

Safeguarding Information Resource for Churches



Sheffield Methodist Circuit

Updated August 2022

Introduction

This folder is designed to be used as a general reference guide. For additional and supplementary information please refer to the Methodist Church in Britain (MCIB) website and Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) website. Contact details of who to speak to regarding safeguarding queries or issues are listed on page 4 of this folder.

The following statement, taken from the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy Statement, emphasises the obligation we all have to ensure our churches remain safe places for everyone:

‘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 has a role to play. This is supported with consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church’

It goes on to remind us that although policies and procedures are vital safeguarding tools it is people, through training, vigilance and resolution who ultimately protect.

Please note that this folder will be updated online as new information is made available by the Connexional safeguarding team.

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Safeguarding Contact Details

Church SG Officer: -----

Minister: -----

Circuit Safeguarding Officer:

Debbie Wheeler, The Furnival, 199 Verdon Street, S3 9QQ. Tel: 0114 2726561

Email: debbie.wheeler@sheffielddcircuit.org.uk

District Safeguarding Officer:

Alison Hill, Tel: 07483 362735

Email: safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org

Connexional Safeguarding Team

Tel: 020 7467 5189

Email: safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

Sheffield

Local Children's Services:

Local Out of Hours Safeguarding Hub: Tel: 0114 2734855 (24 hrs)

Sheffield Adult Safeguarding Partnership:

Sheffield Adult SG Partnership Tel: 0114 2734908 (24 hrs)

Local Police Protection Unit: Tel: 0114 2963968

Barnsley

Child Social Care Assessment Service:

Tel: 01226 772423 or Emergency duty team, Tel: 01226 787789

Adult Social Services

Tel: 01226 773300 or Emergency duty team, Tel: 01226 787789

Derbyshire

Child Protection Services

Tel: 01629 533190 or 101 (24hrs)

Adults at Risk: Tel: 01629 533190 or 101 (24hrs)

Other Services

Police non-emergency: Tel: 101 **Childline:** Tel: 0800 1111, **NSPCC:** Tel: 0808 800

5000 **Action on Elder Abuse:** Tel: 0808 808 8141 **National Domestic Abuse**

Helpline: 0808 2000 247 **Samaritans:** 116 123

Church Safeguarding Checklist

1. Please ensure you have a named Church Safeguarding Officer/s, that they are known to your congregation and their contact details are accessible.
2. Set out clear guidance about how concerns are to be reported. If someone has a concern or worry about someone, or a situation in church, it is important that they speak to someone about it. This may be the minister in pastoral charge or the church safeguarding officer or someone else in a role within the church. They may however prefer to contact someone outside the church and can speak to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and or the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO). Relevant details will be passed onto the DSO who will then decide how to proceed and if the concern should be referred to statutory services. **It is important to note that concerns can be voiced directly to the District Safeguarding Officer, especially if someone is unsure about who to speak to or the situation is complex.**
3. Ensure your Church Safeguarding Policy is easily located. Following feedback, it was determined that the requirement to put up the church or circuit safeguarding policy on noticeboards did cause some problems. The multi-page document often became detached from notice boards near doorways, and key information was difficult to read. It was agreed that a **standard poster** should be made available. The poster has now been distributed, and along with church and wider safeguarding contact details, it indicates where the church safeguarding policy may be found within the church building. The posters must be clearly displayed in all rooms where work takes place with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Although the use of the posters is recommended as a focus for safeguarding on notice boards, it is not mandatory and churches may continue to follow current requirements and display their current policy. **You can download the posters [here](#)**
4. The **Church Safeguarding Policy should be agreed annually at the Church Council meeting**. Templates are available on the Circuit Website and the Methodist Church in Britain Website. A signed copy of the policy should be sent to the circuit safeguarding officer as soon as possible after the meeting.
5. Safeguarding should be a standing agenda item at Church Council meetings.
6. Ensure up to date safeguarding material that includes reference to domestic abuse as well as for children, young people and vulnerable adults is displayed clearly near entrances. In the case of domestic abuse posters these should also be displayed in toilet areas. The Circuit office keeps a stock of up to date posters/leaflets.
7. Always follow the **‘Safer Recruitment’** process for all appointments including DBS checks, confidential declarations, volunteer forms and references.
8. Ensure everyone who is required to attend the **Creating Safer Space** Foundation and Advanced Course has done so, and that they attend a Refresher Course every 4 years. Records of those who have attended should be kept securely and updates sent to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.
9. Ensure **records** of safeguarding concerns are recorded and stored correctly. It is important that all concerns are passed on to the DSO.

10. When a Minister becomes aware that a **Safeguarding Contract**, (formally known as a Covenant of Care) is required, a risk assessment must be carried out by the DSO.

11. Planned activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults must be carried out in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. This includes risk assessments, a register and emergency contact details. All details should be stored securely.

12. Ensure safeguarding principles are promoted within the life of your church.

13. **Hirers of Methodist Church premises** must either agree to follow the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy or produce a copy of their own policy. This policy must be reviewed annually.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry.

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 them support whilst taking steps to mitigate 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 has a role to play. This is supported with consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church.

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

Commitments based on the foundations above, the Methodist Church commits to:

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.

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

The Church will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility related to children, young people 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 and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll-out of consistent and accessible Creating Safer Space safeguarding training in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern or allegation of current or historic abuse to the notice of an officeholder within the Church, will be responded to respectfully and promptly, following the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. All suspicions, concerns, or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer who will direct the concern to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All officeholders and employees within the Church will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to ministers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of the 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.

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

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

Responding well to those who might pose a risk

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.

There are formal processes for managing these situations ranging from 'Covenants of Care', now known as 'Safeguarding Contracts' to less formal agreements. For more information contact your Minister and Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

Putting the policy into action

Churches, Circuits and District bodies need to ensure that these commitments are integrated into a local safeguarding policy. A model Church Safeguarding Policy, updated Feb 22 can be found [online here](#)

Please note that the model Church Safeguarding Policy is designed to be adapted by individual churches.

The policy is an active statement underpinning safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve practice. All church bodies need to:

- ensure that all officeholders have a copy of the policy
- promote and publicise the policy
- communicate the Church's safeguarding message as reflected in the policy
- develop processes to assess how well the policy is being implemented, lessons that are being learnt and what difference it is making
- undertake an annual progress review at Church Council, which is recorded.

Safeguarding organisational structure and responsibilities

Church and Circuit level

In line with 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.

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 Circuit Safeguarding Officer will provide support and guidance for local Churches and Ministers in implementing safeguarding as stated.

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 is recommended that the local Church or Circuit Safeguarding Officer be a member of the Church Council or Circuit Meeting, or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Connexion have produced [a Template Church Safeguarding Officer job description](#) which can be found online here and on the MCIB Website under 'Safeguarding'/Policies and Procedures, page 141.

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.

The District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for advising and following through safeguarding concerns within the district, supported by the District Safeguarding Group (DSG)

Responding Well to Concerns - Quick Reference Guide

What to do if you have concerns about possible abuse.

- Consult the person to whom you are responsible; line manager, minister/minister in pastoral charge of your Church, church safeguarding officer. If you prefer to speak to someone outside your church contact the circuit or district safeguarding officer.
- The circuit safeguarding office and the district safeguarding officer are available for advice.
- Keep a record of what happened, your concerns and your actions, (use the safeguarding incident reporting form if possible, however it is acknowledged that this isn't always practical)
- **Under no circumstances should the person who is the subject of the allegation be informed until after the allegation has been discussed with the District Safeguarding Officer.**
- Only tell others who need to know.
- In an emergency respond immediately by contacting the police and or social services.

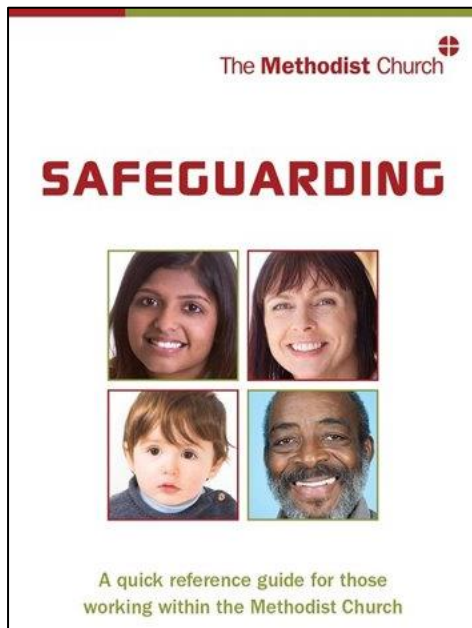
Responding to a child, young person, parent or other adult who shares with you about abuse.

- Never promise to keep a secret.
- React calmly; be aware of your non-verbal messages.
- Don't stop someone who is talking freely about what has happened.
- Don't ask leading questions.
- Reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Avoid making comments or judgements.
- Tell the person what will happen next.
- Record using the person's own words and noting any important dates and times.
- Report to the person to whom you are responsible.

Remember good practice.

- Treat everyone with respect, setting a positive example.
- Respect people's personal space.
- Ensure your actions cannot be misinterpreted.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a constructive way.
- Do not put yourself or other people in vulnerable situations.
- Do not have inappropriate physical contact with others.
- Always share safeguarding concerns with your church safeguarding officer or minister or if you prefer the circuit or district safeguarding officer.

The Safeguarding Quick Reference Guide, which is given out during the Foundation Module 2020 training, should be completed and kept accessible.



You do not have to share your concerns with each of these contacts. If you are referring to the church safeguarding officer then it becomes their responsibility to share that information with the circuit safeguarding officer or district safeguarding officer.

In an emergency contact the statutory authorities directly, and then inform your leader, minister or church safeguarding officer without delay. When it comes to referring to external bodies, such as social services or the police, information concerning an abused adult must only be shared with their consent.

In an emergency contact the statutory authorities directly, and then inform your leader, minister or church safeguarding officer without delay. When it comes to referring to external bodies, such as social services or the police, information concerning an abused adult must only

be shared with their consent. If the person does not consent to having their information shared, their wishes should be respected. If you decide to share the information without consent (if you believe the person lacks mental capacity to make such a choice, when there is a risk of harm to others or in order to prevent a crime) make sure that you record your decision and your reasoning. Consent is not necessary when making a referral about a child.

Safeguarding Incident Reporting

Whenever a safeguarding concern has been raised about a child or adult, anyone receiving a concern or is responsible for dealing with the situation, must keep clear and comprehensive records in order to ensure there is:

- A history of events
- Continuity when there are changes of personnel
- Accountability
- Evidence in case of proceedings
- Issue a Safeguarding Concern Privacy Notice (Contributor or Reporting Person) to those providing personal information in connection to the incident, (see section on Privacy Notices, page 16, for more information) **This may not be possible or appropriate at the time, in which case a notice should be provided at a later date.**

Explain why you would like to take notes, and that they will have access to the information they have shared with you, (this is further emphasised in the Privacy Notice).

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.
- Include:
 - i) Who was involved – names of key people
 - ii) What happened – facts not opinions
 - iii) Where it happened
 - iv) When it happened
 - v) How it happened
- Keep a log of all actions you have taken
- Make sure your notes are legible, clear, concise, relevant, thorough, jargon free and use the person's own words and phrases. Do not attempt to sanitise language or improve grammar.
- Ensure they are up to date, signed, dated and timed.
- Where possible ask the person to review the notes and confirm that they are an accurate record.
- Pass records to the church safeguarding officer and or minister. Records must also be passed to the district safeguarding officer. If the concern relates to a minister then records must be passed straight to the DSO. **In all cases the DSO must be informed of incidents and concerns within 24 hours.**

*If possible use the safeguarding reporting form, however this may not be immediately available and an accurate timely record is far more important than having the correct form. [safeguarding incident recording template is available](#)

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.

It is important that all records are kept in a secure place and only shared in accordance with legislation, government guidance, Methodist Church Policy, Procedure and Guidelines (see Section 5 in the unabridged policies and procedures document on the MCIB [Website](#))

The Methodist Church has put procedures for information sharing and confidentiality in place to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults in our churches by ensuring that information is shared appropriately, in accordance with the law and related good practice guidance.

- Safeguarding records should only be seen by those who need to have proper access to them.
- There should be a written protocol about who has access to the records and how records are accessed in an emergency or in planned or unplanned absences of the record holder.
- Paper files should be contained in a lockable cabinet. It is inappropriate for safeguarding incident concerns to be kept in the safe used for marriage registers as this is only accessible by an authorised person.
- Electronic files should be password protected and backed up regularly. Systems should be virus protected.
- Data must never be stored on a USB stick or other removable media unless encrypted.
- No letter containing confidential information and identifying details should be sent other than by 'Special Delivery' (which tracks documents online together with signed proof of delivery) Always use the double envelope safeguard (relevant information is contained within an inner envelope marked confidential, but no classification details shown on the outer envelope).

All incidents and concerns must be passed onto the District Safeguarding Officer.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The GDPR outlines the rights of individuals regarding the information that is held and used by organisations. Many of the provisions were included in the Data Protection Act 1998, but the new requirements call for greater transparency. It is important that everyone within the Church understands their responsibilities under GDPR and complies with its requirements.

Key Terms

There are several key terms that help to understand the new requirements;

- Personal data

Any information relating to a person.

- Data subject

The person the information refers to, this could include details such as DOB and address.

- Special categories of personal data

This includes special categories of information such as religious beliefs and health information. In the majority of cases because of its nature, safeguarding concerns will include special category personal data.

- Criminal offence data

This comes under a separate category with additional requirements relating to how this information is processed.

- The Controller

The legal body responsible for ensuring compliance with GDPR requirements. For safeguarding purposes this is the Methodist Church Council.

- The Processor

Anyone who processes safeguarding information.

- Privacy Notice

This is a notice to individuals about why personal data is being collected, how it will be used, a person's right of access to see the information being held, and their rights of complaint. A signed copy should be retained as evidence it had been received. Safeguarding Concern Privacy Notice templates are available on the MCIB website and by using the links on the following page.

- Data Mapping

How different categories of information are used and stored, for how long it is kept, disposed of, which organisation or department is keeping and collecting the information and who the personal data has been disclosed to.

How do these new regulations affect safeguarding?

Privacy Notices (PN) should be provided to everyone involved in a safeguarding concern or incident if their personal details are being collected. This will include a person reporting a concern, a third party who is relating a concern shared with them, and the subject of the concern. **Take advice from District Safeguarding Officer, 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. Examples of this would be in cases of domestic abuse or modern slavery.**

The nature of the PN should be explained clearly and concisely at the time they are given so that individuals do not become alarmed by them. Standard safeguarding privacy notices are available below and on the Methodist Church in Britain website. Using this document will ensure that all the information required by GDPR will be provided. NB. Children must also be provided with a privacy notice but they must be age appropriate, (seek advice from the District Safeguarding Officer). Other things to consider;

Sensitivity is important, for example if someone is giving information about themselves, a privacy notice should ideally be supplied at the time, however it may be that the person disclosing a concern is not emotionally in a place where they are able to take in the information concerning a privacy notice. Also, the person who is being confided in may not be aware of the use of privacy notices. The District Safeguarding Officer can provide support in these cases. It is important to recognise that the use of PN's will become familiar practice, but initially may be regarded with concern.

Privacy notices are not only used for safeguarding concerns. There are many roles where personal data is collected and it is important individuals are made aware how and why their information is being collected, and how it will be used and stored. There are specific PN's for different situations. Privacy Notices are to be given in the following situations to ensure an individual's rights are protected under GDPR;

- [Safeguarding Concern \(Subject of Concern\) PN](#)
- [Safeguarding Concern Privacy Notice \(Contributor or Reporting person\)](#)
- [DBS Verifier PN](#)
- [Safeguarding Training Participant PN](#)
- [Key holder PN \(this is in addition to the key holder declaration form\)](#)
- [Monitoring and Support Group Member \(this is in addition to the Confidentiality Agreement\)](#)
- [Monitoring and Support Group Privacy Notice \(Subject\)](#)
- [Volunteer PN for those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. \(this is in addition to the registration form\)](#)

Safer recruitment and DBS

Joint Policy Statement on Safer Recruitment

The Church of England and Methodist Church are committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults, and the care and nurture of children within our church communities. We will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within both churches, in line with Safer Recruitment principles. This means that we will;

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults who may be vulnerable, from taking up in our churches positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others.
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards, responding positively to changing understandings of good safer recruitment practice.
- Produce and distribute practice guidance on safer recruitment to churches, ensuring that it is up to date.
- Ensure there is training on safer recruitment practice.
- Introduce systems for monitoring adherence to the churches' safer recruitment practice guidance and review them regularly

Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidance for Sheffield Methodist Circuit

To make the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers easier there is a 12 step guide to help you through the process. Please follow this [link](#)

Other Recruitment Documentation

Self-Declaration Form

[SD/4 Safeguarding self-declaration for members of church bodies](#)

Members of church bodies (e.g. **church council members**) should complete this form. This form replaces Form C. Aug 2020

Ministers DBS Exemption Form

[Exemptions from DBS checks for Ministers](#) This is for ministers no longer preaching.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks

The following is an abridged guide, for more information please refer to [The Methodist Church in Britain Practice Guidance on Carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service Checks](#) Oct 22 found on the MCIB website.

The information below sets out safer recruitment practices in relation to DBS checks for people working or volunteering in a Methodist Church setting, primarily with children and adults who may be vulnerable. It can also be used as a model of good practice for other posts.

The guidance should be used in the appointment to all new paid posts, including people moving from one Methodist Church employing body to another one, and to new volunteers working with children or adults who may be vulnerable. It may be used to inform any review of people previously in post.

It should not be forgotten that only a small proportion of adults who abuse are caught and still fewer are convicted, so organisations must **never** rely solely on the DBS check, which, although crucial, remains only one element of safeguarding and safer recruitment. **DBS checks should be renewed at least every five years.**

Portability

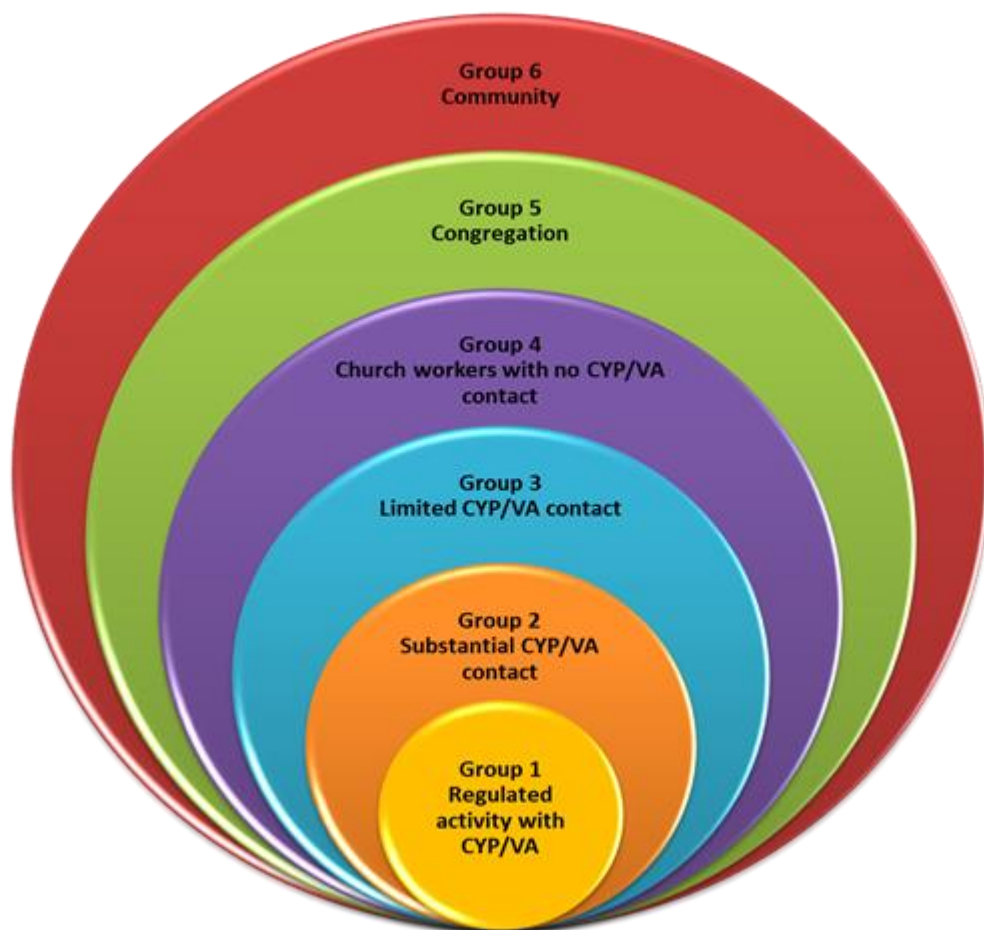
Portability means using a criminal record check obtained in one role for a different role, sometimes with a different employer or organisation. There can be some portability of a criminal record check **within** the Methodist Church in Britain. For example, an individual applying for a new role within the Methodist Church in Britain does not require a second criminal record check if the role is with the same 'workforce' i.e. children and or vulnerable adults, and at the same level (enhanced, enhanced with barred check). The check must be less than five years old for a volunteer and less than two years old for paid roles. Prior to the appointment, contact should be made with the supervisor for their previous role within the Church to confirm there were no known safeguarding concerns.

The Methodist Church may also accept existing DBS certificates undertaken by external organisations if the following conditions are met:

- the certificate is unblemished
- the applicant is registered for the Update Service
- the level of check is at enhanced or enhanced with barred list
- the certificate is less than 2 years old
- the certificate is applicable to a role within the same workforce i.e. adult or child workforce.

Criminal Record Check Eligibility Circles

NB (Not everyone requires a DBS check or is eligible for one)



There are 3 types of check you can carry out as an organisation:

- a standard check shows spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings
- an enhanced check shows the same as a standard check plus any information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role
- an enhanced check with barred lists shows the same information as an enhanced check plus whether the applicant is on the list of people barred from certain roles

In the Methodist Church we are mainly concerned with two types of DBS check:

- **Enhanced DBS Checks**
- **Enhanced DBS checks (With Barred List Checks);** employers have the option to include a barred list check if applicable. This means a check will be made against either the children's or vulnerable adults barred list, or both, to confirm whether the applicant is barred from working with these vulnerable groups.
- It is possible to request a Basic Check for certain roles such as administration workers or premises workers. However please check with the Circuit office before applying to make sure a check is necessary.

All DBS checks on behalf of the Methodist Church are carried out by Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC)

Those Eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check:

Group 1 (Yellow)

Those who undertake 'Regulated Activity' with children or adults who may be vulnerable.

Regulated activity is classed as working regularly with these groups, for instance every Sunday, and doing so unsupervised. This would apply for example to a Sunday school leader or a Lunch Club organiser. It also applies to those who work with these groups intensively, for example someone who volunteers to join the annual summer camp or holiday project and work for more than 4 days in a row. **This group is eligible for an Enhanced DBS check (with barred list checks).**

This group will include the following;

All clergy, presbyters and deacons

Lay workers with a brief to work with children and families

Youth leaders

Children's group leaders

Holiday project volunteers

Sunday school leaders

Music leaders where the group is mainly children and young people

Drivers for youth and children's activities

Pastoral visitors who visit vulnerable adults (this is as a church appointed pastoral visitor, as opposed to helping out as a friend)

As part of the recruitment process this group will also be required to complete a **Confidential Declaration form.**

Group 2 (Orange)

Those who have substantial contact with children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable but do not generally do so unsupervised.

This group are eligible for an **Enhanced Check**. There does however need to be some discretion as it may be the case that an individual may occasionally run a group unsupervised if the group leader is away for example. In this case it would be prudent to apply for an Enhanced check with Barred List Check. If unsure which group an individual falls into please check with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

This group will include the following;

Lay preachers
Worship leaders
Youth workers
Children's group workers
Crèche workers
Parent and toddler group helpers (where parents are not attending)

Applicants in groups 1 and 2 should never start in the role until the criminal record check has been received and they have been approved for the work. This applies to both voluntary and paid roles.

Those NOT Eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check:

Group 3 (Blue)

Those who have limited contact with children and adults who may be vulnerable through their role but their contact is insufficient to cross the threshold for eligibility. Enhanced criminal record checks cannot be carried out for this group. Examples include; gardener, church shop assistant. It is however possible to obtain a Basic Criminal Record check through DDC for two specific roles; 'church administrator' and 'premises worker without substantial contact with vulnerable groups' If in doubt please speak to the Circuit or District safeguarding officer.

Group 4 (Purple)

Work does not relate to children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable.
These groups do not generally need a DBS check. Examples of roles in this category include;
Refreshment servers
Caretaker (unless they have access to the building when vulnerable groups are in the building, in which case a DBS check is required)
Welcome stewards
Church stewards
Church warden
Choir leaders for an adult choir
Church council members
Church welcome team

Group 5 (Green) & Group 6 (Red)

People within the congregation or known through community engagement.

Note: there could be a significant risk when a member of one of these groups becomes known and trusted within the church, and then allowed to move into GROUP 1 or 2 without checks, because of the sense of trust the person has created. This can be understood as part of the process known as grooming. This is one of the main reasons for the emphasis on safer recruitment processes in all situations.

When applying for a DBS check;

Use the eligibility circle to determine whether or not a person requires a check.

DDC (Due Diligence Checking Ltd) <https://www.ddc.uk.net/> is the Registered Body that processes all DBS applications for the Methodist Church. Further information about DDC can be found on the MCIB Website.

A few points to take note of with the new system:

- Ministers or document checkers (Lay verifiers) start the online process for applicants.
- All DBS applications will be done electronically
- Unlike the previous system document checkers are not advised by DDC when an applicant has been sent a DBS certificate. Document checkers are now asked to enquire if an applicant has received their certificate after a time lapse of approximately two weeks, and ask to have sight of it. A note of the date of issue and certificate number should be recorded
- When choosing a role from the drop-down list on the online application form please note that these have been agreed by the Methodist Church, please avoid creating 'other' roles. It is also important to ensure you don't choose a 'worker' role for a volunteer position, as checks for paid roles incur a cost to Church or Circuit.

Criminal Record Checks – Guidance for Specific Situations

16-18 Year Olds

No young person under 18 should be expected to take on a role of sole responsibility. If they assist others in leadership roles, support and supervision must be given in proportion to their requirements. Therefore no 16-18 year-old should be in a role within GROUP 1. Please note that the minimum age someone can be asked to apply for a DBS check is 16 yrs.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

While the Methodist Church fully supports the principle of rehabilitation and applies it to all recruitment practice, the Methodist Church has set restrictions about the roles that can be undertaken by those who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults.

'One-off' events visitors or helpers

When helping at a day or evening event, the above recruitment measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is known to the organisation and is always **supervised**. It is not necessary to obtain a criminal record check for visitors who will only have contact with children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time. However, this does not apply to day outings where it would be impractical to supervise a volunteer in such circumstances.

It is good practice to ensure that visitors sign in and out and are escorted whilst on the

premises by a member of staff or appropriately vetted volunteer.

Self-help arrangements

Family members, self-help groups or other vulnerable adults, do not require a criminal record check where they are assisting a leader in providing an activity for people who experience the same situation as themselves or their relative/close friend.

Student placements

When offering student placements for professional or vocational training where there is a practice placement element, a criminal record check should be applied for as soon as the place on the programme has been accepted, so that the information is received prior to the student commencing the work-based elements of their training. No student should ever start a placement where part of the role would fit within GROUPs 1 or 2, without first having a DBS check.

Caretaker / administrator / food bank workers

Most caretakers / administrators and food bank workers fall into GROUP 3 and are therefore not entitled to a criminal record check. Where the caretaker simply opens and locks the building, the administrator has no contact with vulnerable people or where the food bank worker simply parcels up food and hands it out, no check is required and they are not eligible. Where the role involves substantial contact with vulnerable groups for example some food bank workers, this must be highlighted in the job specification. The role should then be classed as 'premises worker or caretaker, specified place' (vol) or vulnerable adults volunteer.

Ecumenical events:

For an occasional event, a decision should always be made about which body is 'hosting' the event. This matters both for safeguarding and for insurance arrangements.

When recruiting workers (either paid or volunteer), suitable assurances should be obtained from the 'home' church or organisation which first recruited them, that the person has been recruited safely with a criminal record check if required.

Note. References are required as part of the safer recruitment process for paid **and** voluntary roles.

Information for those applying for a DBS check

If you are asked to apply for a DBS check or to renew your existing certificate you should be given the name of someone within your church who can start the application process for you. This person will be a 'document checker' (lay verifier) or your Minister.

If you are happy to complete the online process yourself you don't need to see this person face to face at this stage, you can email or telephone them. They will ask you for your full name and address, date of birth, email address, the role for which you are applying for a DBS check, and which church you worship at (this will be added as your 'location ID') You will also be asked for your role title from a drop down list (please avoid creating 'other' roles) It is also important to distinguish between paid/worker roles and volunteer roles, as the latter do not incur a cost. You will then automatically receive an email containing a link to the online application form. The system is designed to guide you simply through the process.

On the application form you will be asked to input details from **three separate** original identity documents. The full list of acceptable documents will be displayed. Once you have done this you will need to contact your document checker to arrange to take your identity documents to show them. The document checker will then verify the documents online whilst you are present. Once this has been done, the document checker will submit your application.

Once your certificate has been issued you will be sent a paper copy to your home address directly from the DBS. **You need to take the certificate to the person who is or will be your line manager, or the person responsible for your recruitment.** This is the same for paid and voluntary roles.

If you don't have an email address or would rather not complete the process online, you can arrange to meet the document checker, and they will complete the online form on your behalf. You will need to take in your identity documents with you which can be inputted in to the system and verified at the same time. The document checker will then submit your application.

Information you will need to hand to fill in the application form:

- Your current full name and address
- Any other names you have used, along with the dates you started and stopped using them
- A full and continuous address history for the past 5 years, including UK postcodes, where applicable
- Your passport details, if you have one
- Your UK driving licence details, if you have one
- Your UK National Insurance Number, if you have one

Specific Identity documents you will need:

The DBS have created a **3-tiered document identification process** that dictates which documents must be presented in support of your DBS Check application. The valid document types and combinations are listed [here](#) and on the DDC Website, www.ddc.uk.net/methodist 'Help & Advice - Guidance for Applicants'

Route **1** must be exhausted before **Route 2** can be attempted. **Route 3** exists for those who do not have the required identity documents for the route 1 or 2 and is used as a last resort. You will need to speak to your document checker or Minister before you continue with this route.

Code of safer working practice

Good practice guidelines for church-sponsored activities for children and young people

<p><u>You should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat all children and young people with respect and dignity • ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful • always aim to work with or within sight of another adult • ensure 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 if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern • respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around • if any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administer any necessary first aid with others around • obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed • record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader (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. 	<p><u>You should not:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiate physical contact; any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above) should only be initiated by the child • invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting • play rough physical or sexually provocative games • use any form of physical punishment • be sexually suggestive about or to a child, even in fun • touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively • scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child • permit 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 overtly physical or sexual in nature • give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own • smoke tobacco in the presence of children • drink alcohol when responsible for young People • share sleeping accommodation with children • invite a child to your home alone • arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions • allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person) • allow strangers to give children lifts.
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In addition to the above the group leader should:

- ensure health and safety requirements are adhered to
- undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and records kept
- keep register and consent forms up to date

- have an awareness, 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 church safeguarding officer over good practice for safeguarding
- always inform the church safeguarding officer and or minister of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. If you prefer you can raise your concerns directly with the Circuit or District safeguarding officer. Whoever you inform initially, you must ensure the DSO is also informed.
- liaise with the Church Council.

Unaccompanied Children

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. Detailed action on arrival of an unaccompanied child can be found in the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance document page 93, 6.3.6.1.

Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your group leader, church safeguarding officer and/or minister. Agree between you who will take what action and when, this will always involve contacting the district safeguarding officer to determine if statutory services need to be informed.

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 seemed particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible.

Try if possible to note from the register the child's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign the record and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording. Ensure all notes are kept in a safe place.

If a child asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to pass on information about a child you consider to be at risk.

Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.

- Stay calm.
- 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 he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

Immediate risk

- If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is 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. The local authority Children's Services Duty/Referral team are also a source of advice and support 24 hours a day. Local Children's Services: Sheffield North, Tel: 0114 2039591, Sheffield East, Tel: 0114 2037463, Sheffield West, Tel: 0114 2734491, Sheffield Safeguarding Hub 0114 273 4855 (24hrs/7 days)

- If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

Good practice guidelines for church-sponsored activities for children and young people

Recommended staffing levels

It is the responsibility of the group leader to consider individual circumstances and make appropriate arrangements for 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
- Children with additional support needs – extra staff may be necessary
- Any behavioural difficulty identified
- The layout of the room
- 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)
- First aid cover
- The nature of the activity
- NSPCC guidance on staff to child ratios: there should always be a minimum of two adults present at any activity (it is recommended that there be at least one male and one female) and the ratios agreed should also be based on a risk assessment. See MCIB Website under; Safeguarding/Policies Procedures and Guidance, 7.6.1 recommended staffing levels. Also 'The Well Learning Hub' [resource](#) is very useful.

Safe environment

See also section 6.6 'Health and Safety', MCIB Website/Safeguarding/Policies and Procedures

When evaluating an appropriate 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
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity
- if food is regularly prepared for children or others 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 always 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 encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark and badly lit paths
- First aid
- Display both the Childline telephone number (0800 1111) in a prominent place where children and young people can see it and the Family Lives number (0808 800 2222) for parents.

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 about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. 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 legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

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, given approval by the event leader 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
- Any risks identified
- Action needed to address the risk
- A named person for resolving risk issues.

Church photography and video recordings

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording Methodist Church activity and for providing an historic 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 therefore respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed. Use the consent form (which can be found on the children and youth section on the MCIB website) as a matter of course for all groups and events at the same time as you collect contact details, permission slips or

registration forms. 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.

Procedures for photographers at church events

- Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or who is under a court order (where this is known)
- 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

Consent

Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the child/young person if he/she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. For example, whilst parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday, a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.

NB. In most circumstances, parents have a legal responsibility for their children up to the age of 18. 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.

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.

Registration

A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs including activities which the child is unable to take part in
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant. 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.

Register

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

Venue

- Meeting places should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Electric socket covers must never be used as they present a safety hazard.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- 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 encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.

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 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.
- All accidents should be recorded in an accident book.

E-safety

- Ensure 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.
- 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.

Mobile phones

- All children and youth workers will be offered a dedicated work phone
- Use group texts wherever possible
- There should be an agreed length of time for conversations and a curfew (e.g. no communication between 9 pm and 7am)
- Conversations causing concern should be saved and passed to supervisor
- Photos should only be taken in accordance with safeguarding guidance
- Images should only be downloaded to a church computer.

Drivers transporting children on behalf of the church

- 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. This group is eligible for an Enhanced DBS check (with barred list checks)
- 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.

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 cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and 'social, domestic and pleasure' use. This classification generally covers church members giving lifts as long as a fee isn't charged. It is the responsibility of the insured person to ensure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church sponsored activities.
- All cars that carry children should 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.

Social Media Guidelines

Please visit this link for a **complete [guide](#)** to all information relating to social media within the Methodist Church. This information can be found on the MCIB Website – Guidance for Churches - Digital Communication for Churches.

‘The Well’ For Children, Youth, Schools and Family Workers, has also produced a comprehensive [Social Media guide](#). This information is also available on the MCIB Website – The Well - learning Hub – Social Media Guidelines.

Guidance for workers; Internet, email and texting communication guidelines for workers

Rationale

As a children’s or youth worker in the Methodist Church, we recognise that using the Internet (and other forms of technology) is an important part of the lives of the children and young people we work with.

We understand that for many children and young people, using the Internet is a regular part of their lives and has a significant impact on their social development.

In accordance with The Methodist Church’s Safeguarding Policy, we recognise that we must take all possible steps to protect young people from significant harm or risk whilst using the Internet or any other form of technology.

We also recognise the importance of establishing and updating procedures to ensure workers are protected whilst they work with children and young people.

All workers are responsible for reading any policies produced regarding safeguarding and communication matters and are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the current policies.

Reasons for contacting a young person via the Internet or email

It is not appropriate to have private non – work related contact in the form of electronic communication with the children and young people with whom we work.

We recognise that there will be times when it is necessary and important to use electronic communication. However, we recognise the need for an appropriate response and always encourage face-to-face contact as opposed to a contact or reply via online methods of communication.

Workers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work with children and young people, not for general socialising. Workers should make their line manager or youth group leader aware when they are using electronic communication. This must be set up as part of a group communication and not individual.

Parental awareness and consent

Parental consent for using electronic forms of communication is essential and should be included on your annual consent forms or by letter with a return slip agreeing to the use of this form of communication. You should outline what means you will be using for communication and what you will be communicating.

It is important to explain this policy and practice to parents and careers and seek to ensure they are aware and are happy that we use electronic communication and what type of electronic communication we are using (e.g. email).

Specific definitions

‘Internet’ communication specifically refers to the use of social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other websites of a similar nature.

‘Email’ communication specifically refers to the use of emails, including written text and/or pictures sent from personal or work accounts.

Email communication

Email should only be used to communicate specific information (times and dates of events, for example). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.

We recommend having a ‘shared’ staff email account where all staff can access any emails, regardless of whether it is private or public. This would allow communication amongst staff and young people to remain safe.

Only group emails should be used. Workers should encourage appropriate ‘face to face’ contact where possible. Conversation (repeated sending of emails between two individuals) via email is discouraged. Workers should make their line manager or team leader aware when they are using email to contact young people. Email histories should be kept and dated.

Email and accountability

As specified above, email should only be used to convey information and not used as a relationship tool. However, if a young person discloses information or anything of a concerning matter arises via email, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Follow the Methodist Church safeguarding procedures when a safeguarding concern is raised.
2. Do not respond to the email.
3. Make attempts to contact the young person via other methods of communication and where possible, arrange to meet face to face if necessary. Ask the DSO for advice if needed.

Language

All language should be appropriate and where possible ‘standard responses’ should be used (e.g. if you have sent an email out containing event details and receive a reply asking for further details, create a standard response with additional details so that all young people receive the same information).

Workers and volunteers should take great care over the language used to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

When sending emails, workers should not use informal language such as shorthand or ‘text language’ as this can often be misunderstood and lead to further complications.

Hours of communication

When using email/the Internet for communication with young people (within the guidelines above), it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm.

If a project takes place in the evening (after 5pm) and it is necessary to send an email/use the Internet, Workers should seek advice from their line manager but there should be no email communication after 9pm.

‘Adding friends’ on Facebook and similar sites

You should not add children or young people to your personal social networking page who are part of the children’s and youth ministry/project at your church or group and who are under the age of 18. You can set up a Facebook group for your project or group and invite them to be members (that is, if they are over the required minimum age limit – which is 13 for Facebook).

Workers should only use an agreed social networking account for contact with children and young people with whom they are working. This should normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose on behalf of a group rather than an individual (use project accounts, never personal accounts). You can set up a group via a personal Facebook account but ensure that your personal settings are secure and have limited viewing. It is possible also to set the Facebook group privacy settings so they can’t see the profiles of others who have joined (on Facebook, click on the little star-like icon in the top right-hand corner, then select ‘Privacy Settings’ from the drop-down menu).

Workers should not use their personal social networking or instant messaging accounts for contact with children and young people.

Workers should seek to ensure that their personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature.

Chat facilities

Messenger and live chat facilities between workers and children or young people is not permitted.

Youth workers should refrain from engaging in conversation via these mediums. Live chat services and chat facilities cannot be kept on record and are therefore an unsuitable form of communication between workers, children and young people.

Skype

Workers should not use Skype on a one-to-one basis. It can be used for conference call and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a webcam/Skype in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use. Always seek to inform a line manager or group leader when this is taking place and keep a record of it.

Zoom - the virtual meeting platform

The Methodist church recommend using Zoom a video conferencing app that can either be accessed by website with a computer/laptop or downloaded on to a device, such as a phone/tablet. Zoom is free, easy to use and the website is full of useful video tutorials to help you make the most of your online meetings. This platform has a number of advantages when gathering children and young people virtually. It supports a conversation with many participants, allowing your whole youth group to meet in one place. It also has a share screen feature available during the call making the sharing of videos, passages and questions with your group very easy. Please find information [here](#) about using Zoom safely. This can also be found on the MCIB website under, Children and young people ‘Creating safe and engaging virtual spaces with children and young people’

Cyberbullying and the law

Most children and young people use mobile phones and the Internet appropriately. However, when technology is abused there may be legal consequences.

Mobile Phones

The rationale for texting and calling is the same as social networking and email contact.

When you have received a phone call/text or made a phone call/text to a young person that is not related to simply giving out information, you must make a record of the conversation and report it to your line manager or group leader.

As much as possible do not give children or young people your personal number, if you have a work phone use that. Or set up an online texting service that only allows outward communication to a group and is managed online.

But in all cases gain parental consent and limit your texts to the above guidelines.

Guidance relating to adults who may be vulnerable

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.

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
- the 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.

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 risk and cause harm.

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 a straight forward way to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult. Ensure there is information on your church notice board about who to contact within church if someone has a concern, along with phone numbers of local and national helplines such as adult social services and Age UK.
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect

The Creating Safer Space Foundation course contains more information on how to care for adults who may be vulnerable.

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.
- 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.
- Pastoral visitors are encouraged to note the date when they visit people, to report back about 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, agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.

Training

All staff working with children and adults are required to attend a Creating Safer Space course.

The new Foundation Module 2020 Edition now serves as either a basic starting point or as a refresher course. Training should be renewed every 4 years.

The following roles require the office holder to complete the foundation module;

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 & volunteer workers with pastoral responsibility
- pastoral visitors
- anyone working with 0 – 18-year olds in the name of the church (this includes Boy's Brigade and Girls Brigade leaders)
- anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable (e.g. luncheon club for the housebound)
- church council members
- church stewards
- circuit stewards
- local preachers
- worship leaders
- those training for local preaching or worship leading
- church and circuit safeguarding representatives
- choir/music group/drama leaders – where there are 0-18-year olds 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
- 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

Warmly invited but not mandatory:

- evangelism/mission enablers
- leaders of other organisations, working with 0-18yr olds or vulnerable adults who use church premises and have their own safeguarding policy and access to training
- remaining Choir/music group/drama leaders
- any other group leaders within the church, who may have adults within their particular group who are vulnerable.
- property stewards and other key holders
- caretakers
- church/circuit meeting secretaries
- church/circuit/district administrators
- remaining District and Connexional staff
- remaining teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions

The following roles require the office holder to complete the Advanced Module;

Core List – Required Attendance

- Safeguarding Officer - Circuit
- Safeguarding Officer – District
- Members of the District Safeguarding Group
- Members of the District Policy Committee
- All presbyters or deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry including those supernumerary ministers who have pastoral care of a church
- Those in leadership roles, paid or voluntary, where there is direct involvement with children, youth or vulnerable adults
- Lay persons who are appointed to exercise pastoral leadership within a local church
- Local preachers
- Worship leaders
- Safeguarding officer – Church

NB.

1. People in the above roles who have received safeguarding training in other roles (e.g. as a teacher or police officer) still need to attend. The training is specific to the church context. In the same way, such a person would NOT be exempt from education/police training, because they have done the church training. Their attendance is also valuable because of the expertise they can share with other trainees.

2. Property stewards/key holders/caretakers. This covers a multitude of activities. Where these people have direct contact with vulnerable groups, it may be decided locally by the Church Council that they should attend. They are listed here in the second group to avoid unduly including people who have no apparent link at all with safeguarding.

3. Church and circuit stewards are included on the core list because of their important role in church life, and particularly their responsibilities in responding to adults who may be vulnerable, who might attend any church service on an ad hoc basis to access support. Where age or infirmity suggests that an exemption is needed, this should be the decision of the Church Council or Circuit Meeting.

The Safeguarding Creating Safer Space Foundation Module Handbook (2020) is located [here](#) and at the back of this folder and on the MCIB website.

Once the advanced course has been taken and refreshed every 4 years, there is no requirement to retake the foundation course.

Hiring of Church Premises

Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises for regular part-time use under a licence or exclusive use under a lease 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 guidelines and procedures**. If a group chooses to use their own safeguarding policy, a copy should be retained by the church council and reviewed annually. Managing Trustees play a valued role in ensuring that church premises best serve the mission of the Methodist Church. Managing Trustees across the Connexion encourage the local community to use church premises to seek, amongst other things, to;

- create links between the local community and the Methodist Church;
- support local community and youth projects; and/ or
- raise additional income to support Mission purposes

Depending on whether the arrangement with a third party is a one-off hire, regular part-time use under a licence or exclusive use under a lease, the requirements under charity law, Methodist law, policy and best practice are very different.

Lease, licence or a one-off hire?

Sometimes it can be difficult to decide exactly what sort of arrangement Managing Trustees have with a third-party group. The information below will assist Managing Trustees to determine whether a particular group's usage can be treated as "one-off", regular but part-time, non-exclusive use (a licence) or a lease.

"One off Hire"

For example, a child's birthday party, or several irregular occasions such as 3 craft workshops over the course of 8 weeks. A booking form would be appropriate here, one form per occasion of use.

This often takes the form of a simple contract setting out the terms and conditions of use including; what the premises will be used for, payment, and a cancellation policy.

Unlike leases and licences, Managing Trustees are free to use their own booking forms without the need for approval. The booking form produced by TMCP is just a template, although it covers everything that is required.

Booking Form Template

This document has been updated to include the new data protection clause.

A copy of the booking form can also be found on the TMCP Website

Standard Licence

Many groups using Methodist Church premises will be using the premises on a regular but part-time basis. This would include for example, weekly baby massage, aerobics and dance classes. Such use is typically on the basis of a licence.

The Standard Licence is drafted on the basis that:

- The third-party group (the Licensee) uses the premises on a regular but part-time basis, typically once or several times a week.
- The premises form part of a larger building or church complex and share services and common areas within the building.
- The Licence fee is inclusive of an agreed contribution towards anticipated utility costs.
- The Licensee will not use the premises to the exclusion of others i.e. the Managing Trustees and other authorised users will share use of the premises.

When is the Standard Licence not suitable?

- The Licensee wants the Managing Trustees to commit to letting them use the premises for more than 12 months or for a fixed period not terminable on notice.
- The Licensee wants to use the whole or part of the premises exclusively, that is, to the exclusion of others. Please consider whether a lease would be more suitable.
- The Licensee is to use the premises on an isolated occasion such as a birthday party or a limited number of irregular occasions. The Template Booking Form may be more appropriate.
- The Licensee wants to worship on the premises. Where Christian worship is proposed, please [contact TMCP](#) so that they can provide appropriate guidance and suggest amendments that can be made to the Standard Licence to make it appropriate for use. Please note that non-Christian worship is not permitted under the Model Trusts. (Please see Licence FAQs on the TMCP website for issues to be considered).
- A licence to use car parking spaces is proposed. TMCP is in the process of developing a specific form of car parking licence.

If any of these points do not apply in the circumstances of a particular Licensee's use of your building then please contact TMCP so that they can provide further guidance.

The Standard Licence reflects Methodist Church best practice and complies with Standing Orders. It has the deemed approval of the Connexional Team, if used without any alterations being made. If you use the Standard Licence without amendment you do not need to ask for the approval that would otherwise be required before entering into a licence.

*You only need to fill-in the details on the first 2 pages of the Standard Licence to fit your specific licence situation. Help and advice is available from TMCP if needed.

Template - [Standard form of licence for third party use](#)

This document has been updated to include the new data protection clause.

(The standard licence template replaces Form E.)

A copy of the licence is to be found on the TMCP Website

Lease

A third party who uses church premises, or part of church premises to the exclusion of others, who holds the only set of keys or who uses church premises on a more than part-time basis i.e. Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm could be seen as enjoying exclusive possession. In these circumstances contact TMCP to discuss the type of lease to be considered.

[Information and guidance on granting a non-residential lease of Methodist property](#)

See TMCP Website/property/letting-3rd party use for more information.

Third Parties Worshiping on Methodist Church Premises

Please contact TMCP for guidance.

Key Holders

The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to church premises unless access to the premises is required as part of their role or for regular hire of premises. Before the keys can be issued the key holder is asked to sign the declaration and acknowledge the conditions of issue. Please note that a Privacy Notice is now attached as standard.

Template; [Key Holder Declaration Form and Privacy Notice](#)

A copy of this document is to be found on the MCIB Website under recruitment/forms.

Safeguarding and Hiring of Church Premises

Church Councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under license or exclusive use under a lease, 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 to provide sight of comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures.** Whichever policy is used the policy must be signed and a copy kept by the Church.

There are a number of key points to look for when checking user group safeguarding policies, these are listed in the Model Policy Key Points for User Groups 2020, [here](#). The document can also be found on the MCIB website/policies & procedures as a separate document.

References

- Methodist in Britain (MIB) Website 'Safeguarding 2018'
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/>
- Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) Website
<https://www.tmcp.org.uk/>
- TMCP 'Data Protection Responsibilities in a Nutshell' 2018
<https://www.tmcp.org.uk/news-hub/data-protection-responsibilities-in-a-nutshell>
- Due Diligence Checking (DDC) Ltd Website
<https://www.ddc.uk.net/methodist/>
- The Well, for Children, Youth, Schools and Family Workers (Methodist Resource)
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/the-well-learning-hub-equipping-and-supporting-workers/>
- Connexional Safeguarding Team
E: safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk T: 020 7467 5189