



Sheffield Methodist District **Safeguarding Policy**

September 2020

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Section 1

Sheffield District Safeguarding Policy 2020 - Summery

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 with 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 O10 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Sheffield Methodist District

The Sheffield 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. It acknowledges that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and no-one is exempt from fulfilling that responsibility.

The Sheffield 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 Sheffield 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 Sheffield Methodist District 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 Sheffield 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 (2019)*.

a) Roles and responsibilities

District Chair

The District Chair attends the District Safeguarding Group and will:

- Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in this area and enable training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group, the District Safeguarding Officer and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
- Support the District Safeguarding Group(s) in this area as requested.

Independent Chair of the District Safeguarding Group

As part of the implementation of the recommendation from the Presidents Inquiry (2011), the Methodist Conference affirmed the need for a focused group (the DSG) to oversee the work of safeguarding in the District and with an independent chair who will:

- Be recruited safely, with a background in safeguarding at any level and in any setting
- Not be the DSO, the District Chair, or a close relative of anyone fulfilling those roles.
- Be a well-respected individual
- Be strongly committed to supporting the DSO and DSG in fulfilling their work and be an important link to the Chair of District and as appropriate, the District Leadership Team.
- Promote good safeguarding awareness across the District and be able to challenge any areas of practice which do not meet the high standards required.

The District Safeguarding Group

The District Safeguarding Group (DSG) will oversee the work and promotion of safeguarding across the District. It will meet at least three times a year to discuss business matters, and will take an active part in organising District Safeguarding Events.

Membership of ordained and lay people will include professionals, or ex-professionals, working in different agencies, such as police, probation, education, children's and adult's services, health services, law and related services.

The role of the DSG is to:

- ensure support to all circuits and churches in implementing District and Connexional policies;
- oversee the promotion of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults across the District and ensure that all necessary information is disseminated at a local level.
- to support the DSO, advise on policy, practice and training developments
- ensure that the Chair of District, superintendents, ministers, paid workers and all lay staff and relevant committee/group members are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance. (The Chair of DSG, supported by the District Safeguarding Officer, will report to the District Leadership Team as required with such changes);
- ensure that the work of safeguarding across the District is up to date and in line with National Policy and Guidance;
- initiate programmes of awareness and good practice;
- work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The District must have in place a DSO or in any absence of one, a named person to oversee the role even temporarily who serves the DSG and the wider District to:

- ensure DSG is kept up to date with relevant national and local developments;
- advise DSG on safeguarding issues, practice and procedures;
- offer advice, and consultation to ordained and lay staff in the District on any individual case, situations and / or emergencies;
- be available to assist with implementation of policy and procedure;
- undertake risk assessments as appropriate;
- be a critical link between all relevant Committees to ensure safeguarding is relevant and connected to groups within the District;
- support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies;
- ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities and enable training opportunities to be made available;
- use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel;
- ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement policies and assist them in doing so;
- be a pro-active link between the District and external agencies, especially statutory organisations, in ensuring the best support for those who need help;

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

Section 2:

Safeguarding Policy for Sheffield Methodist District 2020

FULL VERSION

1. Philosophy.

- 1.1 The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God. 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.
- 1.2 The District is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people, and adults who are or may be vulnerable and/or need care and support. It affirms that the needs of children and of people when they are vulnerable are paramount. It acknowledges that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and no-one is exempt from fulfilling that responsibility.
- 1.3 The District recognises that there is particular help, support and care needed for those who are vulnerable. It recognises that this vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible but acknowledges this does not diminish our duty of care towards an individual but seeks to affirm their value to God and to each other.
- 1.4 The District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of anyone and recognises that this may take many forms in the light of growing awareness and learning. It acknowledges the effect abuse may have on individuals, sometimes also on their families, especially on 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.
- 1.5 The District commits itself to responding well and without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or any other context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It especially supports the learning from the Methodist Past Cases review in its report "Cost, Courage and Hope 2015" and will continually use this to inform its practice to offer the most sensitive, respectful and appropriate response and care to all.
- 1.6 The District commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2019), national government legislation and guidance and local policies and protocols, especially in relation to safe practice in Circuits and churches. It will support and practice the safer recruitment requirements as laid down by Connexional Policy of June 2013, revised 2019.
- 1.7 The District commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure they 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 (DSG), the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and those others who hold safeguarding roles in Circuits and churches.
- 1.8 In summary and taking account of the learning from the Methodist Past Cases Review (PCR), the District commits to:
 - promoting a safe environment and culture within our churches;
 - safely recruiting and supporting all those with responsibility related to the work of safeguarding;
 - responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;
 - caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and those affected by it;

- caring pastorally for those who are subject of concerns and allegations of abuse and those affected;
- responding to those that may have posed a risk in the past or do so currently.

1.9 The District sees safeguarding in its wider sense, not just about harm and abuse but people's welfare and well-being, relationships between people, day to day vulnerabilities and anything that affects someone's overall quality of life. Safeguarding is therefore at the centre of all our work, the core of our faith and the "golden thread" that runs throughout all we do.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all in the life of the Church and to ensure people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and adults in our care and those using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2019).
- 2.2 Given this policy is governed by the above document as approved by Methodist Council in 2019, it is mandatory. All related policies and procedures are also mandatory. Information given in related documents that is guidance in nature does not carry the same authority, but it is highly advisable that such advice is adhered to given it is a result of experience and learning over recent times.

3. Governance.

- 3.1 The District Leadership Team will take the overall responsibility for the work of safeguarding, with the District Safeguarding Group (DSG) as the vehicle to drive forward the development and implementation of all requirements as laid down nationally and locally across the District.
- 3.2 The District must employ a District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who will report to the Chair of District and offer support, advice and expert help to promote the work of safeguarding throughout the District.
- 3.3 At a Circuit level, the Circuit Leadership Team will oversee the work of safeguarding across the Circuit and ensure that it complies with safeguarding requirements. It will appoint and support the work of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer. This should not be a Minister to ensure no-one is placed in a position where conflict of interest or increased vulnerability to themselves may occur.
- 3.4 At a local level, each Church Council as Trustees (where the church is a Charity) will oversee the work of safeguarding in the church and understand their role to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. It will oversee adherence to letting agreements by outside groups, safer recruitment into church roles and appointing and supporting the work of the Church Safeguarding Officer, who should not be a Minister.
- 3.5 The use of Circuit Safeguarding Teams will be encouraged as a means of having a group of people who can support each other but also discuss, plan and scrutinise safeguarding requirements and how they should be implemented to the local churches in a sensitive and appropriate way. The group can then support the work of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and offer a way of bringing together common themes and issues arising in the local churches and develop a strategy to deal with them.

4. Partnerships

- 4.1 The District will commit itself to working in partnership with individuals and their families by showing respect and sensitivity at all times when offering help and support of any kind. Individuals, including children where appropriate, will be kept informed as to action taking place unless advised that this may not be helpful. This would usually occur in situations of abuse and harm.
- 4.2 Superintendents and Ministers will work with appropriate Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers to ensure the right support and action takes place.

- 4.3 The District will commit itself to working closely with external agencies to ensure the best support for those who need help. It will co-operate, particularly, with statutory agencies in working as a partner and, through DSG and the DSO, ensure working relationships with key colleagues, especially Local Authority Designated Officers (often, but not always, called LADO/DOLA's), Local Safeguarding Children and Adult Board colleagues and Public Protection agencies.
- 4.4 From time to time, as necessary, the District Safeguarding Officer will attend relevant meetings with local agencies to represent the District, especially where is/has been a concern which needs this.
- 4.5 The District recognises the importance of working in partnership with the Charity Commission to fulfil its duty to inform it of serious safeguarding matters as advised by the District Safeguarding Officer.

5. District Safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

- 5.1 **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.** The structures in place across the Methodist Connexion allow concerns to be dealt without delay and ensures outcomes are safe for everyone.
- 5.2 Appendix (i) outlines the roles and responsibilities of all key safeguarding roles and responsibilities in the District in line with the Connexional Safeguarding Policy 2019, with some local considerations included. However, the District will ensure that the following people are clear about their specific responsibilities:
 - Church Safeguarding Officer(s);
 - Circuit Safeguarding Officer(s);
 - District Safeguarding Officer;
 - The District safeguarding Group and its Independent Chair;
 - Superintendent Ministers;
 - Administrative support;
 - The District Chair.
- 5.3 Ministers will not place themselves in, or be appointed to, Safeguarding roles.

6. Procedures for dealing with concerns – “Responding Well”.

- 6.1 The District will adopt the phrase “**Responding Well**” as the over-arching term for its safeguarding policies and procedures especially in responding to a concern. This term reflects the commitment to responding appropriately, sensitively and in line with expectations whilst maintaining a sense of dignity for those being helped and supported, no matter what the concern or who it is about.
- 6.2 Each church and Circuit must have in place a safeguarding policy for both children and adults. It is likely that these will follow the standard District template available on the District website and contained in the Connexional Safeguarding Policy 2019.
- 6.3 In terms of procedures, the District has in place a **District “Responding Well” Safeguarding Flowchart** for dealing with any concerns about children, adults and those in church roles. It is the policy of the District that all churches will adopt this flowchart as a means of ensuring the appropriate and efficient response to concerns.
- 6.4 Each safeguarding policy and procedure in the District has separate to it a summary of the key points. These summaries will be displayed publicly in a designated place that will ensure all those in the church, visitors to it and those in a role in the church are clear on their responsibilities. Other appropriate information will be displayed such as contact numbers of key safeguarding people on a designated space provided for safeguarding information in the church.
- 6.5 It is the policy of the District that any concerns will be:

- listened to;
- taken seriously;
- dealt with in collaboration with the people concerned if appropriate and safe;
- referred to the appropriate people for advice, guidance and/or action without delay and however vague those concerns;
- kept “live” until dealt with appropriately;
- referred to external agencies if necessary.

6.6 These concerns will always be recorded as soon as is possible on the District responding Well Safeguarding Form 2019.

6.7 The District also takes seriously the importance of good practice and will commit itself to ensuring good practice guidelines are adhered to. Where any aspect of good practice may not be possible or is compromised, it is for the church council, CLT or District Leadership Team to be informed so as to make contingency arrangements and have the deficits recorded and reviewed.

6.8 In consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer, the District will be committed to the auditing at appropriate intervals of safeguarding and good practice to ensure compliance, areas of development and maintaining the highest standards are in place.

7. Support to those who have been hurt by those in the church and/or outside of it.

7.1 The District recognises the impact of harm of any kind. Harm done in the context of the church brings with its additional trauma, given that church settings are expected overall to be a safe place and its officers committed to safeguarding and protecting to the highest standards. Given this, particular support will be given to those who are hurt in the context of the church, whether past or present.

7.2 If harm or abuse is experienced outside of the context of the church but becomes known to the anyone in the life of the local churches, that person will respond in the usual way to offer support and get the right help especially, if necessary, from external agencies. It may be that the District Responding Well procedure should be followed and advice sought from the District Safeguarding Officer. It is hoped people feel safe enough to tell people in churches of their abuse or concerns, no matter where or when they arose or occurred.

7.3 Past concerns of abuse, especially specific allegations, will be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer as this will require sensitive support and care for those involved and liaison with appropriate Connexional staff and external agencies. Past concerns will always be recognized as needing a present response.

7.4 The District will seek to have in place a group of experienced and trained people who will be called upon to walk alongside those who have been hurt to ensure that appropriate support is offered and dignity and value is afforded through difficult and painful times.

8. Provision of safeguarding training – Creating Safer Space and Leadership

8.1 The District, in partnership with the Learning Network, will develop, implement and deliver essential and appropriate training as required by the Methodist Church and national governmental standards. Training is seen as critical to the District’s ability to safeguard and protect. Refusal to attend training will be taken seriously and, if necessary, trigger Methodist disciplinary arrangements, including suspension from posts until such training has been completed.

8.2 In particular, the District will implement the Methodist Creating Safer Spaces training at Foundation Level (2016) and the Methodist Creating Safer Spaces Foundation Refresher Module (2016) every 4 years. The Advanced Module must be undertaken by all those in leadership roles especially Ministers, including active Supernumerary Ministers, those with pastoral charge and/or local, Circuit or District responsibilities, including the District Leadership Team.

- 8.3 Worship Leaders and Local preachers must undertake Foundation training, Foundation refresher training and Advanced training.
- 8.4 In working with the Learning Network, especially through the relationship with the DSO, the District will identify training and development to build on people's continuing learning needs, especially for those in safeguarding roles.
- 8.5 Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers will play a key role in highlighting numbers for training, keeping systems for recording who has undertaken which training and keeping people informed of their training requirements. Circuit Administrators, if in place, may be very useful in helping to co-ordinate such information and store it centrally.
- 8.6 The DSG will oversee the development of training within the District as a whole and ensure that all necessary requirements are being fulfilled. In particular it will develop a District Training Pool in the Connexional Year 2019.2020 to bring a consistency of training, offer support and development to the trainers and ensure quality assurance of training being offered. The Pool will be supported by the DSO and the Learning Network.

9. Safe places and safe people.

Safer Recruitment.

- 9.1 The District will ensure roles are safer recruited through a robust recruitment process in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy of the Methodist church 2019.

Letting arrangements.

- 9.2 The Church Council as Trustees is responsible for overseeing the use of the church premises by outside groups, making sure they are compliant with requirements and reviewing at least annually the groups using the premises and how they are conducting themselves.
- 9.3 All outside groups using church premises will be subject to a letting agreement and be required to produce evidence of their own safeguarding policies, appropriate DBS checks and insurance. Should they not have a policy in place, the church that is letting the building will require the group to use that particular church's safeguarding policy.
- 9.4 Any lettings should be agreed only when considered against any other lettings taking place in the same building/vicinity in the church at the same time. It may be that the presence of a particular group occurring at the same time as another may mean increased risk to those groups and make a particular letting not possible.

Risk assessments – buildings, events and special occasions.

- 9.5 It is essential that all buildings, activities and special events are risk assessed to ensure compliance with policy, procedure and insurance requirements. This is especially important for Youth and Children's Workers as they engage with the type of activities that will require robust assessment.
- 9.6 In the same way lettings should be agreed set against other lettings taking place at the same time, a risk assessment to determine the increased risks of groups meeting at the same time should assist in knowing if a letting is safe for themselves and/or others.
- 9.7 Off site events should be risk assessed to ensure all matters have been considered – rations, environmental risks, transport and travel, consent from parents/carers etc.

Risk assessments – Safeguarding concerns.

- 9.8 From time to time it will be necessary for certain specific situations to be risk assessed to ensure people are safe and free from harm. This may be due to concerns about others behaviour and conduct or possible risks an individual may pose in general. These assessments will always be done in conjunction with the DSO and, as appropriate, the Chair

of District. There will be a range of situations where such a risk assessment will be needed and the District will be committed to undertaking these without delay and as advised.

- 9.9 In addition, certain situations may need a more independent risk assessment by another DSO colleague from another District as commissioned by the Connexional Safeguarding Team at Methodist Church House. For these assessments, the District will always co-operate, making information available as required to the person undertaking the risk assessment.
- 9.10 The District will work to support those who are offenders within the church and who desire to worship and maintain contact with the church by ensuring safeguarding contracts are in place and monitoring and supports groups to oversee them. These replace Covenants of Care as agreed by Methodist Conference 2017. No work with offenders will take place, procedures put in place or contract drawn up without first the District Safeguarding Officer being notified and involved.

Accessibility in offering help.

- 9.11 The District will ensure that churches, Circuits and the District itself have available on all its websites and visible notice boards contact numbers, especially emergency ones, of those who are in safeguarding roles and who are best placed to offer safeguarding help and advice. This will include emergency agency numbers. These will be easily accessed so as to avoid people having to ask for them should they wish to remain anonymous.
- 9.12 Further, there will be appropriate links on websites to allow people to easily connect to District and Connexional safeguarding Policies and related documents to ensure people who need help in this way can make use of information easily.

Social Media.

- 9.13 In the light of the growing use of social media to communicate and connect to others, the District is committed to making this aspect of safeguarding a high priority in ensuring relevant, up to date and accessible advice, policies and procedures. Concerns about the use of social media to cause harm in any way must always be treated as a safeguarding matter and the appropriate procedures followed.

10.Criminal record checks (DBS).

- 10.1 All those in an appropriate role will be subject to a DBS check that is relevant to their role and must be updated every 5 years. All those who are in such a role without valid DBS clearance will be not be allowed to continue or begin in that role until one has been obtained.
- 10.2 DBS checks and clearance are mandatory for Ministers/Deacons, including Supernumerary Ministers, paid Lay Workers, Worship Leaders and Local preachers
- 10.3 The Methodist Church Safer Recruitment Policy 2019 outlines the requirements for DBS checks and the response needed should one contain information which needs further consideration and assessment (referred to as a “blemish”).

11.Specific circumstances.

- 11.1 There are a number of complex situations that will require a particular safeguarding response and the DSO must be consulted to help and advise in such circumstances.
- 11.2 This will be especially important in dealing with such emerging safeguarding issues as domestic abuse, modern slavery, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, trafficking, child sexual exploitation - more detail in the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2019).
- 11.3 The Methodist Church has learned a lot about spiritual abuse and this is a further area of safeguarding which will require specific advice and support.

12. Compliance.

12.1 Given safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, the District will do all it can to support, equip and support everyone to be able to play an active part in promoting and responding to safeguarding matters. The District Safeguarding Compliance policy (2019) helps to support and address those individuals who, for whatever reason, may find it difficult to comply with requirements.

13. Policy review

13.1 This policy will be reviewed each year in order to ensure it is up to date, relevant and in line with national and local policy.

Dated

Signed District Chair

Appendix (1)

Key Safeguarding Roles and responsibilities.

Local churches.

The responsibility to ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and being used belongs to the Church Council. It is important that all Church Council members, whether or not a whole church congregation, understands their legal duties and therefore ensures:

- policies and procedures are in place;
- the summary of policies and procedures are displayed as directed by the District/Circuit Safeguarding Officer;
- policies are reviewed pro-actively every 12 months by Church Council with a report being offered by the Church Safeguarding Officer as to how they are working and any concerns about them;
- that the local church has a Church Safeguarding Officer who is not a Minister. If one is not able to be found the church council will decide who is best to caretake the role, considering the support of either a Church Safeguarding Officer from another church or the Circuit Safeguarding Officer;
- that the Church Council meeting have safeguarding as a standing item on each meeting agenda;
- that the Church Safeguarding Officer is a member of the Church Council;

Circuits.

The Circuit Leadership Team is responsible for the oversight of safeguarding within its churches to help, support and ensure compliance. The Circuit Leadership Team will ensure that;

- the Circuit has at least one Circuit Safeguarding Officer, who is not a Minister, in place;
- the Circuit Administrator is clear about his/her role in relation to holding records for safeguarding;
- each CLT and Circuit meeting has Safeguarding as a standing item on the agenda;
- the Circuit Safeguarding Officer is either a member of CLT in their safeguarding role or at least attends the Circuit Meeting to report on safeguarding matters.

District.

The District Leadership Team is responsible for the oversight of Safeguarding across the District at a more strategic level and must ensure:

- there is a District safeguarding Officer (DSO) in place;
- there is a District Safeguarding Group (DSG) in place;
- The DSG has an Independent Chair;
- Safeguarding is a standing item on its meeting agenda each time;
- Safeguarding is a standing item on its District Leadership Team meetings and Synods;
- the DSO is a member of the District Leadership Team or able to attend to give appropriate reports as required;
- That the DSO has the necessary support, line management and supervision in place.

Specific responsibilities.

The Independent Chair of the DSG:

As part of the implementation of the recommendation from the Presidents Inquiry (2011), the Methodist Conference affirmed the need for a focused group (the DSG) to oversee the work of safeguarding in the District and that this should be chair independently.

The Independent Chair of the District safeguarding Group (DSG) will be safely recruited and will have a background in safeguarding at any level and setting. The role will be managed by the Chair of District and have a close working relationship with the DSO. The role will be to support the DSO and DSG in fulfilling their work and be an important link to the Chair of District and as appropriate, the District Leadership Team, to promote the work of safeguarding, especially in challenging areas of practice that need revising or improving.

District Safeguarding Group (DSG)

The District Safeguarding Group (DSG) will oversee the work and promotion of safeguarding across the District. It will meet at least four times a year and have an Independent Chair.

Its role is to:

- ensure support to all circuits and churches in implementing District and Connexional policy;
- oversee the promotion of safeguarding children and adults across the District and ensure that all necessary information is disseminated at a local level to support this;
- ensure that the Chair of District, superintendents, ministers, paid workers and all lay staff and relevant committee/group members are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance. (The Chair of DSG, supported by the District Safeguarding Officer, will report to the District Leadership Team as required with such changes);
- ensure that the work of safeguarding across the District is up to date and in line with National Policy and Guidance;
- initiate programmes of awareness and good practice;
- work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The District must have in place a DSO or in any absence of one, a named person to oversee the role even temporarily who serves the DSG and the wider District to:

- ensure DSG is kept up to date with relevant national and local developments;
- advise DSG on safeguarding issues, practice and procedures;
- offer advice, and consultation to ordained and lay staff in the District on any individual case, situations and / or emergencies;
- be available to assist with implementation of policy and procedure;
- undertake risk assessments as appropriate;
- be a critical link between all relevant Committees to ensure safeguarding is relevant and connected to groups within the District;
- support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies;
- ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities and enable training opportunities to be made available;

- use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel;
- ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement policies and assist them in doing so;
- be a pro-active link between the District and external agencies, especially statutory organisations, in ensuring the best support for those who need help;

Church Safeguarding Officer.

Each church must have a Church Safeguarding Officer. In the absence of one, the Church Council should choose who should cover this role temporarily. A Minister should not take on this role.

The responsibilities of the Church Safeguarding Officer are to:

- i. support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
- ii. provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues i.e. to follow the District Flowchart;
- iii. liaise with the Circuit and District Safeguarding Officer;
- iv. promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers
- v. ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
- vi. attend training and meetings organised to support the role
- vii. oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (e.g. lettings, groups, property etc.)
- viii. report to the Church Council annually
- ix. ensure the church completes a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups and lettings in the church and that these have been;
- x. Take part in risk assessments for the church building and/or special events

Circuit Safeguarding Officers

Each Circuit within the District must have at least one Circuit Safeguarding Officer who is not a Minister. In the absence of one, arrangements should be made with an adjoining Circuit to agree mutual support until the vacancy is filled.

Given the importance of this role, any new appointment must be formalised and follow the Connexional Safer Recruitment policy 2019.

The Circuit will formally commission all those who take up this post by way of a simple commissioning service at the appropriate Circuit service. This will serve to help identify the person in the role to others in the Circuit, raise the profile of the work that this role will undertake and give a public profile to the post holder.

The role of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer:

1. Give support and advice to the Circuit Superintendent and the Church Safeguarding Officers in fulfilling their roles.
2. Work with others, especially if there is a Circuit Safeguarding Team in place, to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit is maintained.
3. Be the point of reference for individual Church Safeguarding Officers throughout the circuit to guide and advise them on Methodist Church safeguarding policy requirements.
4. Liaise with the District Safeguarding Officer as per the District Safeguarding Policy 2019

5. Provide support to the superintendent, make sure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary, especially in linking with the District Safeguarding Officer;
6. Report (in conjunction with the superintendent and relevant minister) any concerns to the District Safeguarding Office without delay firstly by phone and then as advised by the District safeguarding Officer the appropriate recording form.
7. Support the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the District or Connexion
8. Ensure that safeguarding is on the Circuit Meeting agenda as a 'standing' item and present a report to each meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for relevant confidentiality regarding specific cases).
9. Attend the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention i.e. ensure they are known to the Circuit staff team and what action has been taken;
10. Liaise with the individual Church Safeguarding Officers to make sure that they are being compliant with connexional policy, procedures and guidance. This may be best done by meeting with them at interval;
11. Meet with the Church Safeguarding Officers at least annually.
12. Attend at training as necessary.
13. Attend District Safeguarding events.
14. Member of and take active participation in District Safeguarding meetings as called by the District Safeguarding Officer
15. Review the Circuit Safeguarding Policy at least annually and provide an updated copy to the District Safeguarding Officer.
16. Give advice to churches where necessary on their policies.
17. Review the safeguarding policy for each church in the circuit each year after any amendments by the churches.
18. Be the source of up-to-date knowledge of current policies and practice in statutory services and within the Church.
19. Organise and contribute to safeguarding training for all those working in voluntary and paid roles within the circuit.
20. Maintain of a record of all people within the circuit who have received Foundation Module training, Foundation Module Refresher training together with dates of attendance
21. Ensure that all persons receive appropriate Methodist training when working with children and vulnerable adults, hold an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in the Methodist Church policy.
22. Oversee timely delivery of appropriate training, in liaison with the Church Safeguarding Officers and accredited Circuit Trainers
23. Ensure that all circuit churches adopt a safer recruitment policy when appointing staff, or volunteers when implemented;
24. Undertake DBS verification on behalf of the circuit.
25. Retain records of names of those at circuit level who have DBS checks.
26. Be a point of reference for 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).
27. Maintain 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 from the superintendent minister or nominated substitute, with signed and agreed records of meetings.

Superintendent Minister

The Superintendent Minister should:

- Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
- Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
- Suppose those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
- Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of sex offenders.
- Ensure 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.
- Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Circuit Safeguarding Officer/s and that the details of each person are passed to the District Office.
- Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
- 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.

Administrative posts.

In most cases these posts will be working either in a voluntary or paid role to work alongside the local church and/or the Circuit to maintain an administrative oversight in support to the Superintendent, Ministers and Safeguarding Officers.

The main tasks for safeguarding by anyone in such roles especially Circuit administrators will be to:

- ensure records are in place to be clear those in a role have an up-to-date DBS clearance in place as appropriate;
- know when any DBS is due for renewal;
- keep and maintaining records for safeguarding training as appropriate;
- ensure all policies and procedures are in date;
- act as a central point for administrative information especially in relation to role outlines and safer recruitment processes of local churches and the Circuit.

A template form for collecting and maintaining all this information is available on the District website safeguarding pages.

District Chair.

The District Chair will:

- Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in this area and enable training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group, the District Safeguarding Officer and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
- support the District Safeguarding Group(s) in this area as requested.

Appendix (ii)

Responding to those who raise concerns

The following concerns **MUST** be passed to the District safeguarding Officer as per the Connexional Safeguarding Policy 2019 Page 28, with local additions.

- * Any concern where a child or adult, or more than, has been harmed or is in a situation where harm could be likely whether or not in, or by someone in, the church;
- * Any concerns of a preventative nature i.e. responses needed early to put plans in place to reduce or manage risks
- * Any child or adult for whom there are a range of concerns but help and support is needed in a structured and sensitive way
- * A disclosure of abuse or harm is made from anyone about anyone;
- * A concern has been expressed about an office holder, whatever that role;
- * When someone has been suspended, dismissed, investigated and/or dismissed due to safeguarding issues
- * When someone has joined the church or is known to a part of a church with offences against children and/or adults, no matter what the offence;
- * A situation has arisen where the Connexional media are likely to be involved. For action or advice;
- * Disclosure that by someone that they have been hurt, abused or harmed in the past by someone in the church, irrespective of how long ago, irrespective of whether previous action has been taken and/or the whereabouts of those posing a risk are known or not.
- * All situations involving offenders wishing to be or becoming a part of a congregation no matter how that request/information comes to the church or Minister.