant. The contextual safeguarding approach highlights the interaction between these different spheres and the potential for positive and negative outcomes. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and therefore all those engaging with the Church, should remain vigilant for indicators of abuse and commit to working with community and statutory partners to create a safer environment. No individual agency or party is likely to have a full view of a particular situation. The Church can play a significant role in supporting young people who are at risk of peer on peer abuse, gang membership and sexual exploitation by sharing information and engaging with the community.

Further information about peer on peer abuse and contextual safeguarding developed by the University of Bedfordshire may be found via the following link:

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/documents/Contextual-Safeguarding-Briefing.pdf>

6.3.5 Required staffing levels

It is the responsibility of the group leader to consider individual circumstances and arrange sufficient supervision to ensure the safety and effective management of all activities.

The following issues must be considered when determining appropriate numbers of helpers:

- the gender of the group – if mixed, then staff members should also be mixed, where possible
- the duration of the activity
- the competence and experience of the staff providing oversight and support
- the age of the group – staff should have the appropriate skills for the age they are working with
- children with additional support needs, such as physical disabilities, behavioural or mental health problems – extra staff may be necessary
- the size and layout of the room or outdoor area and any particular issues that may be relevant to that location.

- young people attending who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping. **They** should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. Only those over 18 can be counted as part of the staff to child ratio.
- first aid cover
- the nature of the activity, what this involves and what tasks there will be for children
- There should be a minimum of two adults present at any activity (it is recommended that there be at least one male and one female) in line with the ratios below. Staff ratios should also be based on a risk assessment e.g. increased ratios for outdoor or activities.

| Required Adult to Child Ratios (as recommended by the NSPCC) | | |
|--|------------------------|------|
| 0 – 2 years | 1 adult to 3 children | 1:3 |
| 2 – 3 years | 1 adult to 4 children | 1:4 |
| 4 – 8 years | 1 adult to 6 children | 1:6 |
| 9 – 12 years | 1 adult to 8 children | 1:8 |
| 13 – 18 years | 1 adult to 10 children | 1:10 |

6.3.6 Unaccompanied Children

The Methodist Church welcomes those of all ages and is keen to appeal to children and young people.

It is advisable that children under the age of 11 years should be taken to and collected from church or a church activity. If a child is over 11 years of age, it remains the responsibility of their parent/carer to ensure they are cared for, arrive and leave church safely.

6.3.6.1 Action on arrival of an unaccompanied child

On occasion, a child may be sent to church on their own without prior arrangement or decide to attend an activity themselves. Where possible, the following step should be taken by a party who has been cleared to work with children in regulated activity.

The following actions should be taken if an unaccompanied child arrives on church premises:

1. ***Make them welcome and reassure them that they are not at fault.***
2. ***Confirm their name(s) and try to find out who the parent/carer is and their contact details.***
3. ***If the child says anything that suggests there may be a safeguarding issue, the district safeguarding officer should be contacted for guidance.***
4. ***If there are no safeguarding concerns that involve the parent/carer, contact them and discuss the following topics:***
 - ***Confirm the child's location and that they are safe.***
 - ***Provide details of the party who is looking after them and the activity the child has come to attend.***
 - ***Get permission for the child to remain.***
 - ***Provide a consent form and request that they complete it as soon as possible.***
 - ***Obtain contact information for the child's next of kin and details of allergies or other health conditions.***
 - ***Ensure that the parent/carer is made aware of the time the activity finishes and encourage them to collect their child at this time. Highlight the normal dropping off and pick up points for the activity.***

6.3.6.2 Children are not collected from an activity

Church leaders should not be expected to be responsible for, or transport, children unless this has been arranged and agreed beforehand. The required provisions around the transportation of children must be followed if this becomes necessary (see 6.10.7)

Where a child is not collected from an activity without prior agreement, the following steps should be taken:

- ***The parent or carer should be contacted to confirm whether it is safe for them to go home unescorted.***
- ***If both the parent/carer and activity leader deem it is safe for them to go alone, the child should be given details of the activity. The parents/carers should be invited to discuss future arrangements.***
- ***In the event the parent/carer cannot be contacted, follow the above steps 1-3. The police should be called and the child reported as missing from home. If there are safeguarding concerns explain these to the police. Keep trying to contact the parent/carer unless the police advise you otherwise.***
- ***Two church leaders should always remain with a child in these circumstances. If it***

is not possible to contact parent/carer.

Please note: If there is a risk that the child may run away before a parent/carer or social care staff arrive then do not share with child that parent/carer has been called. Make a note of their physical appearance including what they are wearing in case they run away and the police have to search for them. Also, consider moving to a place in the building that is less open so they cannot easily abscond, and try to think of something to occupy them in the meantime. If the child leaves the building or premises then:

It is not advisable to follow the child as this can make their behaviour more unpredictable and therefore dangerous e.g. with traffic etc.in their attempt to get away.

Church staff should not leave until all children have departed.

6.3.6.3 Involving other agencies

In certain situations, there may be a need to involve other agencies. If a child were very young, it would not be appropriate for them to attend church or any activities on their own. This would be regarded as neglect on the part of their parent or carer. If a child is already at church or the activity and the parent/carer is insistent that their child can attend and return home on their own and you do not feel that this is appropriate you should contact your DSO. They will give you advice on what to do next. If you are unable to get in touch with your DSO and the situation cannot wait, children's social care should be contacted for advice. Firstly, however you should let the parent/carer know of your intention to get in touch with children's social care. This will help to maintain a positive working relationship with the family and may encourage the parent/carer to collect their child.

There may be occasions when a child tells you something that means they may be at risk of harm/further harm and you need to respond immediately. For example, if a child has a visible bruise or injury and tells you a parent/carer caused this, or if they disclose another form of abuse. In these circumstances, you should contact your DSO immediately for advice and support. Should you be unable to contact your DSO, or if the situation requires urgent action contact children's social care. They operate an out of hours' service. If you are unable to get in touch with them, phone the police who will be able to give you guidance. Always make sure you inform your DSO.

6.3.6.4 Children under 11 who regularly attend on their own without prior arrangement

If there do not appear to be any safeguarding issues and the child is routinely attending church on their own, parents/carers should be contacted so a discussion can take place. The reasons for their lone attendance should be discussed and any safety implications. Other options for escorting them should be explored.

If it is not possible to avoid lone attendance, a risk assessment should be undertaken in

conjunction with parents/carers and the DSO to consider whether this can be supported in the local church. The following areas should be considered:

- ***how the child would get to and from church***
- ***their level of maturity***
- ***the child's wishes and feelings***
- ***the views of parents/carers***
- ***the availability of staff or volunteers who are cleared to undertake regulated activity to escort the child***
- ***any risks that may arise from lone attendance and how they might be minimised***
- ***consideration of any persons who might present a risk on site e.g. those with relevant safeguarding contracts.***

Where the outcome of the assessment suggests that the organisers of the activity can support lone attendance, arrangements should be agreed and recorded. Parents/carers should provide written consent for these arrangements. If the outcome suggests that lone attendance cannot be supported, other alternatives in the locality should be considered.

6.3.7 Mixed-age activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are supervised. DBS checks are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children.

Separate changing facilities should be provided when needed for adults and children and different genders. Children should be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

6.3.8 Safe environment

In a prominent place where children and young people can see it, the ChildLine telephone number (0800 1111) and, for parents, the Family Lives number (0808 800 2222) should be on display.

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, first aid kits and fire precautions should be checked and a health and safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards.

When evaluating a venue, the following should be considered:

- The meeting place should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. It should be kept clean and free of clutter.

- Fire exits should be checked regularly and clearly marked. The fire exits should not be blocked or obstructed.
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard. UK sockets are supplied to the rigorous safety standards of BS 1363 but safety covers are unregulated and can cause permanent socket damage including:
 - socket contact damage - results in overheating and possible fire
 - socket shutter damage - the shutters will not be able to protect children
 - some socket covers make it possible to poke pins and paper clips into the live parts
 - broken plastic pins stuck in the earth hole - prevents shutters from closing
 - wrong size pins can make covers easy to remove, some even pop out by themselves
 - children like to play with socket covers - plugging in upside down opens the shutter and exposes live contacts.
- Toilets and hand basins with hygienic drying facilities should be easily available.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Office and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated.
- Drinks should be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults must be aware of the fire procedures.
- Unaccompanied children or adults deemed vulnerable should be discouraged from walking along dark and badly lit paths in or outside of the premises.
- Suitable provision for first aid must be available.

6.3.9 Special needs

If a child or adult has special needs, welcome them to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for their needs. Ask the parents/carers how best to meet the person's needs. If premises are being redesigned or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people, and this includes children.

6.3.9.1 Children and young people who self-harm or who have mental health needs

Some children and young people self-harm to help them express their emotions. Others may express thoughts of self-harm or suicidal intent. If any child or young person expresses thoughts of suicide, advice should be sought immediately. The group leader should be informed and discussions should take place about the need to inform parents/carers and involve other services. If the situation is not urgent, consideration should still be given to contacting parents/carers and referring to appropriate agencies who can offer support.

6.3.9.2 Vulnerable Children and Young People

Some children and young people are more vulnerable than others to being victims or child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern day slavery. If it is suspected that a child or young person is affected by any of these issues, the group leader should be informed and further advice sought from the DSO and statutory authorities.

6.3.10 Whistleblowing

Concerns about safer practice and behaviour should always be raised as soon as possible. If any member, volunteer or employee feels that any adult is or has behaved inappropriately towards a child, they should speak to a group leader of an activity in the first instance or a church, circuit or district safeguarding officer or statutory services.

See link to the Methodist Whistleblowing Policy: bit.ly/whistleblowingpolicy

6.3.11 Drug and Alcohol Use

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden while participating in Methodist activities for young people. This applies to staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people. If drug or alcohol use is suspected, the group leader must be informed and a discussion should take place about informing parents/carers. Consideration should be given to the need to inform the police and for a referral to appropriate support services.

6.4 Code of safer working practice with Adults

6.4.1 Appropriate conduct (adults)

You should:

- treat all adults with respect and dignity
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language are respectful
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the

record (a link to forms can be found in Section 8)

- share concerns about an adult **or** the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- invade the privacy of an adult who is washing and toileting
- use any form of physical punishment or restraint (apart from car seat belts)
- be sexually suggestive about or to an adult, or scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group
- permit abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one adult or group
- allow an adult to involve you in behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual
- allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers to give lifts to adults in your group.

6.4.2 Visiting adults at home

- Most visits to adults in their own home will be straightforward as they will be well known to the church. However, when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors should let someone else know whom they are visiting (and when).
- Visiting in twos may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks capacity. It is also advisable to take a mobile phone.
- Do not call unannounced. Call by appointment, telephoning the person just before visiting if appropriate.
- Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so (also relates to Section 6.10 Health).
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer (this also relates to Section 6.13 *Financial integrity*).

- Pastoral visitors should note the date when they visit people, report their visit to the pastoral secretary and say what is concerning or going well. The pastoral secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and safeguarding officer as appropriate, **and** agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.

6.5 Additional guidelines for group leaders who work with adults and/or children and young people

The group leader should:

- ensure that health and safety requirements are adhered to
- undertake risk assessments, take appropriate action, and record it
- keep the register (where required) and consent forms up to date
- be aware of what is taking place and who is present
- create spaces for talking – either formally or informally
- liaise with safeguarding officer over good practice for safeguarding
- always inform the safeguarding officer of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise (the safeguarding officer will liaise with the DSO)
- liaise with the Church Council/Circuit Meeting.
- ensure that relevant privacy notices have been supplied where data is being processed.

6.6 Activity risk assessments

While the Church recognises that it is not possible to avoid all risk when working with vulnerable groups, it is possible to try and minimise those risks. This can be achieved through careful planning and preparation and by providing a written record of the thought processes and action taken. Activity risk assessments should be undertaken before any activity takes place, approved by the event leader/minister and retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date (e.g. as a result of an accident taking place).

Activity risk assessments should include:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- transport needed and associated issues (e.g. insurance)
- staffing levels/gender
- experience of staff

- ages of the group attending, abilities, special needs
- medical and health needs of the group
- emergency planning
- risks
- action needed to address the risk
- a named person for resolving risk issues.

See the Methodist Church Safeguarding Risk Assessment Policy, Procedures and Guidance for further information.

6.6.1 Specialised activities

Where the group is participating in a specialised activity such as adventure activities, advice should be sought from the relevant licensing authority/organisation. Advice is also available from *the Well for Workers*: www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/downloadableresources/organising-events

6.7 Photography and video recordings - the internet and publicity

6.7.1 Photographs and video recordings of children and young people under 18

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording Methodist activity and providing a record – illustrating and validating important moments in people’s lives and the life of our Church. It is, however, a powerful and personal process, and we must respect the rights of everyone to choose whether or not to be photographed.

- Do not use children’s names in photograph captions. If a child is named, avoid using the photograph.
- Only use images of children in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities, for example swimming and drama, present a much greater risk of potential misuse.
- Address how images of children on an organisation’s website can be misused. Images accompanied by personal information, such as the name of a child and their hobby, could be used to learn more about a child before grooming them for abuse.
- For professional photographers or the press invited to an event, state in writing what you expect from them in relation to child protection.
- Do not allow photographers unsupervised access to children.
- Do not approve photography sessions outside the event or at a child’s home.

6.7.1.1 Consent for Use of Images

| Age of Child or Young Person | Consent Required |
|--|--|
| 0-11 years | parent or carer |
| 12-17 years | parent or carer & young person |
| 16-17 years, living independently or estranged from parents | young person & social worker, youth worker or appropriate adult |

It is recognised that many 16-17 years olds have significant responsibility for key decisions in their lives. However, in most circumstances, parents have a legal responsibility for their children up to the age of 18, which is also the upper boundary for child protection purposes. If it is felt that it may not be appropriate for consent to be requested of parents for a particular activity or due to the young person's circumstances and they are not living independently, this should be discussed with a safeguarding officer. There may also be circumstances known to the legal parent or guardian relating to the use of images of which the young person is unaware. Therefore, if a decision is taken that a consent form is not required, parents must still be informed of the consent given by the young person in relation to photographs and images. This approach is in line with current NSPCC guidance.

At large events, arrange video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form, put the notice about photographs in prominent places or in the event programme. Make sure that official photographers are aware of the guidelines for photography.

Consent forms for parents and carers/ young people 12 years or over

The school or club will need to ensure that parents, carers, family members and others understand this policy. Many schools and clubs also have an acceptable use policy for using photographs, which may include asking parents not to share photos on social media. Consent forms must be used for applicable parties to obtain consent **prior** to taking, use or storage any images of children or young people, including video. Information must be provided to parents, carers and **young people** to allow them to understand the use of images and give informed consent.

Consent forms for parents, carers and young people are available on the Methodist Church website. The current form includes an information sheet, which gives clear information about data rights in relation to photographs and videos taken by the Church.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms/>

Use the consent form for all groups and events at the same time as you collect contact details, permission slips or registration forms.

6.7.2 Procedures for photographers at church events

- Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or **who is known to be** under a court order.
- Photography or recording should focus on the activity, not on a particular young person.
- Images should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
- If a young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
- All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- All people taking photographs or recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organiser.
- All concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser.

6.8 Safeguarding and the Internet

Methodist churches and organisations creating their own websites should adhere to these safeguarding policies and procedures and regularly review the pages of their sites so that they remain up to date, effective and safe. The Internet is constantly evolving and changing, and the Methodist Church guidelines change accordingly. You are strongly advised to review the guidelines regularly to ensure your compliance. **Where wifi is available on church premises, an acceptable use notice should be displayed with the access instructions. A template is available on the Methodist Church website safeguarding section which can be modified for local use.**

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

See *Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines*:

www.methodist.org.uk/socialmediaguidelines

Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, circuit or district must ensure that it promotes opportunities for all ages – including children and young people – to get involved in the life of the church. While it is important to reflect the full mix of participation in church worship and other activities, care should be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Website builders should follow these guidelines:

- Photographs are personal data as far as data protection legislation is concerned, and must be used responsibly.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs of anyone under 18 on a website (see 6.8.1). This should include providing a privacy notice. Where the person in the picture is 12 or over, their consent should also be sought, in addition to that of

parents, carers or guardians.

- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by name or other personal details, including email or postal addresses and telephone numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, names or other personal details should not be used in any captions.
- Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use names in image filenames or alt tags.
- Only use images of children in suitable attire to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Consider advertising events simply by giving contact details of the adults responsible.
- When posting activity ideas for children or young people, ensure they comply with good safeguarding practice.

6.8.1 Using the Internet with children

There may be occasions when church officers, youth or children's workers wish to demonstrate the internet to children or young people, or encourage them to access information online as part of an activity. When this happens, workers are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their written permission in advance.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the internet, there are a number of sites that can be used:
 - Kiddle: a safe visual search engine for children www.kiddle.co
 - See Search Engine Watch for a list of other child-friendly search engines. searchenginewatch.com/2017/11/13/4-safe-search-engines-for-kids/
 - Your local authority may operate a local search engine facility appropriate for children and young people.
- Where children and young people are encouraged to undertake subsequent searches on the internet at home, they must only do so with the knowledge of their parent or carer.
- Warn children and young people about the dangers of giving out personal details on the internet.
- Children and young people should be regularly informed and reminded of safe internet use and

accessing social media. They must be encouraged to access websites such as NSPCC or ChildLine or talk to an adult if they have any concerns or fears.

- Encourage children and young people **to** obtain parental consent if they wish to develop internet friends into face-to-face friendships. Even then, they should always be accompanied on any first meeting.

See Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines for Children and Youth Workers:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/resources-from-the-well-to-download/policy-and-practical-help/social-media-guidelines/>

As technology progresses, so must our vigilance in protecting against its abuse. Mobile phones and the internet provide new and imaginative ways of gaining information and communicating, but the darker side offers new opportunities to those intent on harming children.

Communication and common sense are the two key elements to these guidelines and the primary aim is to protect the individual and work to ensure they are aware of their rights and empowered to exercise them, while still offering the freedom to families and friends to record important events in their lives and the lives of those close to them.

6.9 Hire or use of church premises

See Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) *Lettings policy, flowchart and guidance*:
www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use

Many churches own buildings, which they hire out to community groups and others. Some of these undertake work with children. The observance of 'reasonable care' by both parties is a standard insurance condition.

The hiring body (the organisation hiring the premises) is required to ensure that children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage, and must carry full liability insurance for this.

For both one-off and regular hiring, it is recommended that a written hiring agreement be used. Please refer to the TMCP website for further information and hiring agreements, including the declaration: www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use .

If the hiring body is required to register with Ofsted, the church should ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.

Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under licence or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use are given a copy of the local church

safeguarding policy and declare their willingness to comply with the safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church or equivalent procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy). This should be prominently displayed.

See Appendix VI Model Policy Key Points for External User Groups of Premises - Checklist

6.9.1 Record-keeping (church activities/events)

For the recording of safeguarding concerns, see Section 4.2 *Recording*.

For other matters, please read *Guidance on Best Practice in Retaining Records in the Methodist Church*, published 2010, but also see important note below.

www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/document_retention.pdf/

As a guide, records should be kept of the following:

- safeguarding incidents
- church workers employed or working as volunteers with vulnerable groups (this should include start and finish dates, DBS checks, references, application forms, all posts held, training completed)
- risk assessments of church events
- hiring arrangements.

IMPORTANT NOTE: [Retention instructions and data protection](#)

As part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse led by Professor Alexis Jay, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to the care of children, child protection and allegations of child abuse or harm made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents.

The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the duration of the inquiry. See further details Section 7.3 *Information sharing guidance*.

6.9.2 Registration with Ofsted in England (and its equivalents in Wales and Scotland)

Some churches provide groups for children under the age of 6 who attend regularly for more than 2 hours at a time or more than 14 days in any period of 12 months. Those will need registration with Ofsted: www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-registered-early-years-or-childcare-provider-in-england/ unless an exemption applies. Many children's groups provided by churches

will be exempt but will still be required to inform Ofsted of the activity. For further details, contact Ofsted via their website or information line on 0300 123 1231, or call the Children's Information Service of the relevant local authority.

6.10 Health and safety

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that proper health and safety processes are in place. Health and safety should be managed as part of all activities and reference should be made to the following policies and guidance:

- Health and Safety Policy of the Methodist Church bit.do/healthandsafetypolicy (Appendix 8.7 in Lay Employment Advisory Pack - Last modified December 2016)
- Health and safety regulation - a short guide (HSE) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc13.pdf>
- Methodist Insurance advice on health and safety www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/risk-management/health-and-safety-advice/index.aspx

6.10.1 Use of equipment

The use of electricity or electrical equipment in church buildings must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Church members can reduce or remove risks by, for example:

- reporting all faulty equipment
- switching off all equipment when not in use and disconnecting the equipment when leaving the room
- not undertaking electrical repairs unless qualified
- securing trailing leads and cables
- removing trip hazards.
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard. UK sockets are supplied to the rigorous safety standards of BS 1363 but safety covers are unregulated and can cause permanent socket damage including:
 - socket contact damage - results in overheating and possible fire
 - socket shutter damage - the shutters will not be able to protect children
 - some socket covers make it possible to poke pins and paper clips into the live parts
 - broken plastic pins stuck in the earth hole - prevents shutters from closing
 - wrong size pins can make covers easy to remove, some even pop out by themselves
 - children like to play with socket covers - plugging in upside down opens the shutter and exposes live contacts.

6.10.2 Accident book

An accident book should be maintained at all places where activities take place with vulnerable groups, and be easily accessible.

Any injury, however slight, suffered by an employee (or volunteer) in the course of their employment, must be recorded in the accident book, together with the particulars that are a requirement **of** statutory regulations.

6.10.3 First aid provision

A first aid kit should be available on the premises where an activity is taking place. The contents should be stored in a watertight container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge and the church or circuit should encourage access to first aid training. A list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available. A compliant first aid kit should be carried on all activities off-church premises and in all vehicles used by the church (both church-owned and private).

6.10.4 Fire procedures

This is not an exhaustive list, but some things to consider are:

- Children and adults should be aware of the fire procedures.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- A fire drill should be carried out regularly by all groups who use the premises regularly.
- Exits and fire exits should be clearly marked.
- Lights should flash for deaf people in event of a fire.
- Candles should be placed in safe places.
- Emergency lighting should be in place in case lights go off.

For further advice please see *Fire Safety Law and Guidance documents for business* - UK Gov Web Archive bit.ly/1vkRnID

6.10.5 Accessibility

The Equality Act 2010 provides disabled people with protection from discrimination and gives legal rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, services and facilities (Disability Rights Guide, updated 18/09/15 – HM Govt).

The Act makes it a legal requirement to ensure every person has safe and easy access to services and facilities and has a direct impact on Church activities. Guidance on the Act can be found via the following link: *Equality ACT 2010 Guidance (Gov.UK)*

www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

What does accessibility mean in practice?

Some examples:

- accessible toilets
- installing ramps
- providing information in various mediums e.g. braille, clearer signage
- providing sign language interpreters
- installing T-loops
- ensuring that wheelchair access is possible
- providing disability awareness training.

6.10.6 Registration and consent forms

Where the church is running a dedicated service for children or vulnerable adults best practice requires that all activities should have:

- a. a registration form
- b. a register.

Registration form

A registration form should be completed for every child/adult attending the event and include:

- name and address
- date of birth
- emergency contact details
- medical information
- any special needs including activities person cannot take part in
- consent for emergency medical treatment

- consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Registration forms should be available at every session of the relevant group for reference and use in case of emergency. Separate consent should be obtained for one-off events and activities (e.g. swimming) and also for outings, weekends away etc.

Personal details must be stored securely.

Register

This is not always possible or proportionate but where possible, a register should be taken of those attending an activity and should include:

- the date of the activity
- the type of activity
- a list of adults present
- a list of children/young people present.

The register should be retained ***until all children and young people contained within the document reach the age of 21. If this is unknown, a standard retention period of 20 years from the creation of the document may be applied.***

All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely and not shared with other children or adults unless it is legally permissible to do so.

6.10.7 Transport for church activities

The safety of people being transported to and from church activities is the responsibility of whoever makes the transport arrangements. If parents make those arrangements themselves, then they are responsible for ensuring the safety of those being transported. If the church makes the arrangements, safety becomes the responsibility of the church. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the church. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parent to church worker and at which point it is returned.

6.10.7.1 Drivers

- All those who drive children/adults on church-organised activities/rotas should have held a full and clean driving licence for more than two years.
- Drivers who are not children's/adults' workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of six points or more on their licence should inform the

group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding officer.

- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children/adults for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state (i.e. not overtired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicines that may induce drowsiness).
- The DVLA is no longer issuing paper licences on which convictions, disqualifications and points were listed in the past. An annual licence check should be undertaken for all drivers via the website below. The driver can obtain a check code, which can be passed to the Church to check the licence. The code is valid for one single use within 21 days. Further information can be obtained from the link below. <https://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information>

If records are retained including data relating to home addresses or driving offences, data protection should be considered in relation to the security and retention of personal and criminal data under the GDPR (see Chapter 7 for further details).

6.10.7.2 Private cars

- Cars that carry children/adults on behalf of the church should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use.
- The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- Cars should be in a roadworthy condition. They should have up-to-date road tax (other than where a road tax exemption applies) and where applicable, MOT.
- All children/passengers, including the driver, must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional passengers should not be carried. If drivers are using their own cars, the church should see the insurance and MOT certificates.

When transporting children

Children should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car and a signed record must be kept of the reason for this.

When transporting adults

Care should be taken in assisting adults to board or leave vehicles and put on seat belts, taking account of the guidance on touch. Drivers need to be aware of moving and handling issues when assisting adults and transferring their mobility aids. **Lifts** to GP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities are regulated activity and attract a DBS check with barring information.

6.10.7.3 Minibuses/coaches

Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together. If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored. Before using a minibus, ensure you know the most up-to-date regulations for its use and have a trial drive. The driver must check that their licence covers the class of vehicle they intend to drive.

6.11 Insurance

The groups concerned with this document will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of churches, church groups etc. will be insured with Methodist Insurance, who have made the following statement in respect of those policies they have issued for:

- a) churches, in use for worship
- b) youth groups.

Public liability (third party) insurance, where in force, will operate to protect the interests of the insured where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party, or accidental loss of or damage to third party property, subject to the policy terms, conditions and exceptions. The policy will provide an indemnity to the insured if they are held legally liable for an incident leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse. Employer's liability insurance will also be relevant if the alleged perpetrator of the injury or abuse is an employee. It is not Methodist Insurance's intention to provide an indemnity to the perpetrator of an incident of abuse. This statement clearly only applies to policies issued by Methodist Insurance.

Where churches are insured with another company the position of that company should be clarified including confirmation of the scope of cover. Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines. It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer immediately. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy. Public liability insurance indemnity limits should be kept under regular review. Guidance is available from Methodist Insurance.

NB It is now advised that copies of insurance policies are retained for 50 years, given the potential for historic claims.

6.12 Day and Residential Trips

- Day trips

- Residential
- Youth groups

See Methodist Church website the Well for Workers for guidance:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/resources-from-the-well-to-download/>

6.13 Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the Church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by a church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they can be accepted.
- Do not canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable (e.g. the recently bereaved).

6.13.1 Power of attorney

A lasting power of attorney can be made by any adult with capacity and can deal with issues of finance and/or welfare. When the person making the lasting power of attorney loses their capacity – i.e. their ability to make decisions (see section 7.2.4 *Guidance on capacity*) – the person named as attorney can continue to make decisions on their behalf. The safeguard in this instrument is that it has to be registered with the Court of Protection. If an individual wishes to name a church worker as attorney, it would be appropriate for the individual to receive independent legal advice on the subject first. This safeguards the church worker from a possible accusation of undue influence. However, the church worker should consider this carefully and may wish to seek their own legal advice, which can be accessed through the district safeguarding group. This is not a task to be taken lightly.

6.13.2 Wills, bequests and acting as executor

The guidance relating to power of attorney should be followed where appointment as an executor is being considered or where the individual is considering a bequest to a church worker or a church. This should always be referred to the district safeguarding group for advice.

6.14 Health and medication

When organising any activity involving vulnerable groups, health issues should be identified before the activity takes place. These may include noting any mobility difficulties, and ensuring that the meeting place is accessible. They may also include matters relating to medication. In such circumstances, the event leader should ensure that:

- the person required to administer any medication is identified
- parents/carers are consulted so that medication requirements are fully understood
- all medication is stored securely
- consent forms are signed
- a record is made of any medication given **which is** signed and dated.

6.15 Advocacy/access to an independent person

Children and adults who may be vulnerable should be allowed and encouraged to share any concerns they have with parents, carers or church staff/volunteers. The Methodist Church aims to create a culture of transparency and accountability, where secrecy will not be tolerated. Therefore, everyone working with vulnerable groups on behalf of the Church should know the name of a person to whom they could refer a child or adult for concerns to be discussed.

For adults who lack capacity, advice can be obtained from IMCAs:

www.pohwer.net/independentmental-capacity-advocacy-imca

6.16 Keyholders for church premises

(See *Keyholder declaration* under Section 8 *Forms*)

The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to church premises unless it is required as part of their role for regular hire. Before any keys are issued, a declaration must be signed acknowledging conditions of issue.

6.17 Training

6.17.1 Requirements

All staff working with children and adults are required to attend Creating Safer Space training as follows:

- Foundation Module **2020** Edition.
- Advanced Module **2019** Edition.

Records of attendance should be maintained as follows:

- Foundation Module: at both circuit and district level.
- Advanced Module: at district level.

The 2016 Methodist Conference has decided that from September 2017, renewal of training will be done every four years. This is to reflect the pace of change in safeguarding.

Full details of training requirements are at Appendix III.

6.17.2 Failure to attend required training

The Church provides free safeguarding training for all those in applicable roles to ensure that they have an opportunity to build confidence and knowledge about safe practice. It is expected that those attending courses will engage positively and actively in order to maximise their benefit from the course. Where attendance at Foundation or Advanced Module courses is required for a specific role, this is outlined clearly at Appendix III as part of this policy, which has been approved by Methodist Council.

Where there is a refusal to attend, each situation will be considered individually and every effort made to identify any issues or support needs that may be affecting the person's ability to participate. In the event that matters cannot be resolved, the following steps may be undertaken:

- ***contact from a local minister to explore how a resolution can be found, to consider any related issues and to try to remove obstacles***
- ***advice about the requirements and the necessity for the training from the DSO***
- ***a referral for further consideration and action by the district chair and/or the Safeguarding Director of the Methodist Church***
- ***suspension from role, responsibilities or function***
- ***a formal complaint under Part 11 of CPD***
- ***a disciplinary procedure with a potential for removal from role, membership or full connexion, as applicable.***

SECTION 7

Practice guidance

7.1 Definitions, terminology and recognising abuse

This section provides guidance on some of the key definitions and terminology used for safeguarding children and adults throughout the procedures. It is not an exhaustive list and if you are unsure what something means you should always check with a safeguarding professional.

7.1.1 Children

7.1.1.1 Safeguarding definitions

Children

Anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Child protection

Activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Harm and significant harm

'Harm' means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. 'Significant harm' is the

threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and is based on comparing the child's health and development to that which could be reasonably expected of a child of a similar age.

Children Act 1989/Children Act 2004 and Adoption and Children Act 2002

7.1.1.2 Abuse definitions

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as

a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Domestic abuse

Includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

The categories identified above are those recognised in statutory guidance.

However, the Methodist Church recognises other emerging forms of abuse as shown below.

Spiritual abuse

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.

Lisa Oakley and Kathryn Kimmond, 2014,
Journal of Adult Protection

Abuse using social media

Online abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

NSPCC Website. Online abuse definition accessed June 2016

Child trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in human beings".

Council of Europe, ratified by the UK Government in 2008 (See also Human Trafficking)

7.1.1.3 Possible indicators of abuse - children

Identifying abuse is not easy, and the indicators given here are examples only. Some of the indicators can occur in more than one type of abuse and it must be borne in mind that there can **sometimes** be other non-abusive explanations. However, they may alert you to the need to be aware of the possibility of abuse, to be observant and to record any concerns. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from a safeguarding professional.

Physical

- bruising in unusual places, patterns or shapes
- burns and scalds, especially in significant shapes (e.g. iron or cigarette end)
- adult human bite marks
- serious injury where there is a lack of, or an inconsistent explanation
- untreated injuries
- unusual fractures.

Children may be:

- unusually fearful with adults

- unnaturally compliant with their parents/ carers
- wearing clothes that cover up their arms and legs
- reluctant to talk about or refuse to discuss any injuries, or fearful of medical help
- aggressive towards others.

Emotional

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour extremes: children may be overactive or withdrawn • lack of confidence or self-worth • lack of concentration • physical indicators without an apparent cause • difficulty in trusting adults or very anxious to please adults • reluctance to go home; fear of parents being contacted • social isolation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour that expresses anxiety (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting or thumb sucking) • self-harming behaviour • substance misuse • sleep and/or eating disorders • school non-attendance • running away. |
|--|--|

Neglect

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children whose personal hygiene and state of clothing is poor • children who are constantly hungry and frequently tired • developmental delay • low self-esteem • social isolation • poor skin tone and hair tone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • untreated medical problems • failure to thrive with no medical reason • poor concentration • frequent accidents and/or accidental injuries • eating disorders • begging and stealing. |
|---|--|

Sexual abuse

- Changes in behaviour – a child may start being aggressive, withdrawn, clingy, have difficulties sleeping or start wetting the bed.

- Avoiding the abuser – the child may dislike or seem afraid of a particular person and try to avoid spending time alone with them.
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour – or sexually explicit language.
- Physical problems – health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas or sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy.
- Problems at school – an abused child may have difficulty concentrating and learning and their grades may start to drop.
- Giving clues – children may also drop hints and clues that the abuse is happening without revealing it outright.

7.1.2 Adults

Adult safeguarding is working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. It is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect.

(UK Government Fact Sheet – Care Act 2014)

7.1.2.1 Safeguarding definitions

The term “vulnerable adult” has been used for some years and has had a number of different definitions but is now being used far less by statutory bodies following legislative changes introduced by the Care Act 2014. Instead the term adults at risk of abuse or neglect is used by local authorities when defining the group of people who are eligible for their services.

The Care Act states that safeguarding duties apply to an adult, aged 18 years or over, who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect.

While this definition of those who require safeguarding may be considered appropriate when assessing for local authority services, it is less helpful when considering the members of church communities. Likewise, the term, ‘Adult at Risk’, may be less appropriate when referring to people within a church context. Therefore, the Methodist Church will continue to use the term ‘Vulnerable Adult’.

In order to bring into focus those adults for whom the Church should have a particular care, the Methodist Church has adopted the definition used by Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as the

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service).

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
- 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.

Refugees and asylum seekers will meet this definition of vulnerability by virtue of their circumstances.

7.1.2.2 Abuse definitions

Physical abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

Sexual abuse

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language (including

sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.

Psychological/emotional abuse

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include scolding or treating like a child, making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour, blaming someone for attitudes or actions or events beyond their control, use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create over-dependence, lack of privacy or dignity, deprivation of social contact, threats to withdraw help and support, denial of cultural and spiritual needs, denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

Financial/material abuse

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds by omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation, where other forms of abuse occur, financial abuse is also likely.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Also, refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money, property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan.

Neglect and acts of omission

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission.

This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. Also the inappropriate use of medication, lack of attention to hygiene, toe and fingernails or teeth.

Self-neglect

This has to be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves.

Discriminatory abuse

This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups.

Equalities Act 2010

Additional areas of abuse identified and recognised by the Methodist Church include:

Institutional abuse

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

Spiritual abuse

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'.

Oakley and Kinmond 2014

Journal of Adult Protection 16.2

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Controlling behaviour

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Human trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a

person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is broken down into three elements:

- the act (what is done)
- the means (how it is done)
- the purpose (why it is done).

The Palermo Protocol - Article 3

Modern slavery

The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation of bodies or body parts.

Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited.

Kevin Bales, *Slavery Today* 2008

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation **or** safety, and sexting.

Additional terminology to be aware of includes:

Safeguarding adults at risk of harm

Means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

Care Act 2014

Safeguarding Adults Board

Brings together teams and organisations involved in keeping people safe.

Care Act 2014 - Government Fact Sheet

Capacity

A person must be assumed to have capacity (to make decisions) unless it is established s/he lacks capacity.

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Protected Adult Scotland

An individual aged 16 or above who is receiving certain types of services. There are four categories of services specified in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (PVG Act).

In summary, they are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a support service • an adult placement service. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a care home service • a housing support service. |
|--|---|

7.1.2.3 Possible indicators of abuse - adults

As with children, this is not a definitive list of indicators but rather some examples of what may be observed. Some indicators occur across the categories and not all categories are covered here.

It is important *that if your role requires that you attend Foundation or Advanced Module training (as set out in Appendix III) and you have not yet done this, please speak with your circuit safeguarding officer about arranging a time to undertake the training.*

In some of the examples below the action is a clear form of abuse:

Physical

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a history of unexplained falls, minor injuries or malnutrition • unexplained bruises or untreated injuries in various stages of healing • injuries to the head, face or scalp • poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene • dehydration and/or malnutrition without illness-related cause • broken spectacles/frames • physical indicators of being subjected to punishment or of having been. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the person • restrained • loss of weight • a vulnerable person telling you they have been hit, slapped, kicked or mistreated • varicose ulcers or pressure sores • injuries reflecting the shape of an object • unexplained burns, rope burns or cigarette burns. |
|---|---|

Emotional

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult being scolded or treated like a child (infantilisation) • making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blaming someone for attitudes or actions beyond their control • use of silence |
|--|---|

- humiliation
- bullying/harassment
- verbal abuse
- intimidation
- controlling or over-dependence
- lack of privacy and dignity.

- deprivation of social contact
- threats to withdraw help and support
- denying of cultural and spiritual needs
- denying of choice
- failing to respond adequately to emotional needs

Neglect

- poor hygiene and cleanliness
- clothing which is inadequate or in poor condition
- dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment
- persistent hunger
- dehydration.

- weight loss
- an untreated medical condition
- poor physical condition; rashes, sores, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- evidence of failure to seek medical advice or summon assistance
- evidence of failure to access appropriate health **or** educational services or social care.

Sexual abuse

- unexplained changes in behaviour
- a significant change in sexual behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- pregnancy in a woman unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- bruises around the vagina or genital area
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- unexplained infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- hints about sexual abuse
- sleep disturbances
- self-harming
- a vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped.

Self-neglect

- dehydration, malnutrition (or obesity), untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene
- hazardous living conditions e.g. improper wiring, no indoor plumbing, no heat, no running water
- unsanitary living quarters e.g. animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet, excrement present

- inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids e.g. glasses, hearing aids, dentures
- grossly inadequate housing or homelessness.

Institutional abuse

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of flexibility or choice for people using the service • inadequate staffing levels • inappropriate or poor care • no opportunity for snacks or drinks • failure to promote or support a person's spiritual or cultural beliefs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a culture of treating everyone 'the same' as opposed to treating everyone 'equally' • dehumanising language • absence of individual care. |
|--|---|

Spiritual abuse

Those who have been spiritually abused may experience:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sense of betrayal leading to distrust and self-isolation • silencing by their abuser • a changed and damaged view of the church. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling misunderstood • long-term distress • loss of church as safe space • powerlessness. |
|--|---|

Domestic abuse

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained bruises or injuries • unusually quiet or withdrawn • panic attacks • frequent absences from work or other commitments • wears clothes that conceal bruises even on warm days. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stops talking about partner • anxious about being out or rushes away • always accompanied by partner • isolated, withdrawing from friends and family. |
|---|--|

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

See above sections for both children and adults.

Human trafficking/modern slavery

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trauma • complex medical, emotional, mental and practical needs • potential for financial, legal and physical impact of experience to affect long-term recovery • anger and post-traumatic altruism • apparent high resilience masking trauma • appears to be in a dependency situation • travel, identity, financial documents are held by someone else • Unsure of home/work address • may be living and working at the same address • may appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood • may be isolated, with limited social contact or time off and limited contact with family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seems to be bonded by a debt. • experiences threats against themselves or family members • unable to negotiate working conditions or leave their employment • on low pay or have excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport • may look malnourished or unkempt, lacking access to medical care, hygiene facilities and education • may wear same clothes day in and day out • expressing of anxiety, fear or mistrust. • Previous history of having been trafficked. • Untreated injuries or medical conditions. • Reluctant to seek help or to trust others. |
|--|--|

7.2 Guidance relating to adults who may be vulnerable

7.2.1 Safeguarding and the Care Act 2014

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress or otherwise. For that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some ways 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
- a learning disability
- a physical illness

- mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Remember:

- vulnerability is often not a permanent state
- vulnerability is not always visible
- a person with apparently visible vulnerabilities may not perceive themselves as such
- we are all vulnerable at different stages of life
- vulnerable people may also pose a risk and cause harm.

Please note that the Care and Support 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” in order to assess eligibility to statutory social care services.

7.2.2 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance

Chapter 14 defines adult safeguarding as:

...protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted, including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

7.2.3 The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to adults with care and support needs
- stop abuse and neglect where possible
- safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned

- raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different type of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance) gives six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work.

Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent

"I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and can directly inform what happens."

Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs

"I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the indicators and what I can do to seek help."

Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented

"I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest as I see it and they will only get involved as much as needed."

Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need

"I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent that I want."

Partnership

Local solutions through services working with the communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

"I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."

Accountability

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

"I understand the role of everyone involved in my life, and so do they."

The issue of capacity is also important. Capacity is not a universal concept. It must be applied in a specific context: is this person able to make the specific decision at this particular time? Adults are

presumed to have capacity to make all decisions about themselves. Those who work with them should use every reasonable endeavour to obtain the decision from the adult. Advice can be obtained from adult services if there is uncertainty about an important decision or a situation where harm may occur.

7.2.4 Guidance on capacity

If there is any doubt that a person has the mental capacity to make specific decisions about sharing information or accepting intervention in relation to their own safety, then the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) will apply.

It is best to seek guidance from Adult Social Care services about defining a person's mental capacity if there is concern about their ability to understand safeguarding processes.

There are five guiding principles of mental capacity (from the MCA Code of Practice) bit.ly/1QD8ydh

These are:

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him or her to do so have been taken without success.
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision.
4. An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity, must be done, or made, in his or her best interests.
5. Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

7.2.4.1 Other considerations

- Every effort should be made to find ways of communicating with someone before deciding they lack capacity to make a decision.
- Different methods (e.g. pictures, communication cards or signing) should be used to support people with communication difficulties to make sure their views are heard.
- Family, friends, carers or other professionals should be involved as appropriate.
- The mental capacity assessment must be made on the 'balance of probabilities' – is it more likely than not that the person lacks capacity? You must be able to show in your records why you have come to your conclusion that capacity is lacking for the particular decision in question.

7.3 Information sharing guidance

For procedures please see Section 5 *Procedures for information sharing*.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states that sharing information is an intrinsic part of

safeguarding and the decision about what to share and when can have a huge impact on individuals' lives. The early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems and at the other end of the scale, can be essential in putting in place effective child protection services.

Practitioners should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (e.g. they are being supported as a child in need or have a child protection plan). Practitioners should share important information which may impact the child's safety or welfare about any adults with whom that child has contact.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern.

(Working Together 2018 and HMG Information Sharing for Practitioners 2018)

All the above applies as much to adults as to children.

In the document *The Protection of Children in England: a progress report*, Lord Laming recommended **that** all staff in every service from statutory services to the voluntary sector should understand the circumstances in which they **may** lawfully share information.

There have been many examples where poor information sharing has led to serious harm including the deaths of vulnerable individuals, and poor or non-existent information sharing is repeatedly flagged up in government reviews of serious incidents where death has occurred.

7.3.1 Seven golden rules of information sharing

The following information about information sharing is extracted from HM Government Guidance:

Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

This is a concise and easily accessible guide, which may provide a useful reference point for all those who need to share safeguarding information.

When deciding whether to share information there are seven golden rules to remember:

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear about the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being. Base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Necessary and proportionate

When taking decisions about what information to share you should consider how much information you need to release. Not sharing more data than necessary is a key element of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and you should consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

Accurate

Information should be accurate and up to date and **should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion**. If the information is historical then this should be explained.

Record

Information sharing decisions should be recorded whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom in line with organisational procedures. If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester. In line with each organisation's own retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some circumstances, this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case there should be a review

process *scheduled at regular intervals to ensure that data is not retained unnecessarily.*

Timely

Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protection to a child. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore place a child or adult at increased risk of harm. Practitioners should therefore ensure that sufficient information is shared, as well as considering the urgency with which to share it.

Relevant

Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make sound decisions.

Adequate

Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon.

Secure

Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information.

7.3.2 Obtaining consent

The general principle around consent is that you should explain to children and adults at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement to share personal or sensitive information.

The exception would be where seeking consent would put that person at increased risk of significant harm, or would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime, including where it might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

You should, where possible respect the wishes of children, families and adults who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information if, in your judgement, there is sufficient public interest to override that lack of consent.

When in any doubt, you should seek advice from a safeguarding professional. This is particularly recommended in relation to adults as the issues around capacity and consent are slightly more complex. The SCIE document *Adult safeguarding: sharing information* (bit.ly/1cIHFBF) states that:

Adults have a right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves. In the context of adult safeguarding, their rights can be overridden in certain circumstances.

7.3.3 When and how to share

When deciding whether to share information, the safety and welfare of a child or an adult should always be the primary consideration. Where there is concern that a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm then information must be shared. Likewise, where there are concerns about the safety of an adult, their welfare takes precedence and information must be shared where a crime is suspected. When thinking of or being asked to share information, the following questions need to be considered:

When

Is there a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information? If not, do not share. If there is, then ask:

- Does the information enable an individual to be identified? If yes, consider the next question but if the answer is no, you can still share but should consider how.
- Is the information confidential? If yes, consider the next question. If no, you can share but should consider how.
- Do you have consent? (see 7.3.3) If yes, you can share but should consider how. If no, consider the next question.
- Have you identified a lawful reason to share information without consent? If yes, you can share but should consider how. If no, do not share.

How

- Identify how much information to share.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Ensure that you are giving the right information to the right individual (see Section 5).
- Ensure where possible that you are sharing and storing information securely.
- Where possible, be transparent with the individual, informing them that the information has been shared, as long as doing so does not create or increase the risk of harm to the individual.

7.3.4 Recording information sharing decisions

It is important that any decisions made to share information are accurately recorded.

This should include:

- reasons for sharing or not sharing
- the purpose of sharing
- what was shared, how and with whom.

7.3.5 Confidentiality

If any person in the church has reason to believe that a child or adult is at risk of harm, the procedures in Section 2 must be followed.

There are often occasions when someone may wish to share information of concern 'in confidence'. In such situations, it is important not to promise total confidentiality but explain what needs to happen paying due regard to the procedures as set out in Section 2 and in Section 3.

Confidentiality is often confused with secrecy and a request to remain anonymous when reporting. Anonymity can be agreed if the information is coming from a church member and is being passed on to the statutory agencies through the safeguarding officer or DSO but only with their agreement and in agreement with the statutory agency. Total anonymity cannot be agreed as the incident may result in criminal proceedings.

Persons who have a formal role in the church (e.g. a minister **or** safeguarding officer) cannot raise concerns anonymously.

7.3.6 Required contents for privacy notices

The following information must be supplied in a privacy notice to an individual providing personal or special category data that relates to them:

- identity and contact details for the data controller and the data protection officer (see 5.1.1.)
- purpose and legal basis for processing
- the legitimate interest of the church in processing the information (where applicable)
- any recipients or categories of recipients of the data
- retention period or criteria to determine retention period
- the existence of the subject's rights about data
- the right to withdraw consent where applicable
- the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority

- whether the provision of personal data is part of a statutory or contractual requirement or obligation, and the possible consequences of failing to provide it
- any automated decision making process or profiling which may be used and its consequences
- any intended transfer of information to other countries and relevant safeguards.

Information that must be supplied in a privacy notice to a person about whom the church has received details from another party (in addition to the items above):

- the categories of information supplied to the church about that person
- the source the personal data and whether this was from accessible material.

There is no need to supply information about whether the provision of personal data is part of a statutory or contractual requirement or obligation, and the possible consequences of failing to provide the personal data where information has already been supplied by a third party.

7.4 Pastoral conversations and confidentiality

Relevant information may be disclosed in the particular context of a pastoral conversation. The Methodist Church does not have authorised liturgies for the sacraments of individual confession and the Service of Reconciliation. A minister is not prevented from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of a pastoral conversation or a confession within that context. The requirements about information sharing apply.

Wherever possible, ministers and others engaged in pastoral conversations on behalf of the Church should explain the limits of confidentiality in pastoral relationships. This should ideally occur at the beginning of a pastoral relationship or meeting. A similar approach should be adopted for spiritual direction and formal supervision or mentoring arrangements conducted on behalf of or by officers of the Church.

Ministers should be aware that convicted offenders can sometimes come forward with new information. There is no bar in law to prevent ministers passing on such information to the authorities.

7.5 Guidance relating to domestic abuse

What is it?

The cross government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological,

physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

(Home Office, *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, published 26/03/13, updated 08/03/16)

COERCIVE behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

CONTROLLING behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Domestic abuse is usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their partner or a family member. It is rarely a one-off incident. It occurs **at all** levels of society. In some communities this can also take the form of 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

A further hidden form of abuse that is often not spoken about is **Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA)**. The Home Office is working with its partners to develop and disseminate information for practitioners working with children and families on how to identify this.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420963/APVA.pdf

For a long time, 'domestic abuse' was not acknowledged in society, only being 'criminal violence' towards another – usually women. This resulted in a reluctance on the part of individuals and agencies to intervene in what was seen largely as a private matter. Fortunately, this position has changed and legislation has been passed to try and address it.

Appendix I

Safeguarding Standing Orders

The Standing Orders (SOs) that relate to safeguarding can be found in CPD (Constitutional Practice and Discipline) Vol 2 <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/governance/cpd/> :

- SO 010 Qualification for Appointment (**Revised September 2020**)
- SO 013 Suspension
- SO 013C Safeguarding and the Exercise of Office
- SO 232 Safeguarding Committee
- SO 233 Grounds for Appeal
- SO 234 Appeal Process
- SO 235 Appeal Decision
- SO 236 Safeguarding Concerns and Procedures
- SO 237 Assessment of Risk
- Section 69 Involvement in the Local Church where there is a Safeguarding Concern (**Revised September 2020**)
- SO 1125 The Reporting of Possible Criminal Offences Subject to Part 11 Complaint (Revised)
- Book VI Part 1 - Qualification for Appointment under SO 010(3), and Duty to Obtain Disclosures
- Book VI Part 4 - Guidance about the implementation of safeguarding contracts (**Revised September 2020**)
- Book VII Part 14 - Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care

Appendix II

Forms & Information Leaflets

The following safeguarding forms may be found on the Methodist Church website:

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

- Safeguarding contract forms (SGC1-5)
- Confidentiality agreement and privacy notice for monitoring & support group members
- Safeguarding risk assessment privacy notice and information receipt contributor
- Safeguarding risk assessment privacy notice and information receipt subject
- Safeguarding concern privacy notice and information receipt reporting person
- Safeguarding concern privacy notice and information receipt subject
- Use of photography and video – Information receipt and consent form for young people (12 and over)
- Use of photography and video – Information sheet and consent form for parents and carers

The following safeguarding forms relating to safer recruitment may be found on the Methodist Church website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/recruitment-dbspvg-forms-etc/forms/>

- Safeguarding self-declaration for office holders with substantial contact with vulnerable groups
- Safeguarding self-declaration for office holders without substantial contact with vulnerable groups
- Safeguarding self-declaration for Methodist Council Members
- Declaration on renewal of criminal record check for those working with vulnerable groups
- Form A Part 1: Registration form and privacy notice for volunteers with vulnerable groups
- Form A Part 2: Volunteer agreement with role outline for volunteers working with vulnerable groups
- Minister DBS Exemption Form
- Local Preacher DBS Exemption Form
- Form D Keyholder Declaration
- Safeguarding DBS Verifier Privacy Notice

The following information leaflets can be found on the Methodist Church website:

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

- What happens at a safeguarding panel
- Risk Assessment: A Guide for the Subject
- Risk Assessment: A Guide for Contributors
- Risk Assessment: A Guide for Ministers
- Risk Assessment: A Guide for Pastoral Supporters
- Risk Assessment: A Guide for Congregations

Other forms

- Connexional risk assessment template (provided to risk assessors by the Connexional Safeguarding Team)

Appendix III

Glossary of terms used in public protection

This glossary **contains** some of the terms used in relation to public protection by statutory agencies, which may be useful when setting up safeguarding contracts.

Bail Conditions

A person under investigation by police may be subject to bail conditions when they are released from custody. These may include a wide range of prohibitions relating to their activities **and** locations, and require them to report to the police station at certain times. Once a case goes to court, the court may decide to impose court bail conditions to restrict activities and behaviour during the period of the case. This removes the need for the person to remain in custody.

Child Arrangement Order

These orders were introduced in 2014 to replace contact and residence orders for children. They may define with whom a child may live, spend time or have contact and are put in place via application to a court.

Child in Need

A 'child in need' is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, in relation to their special educational needs, disabilities, as a carer, or because they have committed a crime.

Child at Risk of Significant Harm

Concerns about maltreatment may be the reason for a referral to local authority children's social care or concerns may arise during the course of providing services to the child and family. In these circumstances, local authority children's social care must initiate enquiries to find out what is happening to the child and whether protective action is required. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations also have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Child Protection Conference

A local authority will call a child protection conference when they have investigated concerns about child abuse and they believe the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The purpose of a child protection conference is to:

- share information between all the professionals who are working with the child and their family
- decide what future action should be taken to keep the child safe

- decide whether or not a child protection plan should be drawn up
- in Wales, decide whether or not the child's name should be placed on the child protection register.

The child protection conference must consider all the children in the household, even if concerns are only being expressed about one child. Further review meetings may be held to monitor progress.

Child Protection Plan

A child protection plan is a plan drawn up by the local authority. It sets out how the child can be kept safe, how things can be made better for the family and what support they will need. There may be agreed actions for partners working to support the family and also parents and carers. The plan will be reviewed through Child Protection Conference Review meetings.

Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC)

These meetings are held to address problems such as anti-social behaviour that are impacting a particular community. They are focused on bringing community partners together to respond to issues arising from specified individuals within an area or an identified problem in a location. Not all areas of the country are covered currently by these arrangements.

Community Sentences and Supervision

Some offenders may be given community sentences, probation supervision or requirements to engage in programmes. These may include regular supervision meetings with[...] an offender manager. Probation services should be contacted for details.

Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO)

DVPOs were brought in under the Crime and Security Act 2010 (CSA 2010). This is a notice served by police as a result of their attendance at a domestic incident which bans the perpetrator from returning to the residence and having contact with the victim for up to 28 days. They are used when **the** police cannot charge due to lack of evidence and therefore police bail to court **is** not possible to put controls in place and civil court injunctions cannot immediately be put in place. The perpetrator must be 18 or over and have used or threatened violence towards the victim and/or another person. They must be married to/cohabiting or living in the same household as the victim or have done so in the past. It also applies where a party has agreed to marry, has parental responsibility or is a parent of the victim. The DVPO can be applied for by the police from a court after issue of a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN). It may be in force for between 14-28 days from the court date.

Licence conditions

When offenders are released from prison, they are often given licence conditions and may be ordered to reside in an approved premises and undertake specific activities. They are under the supervision of probation (and police if on the Sexual Offenders' Register) during this period. The probation officer should be contacted about these conditions.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

MAPPA is the process through which the Police, Probation and Prison Services work together with other agencies to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public. MAPPA offenders are managed at one of three levels according to the extent of agency involvement needed and the number of different agencies involved. The majority are managed at level 1 (ordinary agency management). This involves sharing information but does not require multi-agency meetings. Others are managed at level 2 if an active multi-agency approach is required (MAPP meetings), and at level 3 if senior representatives of the relevant agencies with the authority to commit resources are also needed. While there is a requirement for certain agencies to cooperate and take part in MAPPA meetings, other parties may be invited. Any engagement requested by MAPPA should always be supported as part of a multi-partnership approach to managing those who wish to engage with the Church.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. After sharing all relevant information they have about a victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim and turn these into a co-ordinated action plan. The MARAC will also make links with other fora to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator. The victim does not attend the meeting but is represented by an IDVA who speaks on their behalf.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH brings together a team of multi-disciplinary professionals from partner agencies to deal with all safeguarding concerns, where someone is concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child. Within the MASH, information from partner agencies will be collated to assess risk and decide what action to take. As a result, the agencies will be able to act quickly, in a coordinated and consistent way, ensuring that vulnerable children and families are kept safe. The MASH in any area may include children and adult services, probation, police, housing children's social care, voluntary groups and health services to provide.

MOSOVO (Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders)

This term is often used to describe the team within a particular force that has responsibility for managing sexual and violent offenders. They are often a team within a Public Protection Unit, which deals with investigations of abuse against adults and children, although arrangements vary from force to force.

Notification Order

This order is put in place to protect the public from risks posed by sex offenders in the UK who have been convicted abroad for relevant sexual offences. It makes the offender subject to the same notification requirements that would be in place if they had been convicted in the UK.

Probation

The term probation is used in this document to identify those who have oversight of offenders in a formal capacity as part of either the National Probation Service or community rehabilitation companies. Both types of organisations are likely to deal with safeguarding issues. In the current system, supervision and oversight of offenders is carried out by a range of officials, including probation officers. Those undertaking such work are referred to in this document as 'offender managers'.

Risk of Sexual Harm Order (ROSHO) replaced by Sexual Risk Order (SRO), 2015.

Sex Offenders' Register

Following conviction or caution for a relevant sexual offence (subject to the offence thresholds which relate to certain offences and offences by children), the offender is required to notify such details as date of birth, national insurance number, home address, passport details, bank details and details of any residence with a child. They are also required to notify changes of personal information.

The periods for which an offender will remain on the sex offenders' register are defined by the sentence they receive.

| Sentence | Period on Register |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 30 months or more imprisonment (including suspended) | Indefinite |
| Less than 30 months imprisonment but more than 6 months (including suspended) | 10 years |
| 6 months or less imprisonment (including suspended) | 7 years |
| Caution | 2 years |
| Conditional Discharge | Duration of the conditional discharge |
| Other disposal (such as community punishment or fine) | 5 years |

A person on the Sex Offenders' Register is subject to active risk management by a nominated police officer.

The notification requirements for those on the Register include:

A person with a relevant conviction or caution may not be on the Sex Offenders' Register currently for several reasons:

- The person has completed the required period.
- The person was placed on the Sex Offenders' Register indefinitely but has been removed following a request for a review by police. Since 2012, it has become possible for those who were placed on the register indefinitely to request a review after 15 years (adults).
- The Sex Offender's Register in the UK did not come into place until 1997, so those convicted or cautioned before this will never have been included.

- The person has appealed their conviction and has been successful. As a result, the conviction or sentence may be overturned or reduced.

Therefore, it is worth confirming the current situation with police prior to setting up a safeguarding contract. While a person is on the Register, they will be under the oversight of a nominated police officer and will be subject to risk assessment.

Sexual Risk Order (SRO)

The police will apply for a SRO to restrict the behaviour of someone who is thought to pose a risk of harm to the public in the UK; to pose harm to children and vulnerable adults abroad or who has done an act of a sexual nature which gives **the authorities** cause to believe that an order is necessary to protect the public from harm. The person does not need to have had a relevant caution or conviction previously. Breaching the order is a criminal offence. The person also becomes subject to notification requirements to the police. The minimum duration is 2 years; **if** there is a foreign travel restriction, the maximum period is 5 years. It can be applied for in relation to anyone aged 10 or above.

Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO)

This type of order may be applied for by police at the time of the conviction or caution for a relevant sexual or violence offence or afterwards, Restrictive conditions will be used to suit the particular circumstances of the offender's conviction or behaviour and can include restrictions on internet use and travel. These are prohibitions not requirements for positive action. While the order is in place, the offender is subject to notification requirements (see below). An SHPO can be sought if the person is thought to pose a risk of sexual harm to the public in the UK or to children or vulnerable adults abroad. The minimum period of an order is 5 years and breaching the conditions is a criminal offence. If there are foreign travel restrictions, the maximum period is 5 years. An SHPO can be put in place for anyone aged 10 years **or** above.

Sexual Offence Prevention Order (SOPO) was replaced by Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) from March 2015 (see above).

Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR)

This is a computer database of those who are subject to registration requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The system can be accessed by authorised police officers, members of the National Probation Service and HM Prison Service. It provides details about the registered offender including addresses, passport and driving licence details, records of foreign travel and information from risk assessment meetings held by **the** police or probation officers.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

An **SGO** appoints one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.

Youth Offending Team (YOT)

Youth offending teams work with young people who get into trouble with the law. They look into the background of the young person and try to help them stay away from crime.

They also:

- run local crime prevention programmes
- help young people at the police station if they are arrested
- help young people and their families at court
- supervise young people serving a community sentence
- stay in touch with a young person sentenced to custody.

Appendix IV

Safeguarding Training Attendance List

Foundation 2020 Edition

Core List – Required Attendance

- presbyters with an active preaching or pastoral ministry
- deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry
- pre-ordination students and probationers
- lay employees and volunteer workers with pastoral responsibility
- pastoral visitors
- anyone working with children in the name of the church
- anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable (e.g. luncheon club for the housebound)
- church stewards
- circuit stewards
- local preachers should enrol and complete the Foundation Module at the earliest opportunity after receiving a Note to Preach. Both Foundation and Advanced modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their second interview on trial, whichever occurs first.
- worship leaders should enrol and complete the Foundation Module at the earliest opportunity after commencing training. Both Foundation and Advanced modules must be complete by the end of the second year of training and before their appointment by the Church Council, whichever occurs first.
- church and circuit safeguarding representatives
- choir/music group/drama leaders – where there are children or vulnerable adults in the group.
- district staff especially policy committee members, complaints and discipline, mediators
- core teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions
- connexional staff with direct safeguarding links e.g. children and youth workers
- monitoring and Support group members (for safeguarding contracts/Covenant of Care Agreements)
- young Leaders (ages 16-18)
- members of the Safeguarding Committee.

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- evangelism/mission enablers

- ***[...] leaders of other groups or organisations that regularly hire or use Methodist premises for work with children and vulnerable adults but do not have access to safeguarding training elsewhere and do not have their own safeguarding policy.***
- remaining Choir/music group/drama leaders
- any other group leaders within the church, who may have adults who are vulnerable within their group.
- property stewards and other keyholders
- caretakers
- church/circuit meeting secretaries
- church/circuit/district administrators
- remaining District and connexional staff
- remaining teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions

Recognition of Church of England Training

The Methodist Church recognises the Church of England Foundation Module (previously called C1) as equivalent and qualifying training to the Foundation Module. Therefore, those who have undertaken that Church of England course will have satisfied attendance requirements listed above in the Methodist Church.

Renewing Training

The requirement to renew training every four years will only apply to the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken by any individual. If the highest level of training is Foundation Module, then a repeat of this module will be necessary after four years.

The 2016 Conference decided that the frequency of undertaking Creating Safer Space training should change from five to four years from September 2017 in order to make sure that training content can keep pace with changes in legislation and safeguarding practices.

Link to the conference report:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-30-Safeguarding.pdf>

Advanced Module 2019 Edition (Formerly Leadership Module)

(As agreed by the 2016 Methodist Conference and updated following January 2017 Methodist Council and the April 2019 Methodist Council.)

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1400/counc-mc17-13-the-2016-conference-resolutions-34-2-and-34-3-january-2017.pdf>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-34-Past-Cases-Review-Implementation.pdf>

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/11052/counc_mc19-52_safeguarding-policy_apr_2019.pdf

Core List – Required Attendance

- safeguarding officer – District
- safeguarding officer – Circuit
- safeguarding officer - Church
- members of the District Safeguarding Group
- members of the District Policy Committee
- all presbyters or deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry (including supernumerary ministers)
- those who are in paid employment or a voluntary role which includes leadership within the Methodist Church, involving direct work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- lay persons who are appointed to exercise pastoral leadership within a local church
- local preachers should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after receiving a Note to Preach and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their second interview on trial, whichever occurs first.
- worship leaders should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after commencing training and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be complete by the end of the second year of training and before their appointment by the Church Council, whichever occurs first.
- those who deliver the Foundation Module
- members of the Connexional Complaint Panels, Discipline Committees, Pastoral and Appeals Committees
- those in recognised roles involving pioneering, fresh expressions or evangelism
- mentors for the Youth Participation Scheme
- members of the Safeguarding Committee

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- supernumerary ministers apart from those who have an active preaching or pastoral ministry.

[...]

Recognition of Church of England Training

The Methodist Church recognises the Church of England Leadership Module (previously called C2) as equivalent and qualifying training to the Advanced Module. Therefore, those who have undertaken that Church of England course will have satisfied attendance requirements listed above in the Methodist Church.

Renewing Training

The requirement to renew training every four years will only apply to the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken by an individual. Where the Foundation and Advanced Modules are required, following attendance at both courses, only a repeat of the Advanced Module will be necessary in future years.

The 2016 Conference decided that the frequency of undertaking Creating Safer Space training should change from five to four years from September 2017 in order to make sure that training content can keep pace with changes in legislation and safeguarding practices.

Link to the conference report:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-30-Safeguarding.pdf>

Appendix V

Model safeguarding policies

The following model policies are templates, which may be used and amended to suit local circumstances.

Statement of safeguarding principles

Every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from the creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing safe, caring communities, which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with² the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern, which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

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

Working with the District Safeguarding Officer, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts. We will recognise and apply the restrictions to appointment laid down in Standing Order 010 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

² Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

In all these principles, we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

a) A model church policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy
for Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God’s creation in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

..... Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

..... Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and our wish to affirm the gifts and graces of all God’s people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

..... Methodist Church fully agrees with the statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space* 2007:

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God’s purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

..... Methodist Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have

on people and their development, including spiritual and religious 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. It takes seriously the promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

..... Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. **PROVIDE** support, advice and training for lay and ordained people **to** ensure **that** people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children **and** vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Church Council

It is the responsibility of each Church Council to appoint a Church Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. ***The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.***

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the church safeguarding officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities. It is acknowledged that to avoid any disruption in safeguarding provision, it may be necessary for the minister in pastoral charge to take responsibility for some or all of the activities temporarily while other arrangements are made. However, this should only be for a very short period to enable the sharing of the role with another church or the identification of an alternative person to take on the role.

The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the church lies with the Church Council.

.....Methodist Church appoints (name)

as church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) .

and (name)

as church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports them in their role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.
- 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.
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- 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.
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- 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.
- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.
- 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.

a) Purpose

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2020).

b) Good practice

We believe that good practice means:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed by the church safeguarding officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (**where required**) are appropriate. **(See 6.10.7.1 of the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church)** A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.
- vi) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

c) Appointment and training of workers in the church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo Foundation Module **(2020 Edition)** safeguarding training, within the first 6 months (agreed by Methodist Conference in 2011 -*Creating Safer Space Report*) of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).

d) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of **Foundation Module (2020 Edition)** safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a DBS would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will be reviewed annually³.

f) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will be given to the church safeguarding officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church council secretary:.....(name of church council secretary).

If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the church safeguarding officer will contact the circuit safeguarding officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the **hirer** signing the letting agreement (www.tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use) will be given a copy of that agreement [...]. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the church safeguarding officer who will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from both the DSO and circuit safeguarding officer.

i) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows issues to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality. The provisions of Part 11 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church will be followed.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. [NAME]. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to them. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. [NAME] at [ADDRESS].

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

³ The Code of Safer Working Practice can be found at Appendix V of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. Next review date:

j) Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change **their** status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity, which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, a community or an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Signed Chair of Church Council Dated

A model circuit policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for

..... Circuit

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on / /

It will be reviewed on / /

1. The Policy

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children and of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The Circuit recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and our wish to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people. This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

The Circuit fully agrees with the statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*:

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

The Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious 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. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The Circuit commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.
2. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance, government legislation and guidance to achieve safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.
4. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledge the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults on our premises.

2. 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 vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the *Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2020)*. The full implementation of these policies should ensure that:

- The Church (and all associated activities) is a safer place for everyone.
- Communities we serve have confidence that children and vulnerable adults are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life of the Church.
- People in the church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them.
- Office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.
- People who have experienced abuse are accepted, empowered and supported in maintaining control over their lives and making informed choices without coercion.
- 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Circuit Meeting

It is the responsibility of each Circuit Meeting to appoint a Circuit Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for a minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles **but an individual safeguarding officer may cover the role in more than one location**. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis, although expenses should be met. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the circuit lies with the Circuit Meeting. **The circuit safeguarding officer should be a member of the Circuit Meeting or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual holds the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.**

TheCircuit

appoints.....(name)

as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and

.....(name)

as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children), and supports him/her/them in their role.

The circuit meeting holds the following responsibilities, which may be delegated to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, if appropriate:

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. Promoting the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit.
5. Presenting a report to each circuit meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for confidentiality regarding specific cases) and reminding relevant parties (where necessary) that safeguarding should be a standing item on the Circuit Meeting agenda
6. Receiving and reviewing church risk assessments and training schedules for each church in the circuit and sharing with the circuit meeting annually.
7. Attending the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.
8. 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.
9. Working with the superintendent minister, ministers and the DSO regarding safeguarding concerns.
 10. Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings.
 11. Work with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.
 12. Reviewing safeguarding policies for each church in the circuit prior to presentation to the Circuit Meeting.
 13. Supporting the circuit superintendent with the annual review of the circuit safeguarding policy and sending a copy to the DSO.
 14. Maintaining of a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module, Foundation Refresher Module (prior to 2020), together with dates of attendance
 15. 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.
 16. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers
 17. Advising all churches in the circuit of the requirement to adopt a safer recruitment policy and to carry out required procedures when appointing staff or volunteers
 18. DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
 19. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
 20. Providing reminders to church safeguarding officers about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).
 21. 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.
 22. Maintaining a directory of useful names and contact details.

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.

3.2. Superintendent Minister

1. Ensure that all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding

policy and practice.

3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in the management of those who present a safeguarding risk.
4. Ensure that training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit, in accordance with Appendix III of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
5. Ensure that the Circuit Meeting appoints a circuit safeguarding officer/s and that the details of each person are passed to the district office.
6. Ensure that the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
7. Support the circuit safeguarding officer (Adults) and the circuit safeguarding officer (Children) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Circuit stewards

The circuit stewards must ensure that agreed procedures are in place for circuit and ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults.

Procedures for circuit events involving children, young people or vulnerable adults

It is essential that circuit events that involve children or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church. Circuit events must be notified to the DSO prior to final agreement with the event organiser to ensure that all permissions, risk assessments and good practice guidelines are in place.

Responsibility for those planning and leading the event

All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of the procedure.

The event should have been planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:

1. Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises
2. The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel (particular health or ability needs should be taken into account)
3. Numbers of children, young people or vulnerable adults involved
4. Transportation following good practice guidelines.

This information is to be sent to the DSO for approval PRIOR to the event being agreed.

Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

- ii) Vulnerable adults: 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.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated

Signed Chair of Circuit Meeting

c) A model district policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Methodist District

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

The Methodist District fully agrees with the Connexional Team statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*: As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

The Methodist 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, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

The Methodist District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious 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. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The Methodist District commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
2. Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.
3. The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable. It affirms the role of the district safeguarding group.

Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2020).

a) Roles and responsibilities

District Chair

The District Chair attends the district safeguarding group and should:

- Manage and support the work of the DSO.
- Through the DSO, ensure that superintendent ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the DSO, district safeguarding group and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the DSO, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the DSO and the district safeguarding group in their work by ensuring that an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.
- Ensure that each superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the DSO for scrutiny by the district safeguarding group. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the district safeguarding group's report to the District Council.

Independent Chair of the district safeguarding group

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults and should have an independent Chair, as set out in the Safeguarding Framework (2010), who:

- should be strongly committed to supporting the DSO
- should be well-respected
- should be able robustly to challenge the district where necessary
- should not be the DSO, the District Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling these roles.

District safeguarding group

The district safeguarding group will promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults across the district. This responsibility includes ensuring that:

- The group is independently chaired; its business managed in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.
- The group provides support and guidance to the DSO, including confidential advice and discussion on complex cases.
- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of the District Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- Publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- District and connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- The Chair, superintendents and District Council are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- A report is delivered to the first District Council meeting of each connexional year by a member of the district safeguarding group, which will include a note on the monitoring of district events.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The DSO has a key role within the Methodist District and is required to:

- oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding procedures
- be accessible by churches about all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts
- liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as necessary
- undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the implementation of safeguarding contracts and relating to specific cases
- take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations

- have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for children and vulnerable adults
- be committed to continuing personal development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the district.

4. Key concepts and definitions

- i. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii. Vulnerable adults: 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.
- iii. Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv. Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v. Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult, or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated

Signed District Chair

Date for review

Appendix VI

Code of safer working practice with children and young people

The code outlines the conduct that is expected of anyone undertaking duties with children and young people within the Methodist Church. The content of this code forms part of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church which are therefore required practice. The code applies to volunteers, paid staff, clergy, students on work placement, members and non-members working in a Methodist context. By complying with this code, you will help the Church to protect children from abuse and mistreatment and minimise the likelihood of unfounded allegations against those who are involved in youth work.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code within the Methodist Church, you must report them to your group leader, safeguarding officer or minister in pastoral charge as soon as possible.

Terminology used in this code:

the word 'child' refers to *anyone* under the age of 18.

the term 'group leader' is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity, who is answerable to the Church Council/Circuit Meeting.

For guidance and good practice support resources and free downloadable forms for work with children, visit:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/>

Required practice for anyone working with children and young people

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination, prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult
- ensure that another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks should be organised for young children)
- ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to or contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern and encourage them to speak out if they feel uncomfortable

or concerned. They should be made aware of organisations that can provide support.

- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.
- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 12 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices.
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader in the first instance. Although you must also contact the church, circuit or district safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- initiate physical contact and if this is initiated by the child, do not pull away abruptly but do so gently, so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time.
- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or toileting
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
- allow abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one child or group
- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is clearly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them

- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions with children or invite them to your home outside of organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts.

Dress

You should dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.

Gifts

There may be occasions when children give you gifts. It is polite to accept a gift but your group leader should be informed. If you receive any gift of significant value e.g. more than £15.00, you should talk with your group leader about whether it is appropriate to accept it. As a general rule, expensive gifts should not be accepted.

Whistleblowing

Speak out if you think any adult is or has behaved inappropriately towards a child. Speak to the group leader in the first instance if appropriate or alternatively a church, circuit or district safeguarding officer or statutory services.

Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your group leader and/or safeguarding officer. Agree between you who will take what action and when. If you are not sure if abuse of a child is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then again you should contact your group leader or church, circuit or district safeguarding officer. The local authority Children's Services Duty/Referral team are also a source of advice and support 24 hours a day.

Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible. These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seems particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible. Take a note from the group records the child's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign your notes and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

Ensure that all notes are kept in a safe and secure place.

If a child asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young

person who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help to make sure they are safe.

- Try to stay calm and not appear shocked.
- Listen to the child attentively.
- Allow the child to talk but do not press for information or ask leading questions.
- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell.
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand.
- Reassure the child that they will continue to receive support when a referral has been made.

Immediate risk

- If you encounter a child in a situation where they are in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure the safety of the child. Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to local authority Children's Services.
- If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents/carers, if available, should be kept fully informed.

What to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused

- Agree with your group leader or safeguarding officer, who will make the referral.
- Make an immediate telephone referral to the local authority Children's Services. Make it clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child protection referral.
- Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family, e.g. the child's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP.
- Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the local authority website) or letter. If there is no acknowledgement within 48 hours, contact them again until you receive a response.
- Remember that the child and family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral. The duty social worker will give you advice on this if necessary.
- Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team.
- Say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.
- For out of hours referrals, call the emergency social work team or where urgent, the police.

- You may need support for yourself when dealing with a safeguarding incident, so do speak to someone about this but remember to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Children and young people who self-harm or who have mental health needs

Some children and young people self-harm to help them express their emotions. Others may express thoughts of self-harm or suicidal intent. If any child or young person expresses thoughts of suicide, advice should be sought immediately. The group leader should be informed and discussions should take place about the need to inform parents/carers and involve other services. If the situation is not urgent, consideration should still be given to contacting parents/carers and referring to appropriate agencies who can offer support.

Vulnerable Children and Young People

Some children and young people are more vulnerable than others to being victims of child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern day slavery. If it is suspected that a child or young person is affected by any of these issues, the group leader should be informed and further advice sought from the DSO and statutory authorities.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden while participating in Methodist activities for young people. This applies to staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people. If drug or alcohol use is suspected, the group leader must be informed and a discussion should take place about informing parents/carers. Consideration should be given to the need to inform the police and for a referral to appropriate support services.

Additional guidelines for group leaders

In addition to the above the group leader should:

- ensure that health and safety requirements are adhered to
- undertake risk assessments, take appropriate action in response to any identified risks or situations and *keep* records of any circumstances of concern
- keep the register and consent forms up to date
- be aware, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present
- create space for children to talk – either formally or informally
- liaise with the safeguarding officer over good practice for safeguarding
- always inform the safeguarding officer of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise (the safeguarding officer will liaise with the DSO)
- liaise with the Church Council/Circuit Meeting.

Good practice guidelines for church-sponsored activities for children and young people

Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent/carer and the child or young person about how best to meet their needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent/carer. Monitor how the child /young person is managing and review this if necessary with the parent/carer and child/young person. If premises are being designed or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available. Disability and equality legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

Consent

Consent to participate in activities needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. In addition to this, where consent to take, store or use images is sought, any young person who is 12 years or older should be asked for their consent, in addition to the person with parental responsibility. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity and retain any consent forms. ***Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church 6.7.1.1 in relation to images consent for 16-17 year olds.***

Records

As part of initial registration for an activity, the following details should be obtained and updated annually:

- name and address
- date of birth
- emergency contact details
- medical information
- any special needs including activities in which the child is unable to take part
- consent for emergency medical treatment
- separate consent should be obtained for one-off events and activities (e.g. swimming) and also for outings, weekends away, etc.
- all personal details and consent forms must be stored securely and not shared with other children or adults unless it is legally permissible to do so. There is further information about when you can share information in the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church.
- consent for photography, video or film should be confirmed by completing the relevant form.

Any group that includes children under the age of eight that meets for more than two hours a day in England must register with Ofsted unless they are exempt, as detailed in Annex A of the *Early Years and Childcare*

Registration Handbook <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted>. It is an offence to provide such childcare without being registered or on premises that have not been approved.

Register

For all children and young people's activities, a register must be taken of those attending on each occasion. This should include:

- the date of the activity
- the type of activity
- a list of adults present
- a list of children/young people present.

The register should be retained securely for a period ***until all children and young people contained within the document reach the age of 21. If this is unknown, a standard retention period of 20 years from the creation of the document may be applied.***

Required staffing levels

It is the responsibility of the group leader to consider individual circumstances and [...] arrange sufficient supervision to ensure the safety and effective management of all activities. The needs of the group, age, location, nature of activity and experience of staff should all be considered. Further information is available in Section 6 of the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church.

| Required Adult to Child Ratios (as recommended by the NSPCC) | | |
|--|------------------------|------|
| 0 – 2 years | 1 adult to 3 children | 1:3 |
| 2 – 3 years | 1 adult to 4 children | 1:4 |
| 4 – 8 years | 1 adult to 6 children | 1:6 |
| 9 – 12 years | 1 adult to 8 children | 1:8 |
| 13 – 18 years | 1 adult to 10 children | 1:10 |

- Each group must have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.

- Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping, should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. They should not be included in staff numbers for ratios unless they are over 18.
- Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

Safe environment

Display, in a prominent place where children and young people can see it, both the ChildLine telephone number (0800 1111) and, for parents, the Family Lives number (0808 800 2222).

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, first aid kits and fire precautions should be checked and a health and safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards.

Venue

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Fire exits should be checked regularly and clearly marked. The fire exits should not be blocked or obstructed.
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard.
- Toilets and hand basins with hygienic drying facilities should be easily available.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by an Environmental Health officer and a food handling and hygiene certificate acquired.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be discouraged from walking along dark or badly lit paths in or outside of the premises.

First aid kits and accident books

- A first aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The contents of the first aid kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.
- All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge and the church or circuit should encourage access to first aid training. There should be an adequate number of qualified first aiders and a list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available.
- All accidents should be recorded in an accident book.

E-safety

- Ensure that all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their written permission in advance.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the Internet, search engines are recommended by the Department for Education and Skills (see section 6.5.8.1).
- Children and young people should be regularly informed and reminded of safe Internet use and accessing social media. If they have any concerns or fears, they must be encouraged to access websites such as NSPCC or ChildLine or talk to an adult.

Transporting children on behalf of the church

Drivers

- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years.
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.

- Any driver who has an endorsement of six points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding officer.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the Church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state (i.e. not overtired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicine, which may induce drowsiness).
- Drivers of church-owned vehicles should provide a copy of their driving licence on an annual basis or provide consent and relevant details for a check to be made via the government website.

Private cars

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
- All vehicles that carry children to church activities must be covered by a comprehensive insurance policy for both private and business use. They should have up-to-date road tax and where applicable, MOT.
- The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- All cars that carry children must be in a roadworthy condition.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional children should not be carried.
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. A signed and dated record must be kept of the reasons for this.

Minibuses/coaches

- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the most up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.
- Check your licence covers the vehicle group you are intending to drive.
- Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle when safe to do so, until calm is restored.

Important telephone numbers

(Please write in your local numbers)

Local agencies

| | |
|---|--|
| Police (all non-emergency enquiries) | |
| Local police Child/Family Protection Unit | |
| Local council Children's Services/Social Care | |
| Local Emergency Social Work Team | |
| Local general hospital | |

Support and Advice Organisations

| | |
|--|---------------|
| ChildLine | 0800 1111 |
| Family Lives (helpline for parents) | 0808 800 2222 |
| YoungMinds (parents helpline, mental health) | 0808 802 5544 |
| Hopeline (suicide support for young people) | 0800 068 4141 |
| FRANK (drug and alcohol support) | 0300 123 6600 |

Telephone Numbers for Staff

District Contacts

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| DSO | |
| LN Regional Coordinator (Training) | |

Church and circuit contacts (please write in your local numbers):

| Name | Role | Phone |
|------|---|-------|
| | Superintendent Minister | |
| | Minister | |
| | Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) | |
| | Church Safeguarding Officer (Children) | |

Appendix VII

Model - Circuit safeguarding officer role description

Role of circuit safeguarding officer

Reporting to: The circuit superintendent

Experience and skills needed:

- Administrative – confidentiality, organisation, detailed record-keeping, administration
- Interactive – confidentiality, ability to respond quickly to issues, willingness to train others, good interpersonal attitude, sensitivity.

Training requirement:

- Methodist Church Safeguarding Foundation 2020 Edition and Advanced 2019 Edition Training Modules as a minimum (can be completed immediately following appointment)
- continuous professional development to include three-yearly or more frequent training updates
- routine and regular awareness of the evolution of safeguarding legislation, principles and associated legal requirements
- other safeguarding training as appropriate.

Key purposes of the role:

- to promote the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit
- to be the point of reference for individual church safeguarding officers throughout the circuit, to guide and advise them upon Methodist Church safeguarding policy requirements
- to ensure timely delivery of appropriate training for all in need of it across the circuit
- to act on behalf of and as consultant to the superintendent with regard to reports required by the district or Connexion
- to act as a verifier where circuit roles require DBS checks to be undertaken or updated
- to be a member of and actively participate in district safeguarding liaison meetings as called by the DSO
- to work closely with the DSO on all safeguarding matters.

Administrative responsibilities:

- draft, maintain and ensure application of the circuit safeguarding policy

- for any volunteer appointed to a circuit role, the individual concerned has to agree to be approved for the post by the circuit safeguarding officer before they take up the role, including ensuring relevant checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the control, distribution, receipt, and recording of self-disclosure forms.
- maintain comprehensive records and information on behalf of the superintendent and district as set out in policy documents and guidelines.

The key tasks of the role are as follows:

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. Promoting the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit.
5. Presenting a report to each circuit meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for confidentiality regarding specific cases) and reminding relevant parties (where necessary) that safeguarding should be a standing item on the Circuit Meeting agenda
6. Receipt of church risk assessments, policy and training schedules for sharing with the circuit meeting annually.
7. Attending the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.
8. 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.
9. Working with the superintendent minister, ministers and the DSO regarding safeguarding concerns.
10. Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings.
11. Working with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.
12. Reviewing safeguarding policies for each church in the circuit prior to presentation to the Circuit Meeting.
13. Supporting the circuit superintendent with the annual review of the circuit safeguarding policy and sending a copy to the DSO.
14. Maintaining a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module and

- Foundation Refresher (*prior to 2020*) training together with dates of attendance
15. 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.
 16. Overseeing timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers.
 17. Advising all churches in the circuit of the requirement to adopt a safer recruitment policy and to carry out required procedures when appointing staff or volunteers.
 18. DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
 19. Retaining records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
 20. Providing reminders to church safeguarding officers about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).
 21. 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.
 22. Maintaining a directory of useful names and contact details.

Appendix VIII

Model - Church safeguarding officer role description

Role of church safeguarding officer

Main tasks

The following tasks will form a core part of the church safeguarding officer's role:

- provision of support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding
- ensuring 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.
- recording of all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedures
- promotion of appropriate routes for reporting of concerns
- identify those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training
- attend training and meetings relating to the role
- work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include confirming in writing that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.
- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures
- 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.

Person specification

- Some knowledge and experience of working with children, young people or vulnerable adults would be helpful.
- A basic understanding of safeguarding issues and a willingness to attend any necessary training.
- Good communication and administrative skills.

Accountability

The church safeguarding officer will be responsible to the Church Council, through the minister.

DBS check

Due to the nature of the post, the post holder will be required to complete a DBS application, to be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.

Approved

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Methodist Church

Date

Appendix IX

Model Policy Key Points for External User Groups of Premises - Checklist

Promote a safer environment and culture

- have a safeguarding children and adults policy in place with evidence of/process for annual review and update
- named safeguarding person/point of contact
- acknowledgment that safeguarding is a shared responsibility
- evidence the policy is based on statutory guidance and good practice
- statement that all people are treated with respect and dignity
- the property should be kept safe and checked at the beginning and end of any session for issues, and these reported to the appropriate person
- any transport of children or vulnerable adults will need to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are safely recruited. An agreed record to be kept for each driver/car.

Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and adults at risk of harm

- evidence that staff and volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities
- safeguarding training at the appropriate level to be in place for all staff and volunteers
- staff and volunteers are not to work alone or meet alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- all staff and volunteers to be safely recruited with DBS checks completed for all eligible roles and a process in place to assess the appropriateness of anyone who has a blemished DBS.

Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

- a process in place to deal with safeguarding concerns without delay
- a process to deal with allegations about staff and volunteers
- a process in place to deal with complaints.

Organisations may have separate policies for social media/electronic communication; photography and video, off-site events. They may also have safer working guidance about adult child ratios, touch and a code of conduct for individual workers.

Users and hirers of Methodist premises

Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under licence (or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use) are given a copy of the local church safeguarding policy and declare their willingness to comply with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance of the Methodist Church or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy).



Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain

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