

## Lettings Policy

Last updated: Jan 2024

### 1. Pre-amble

The Wesley Church Centre is a community venue in the heart of Chester city centre. The faith community makes the premises available to community groups on a lettings basis as part of its expression of God's hospitality. The hire fees we charge are to offset some of the costs of running the premises and of administering lettings.

### 2. Eligible hirers

Spaces will be let to groups and organizations from the commercial, statutory, faith, voluntary, community or charitable sectors. Different rates may be applied (*see separate Lettings Rates table, available online on our website or from the Wesley office*) to each sector. See section 6 for prohibited activities.

### 3. Safeguarding

In accordance with the principles and guidance of the Methodist Church, Wesley Methodist Church Centre is committed to ensuring that the church provides a Safe Space for all, and particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults. For this reason, no booking involving people under 18 or vulnerable adults, as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (see Appendix 1), will be accepted without the hirer confirming that they agree to comply with our safeguarding arrangements. See Appendix 2 for further details.

### 4. Spaces available for booking

Space	Approx size (m)	Approximate unrestricted capacity	Accessible
<b>Worship area</b>	Body 16 x 16 Chancel 7 x 7	250	Yes
<b>Hall</b>	11 x 9	100	Yes
<b>Coffee lounge</b>	6 x 6	25	Yes
<b>Upper room</b>	6 x 4.5	25	Yes
<b>Crèche</b>	9 x 5.5	35	Yes
<b>Atrium</b>	9.3 x 5.5	60 (standing)	Yes

The rates for each space are available on our website <https://www.wesleychester.co.uk/>  
The charges quoted may be subject to an annual increase each January.

## 5. Equipment and facilities available

Chairs and tables – included

Piano and organ – only included by specific arrangement

Kitchen and servery – any usage must be agreed with Wesley Centre Co-ordinator

IT equipment and other music or specialist equipment (e.g. PA system, portable TV, WA projector/screen, staging) - any usage must be agreed with the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator; additional charges may apply.

## 6. Booking, confirmation, variation and termination.

Booking of spaces at Wesley should be made through the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator, Kate Matthews, preferably via the online Booking Enquiry form under the Room Hire tab on <https://www.wesleychester.co.uk/>. Alternatively contact the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator in the Wesley Office by phone (01244 323037), e-mail ([office@wesleychester.co.uk](mailto:office@wesleychester.co.uk)) or in writing (The Office, Wesley Church Centre, St John Street, Chester CH1 1DA). A contact name, address and telephone number must be given at the time of booking. An email confirming the details of the booking will then be sent out.

Should a date or time need to be renegotiated, this must also be done through the Centre Co-ordinator and as much notice as possible is required in order to accommodate any changes. If a booking has to be cancelled, then we ask that you inform us 48 hours before the booking.

Termination of a regular booking requires one month's written notice to the Centre Co-ordinator.

Payment for use of a space is required after the session and an invoice will be issued at the end of that month.

**OPTION 1:** Payment by bank transfer to the bank account of 'Wesley Methodist Church', Lloyds Bank plc, Sort Code 30-91-92, Account no. 00446705, quoting Wesley's invoice number. Email [office@wesleychester.co.uk](mailto:office@wesleychester.co.uk) to confirm that the payment has been made.

**OPTION 2:** Payment by cheque to 'Wesley Methodist Church'. Cheques can either be handed in to the Wesley Office, posted through the outside letterbox, or placed in a sealed envelope and pushed through the office door letter flap.

**OPTION 3:** Payment by cash is possible (but not preferred) for invoices of £25 or less. Where this option is used, the cash sum has to be handed over in person to the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator, Kate Matthews, in the Wesley Office (Tues to Fri, 10am to 1pm). Please note that the office is not able to provide change and we ask that groups/individuals have the right amount if they are paying by cash. ***Under no circumstances is cash to be pushed through the door of the office or posted through the post box on the outside ramp.***

## 7. Restrictions and prohibitions

The following are prohibited on our premises:

- Bringing alcohol or illegal drugs onto the premises for any reason including consumption, prize or sale.
- Gambling (unless a raffle has been permitted beforehand by the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator and Minister in pastoral charge at Wesley, for which the prizes are modest - not cash or alcohol - and the main purpose is fundraising).
- Approaching members of the public on the premises in connection with campaigning, fundraising or sales activities unless agreed in writing by the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator.
- Meeting in connection with any illegal activity or extremist politics.
- Smoking anywhere on the premises.
- Use of the lift, unless a group has booked an upstairs room.
- Wearing of stiletto/pointed heels in the Worship Area (to avoid damaging the floor).

## 8. Security

### 8.1 Bookings during public opening hours

If a booking occurs during hours when the premises are normally open to the public, the Wesley staff who are present carry responsibility for the security of the premises.

### 8.2 Lettings outside of public opening hours

#### 8.2.1 Regular bookings (activity not open to general public)

The hirer must nominate a keyholder willing to supply their name, address and telephone number and sign Wesley's Keyholder Declaration form. This person takes personal responsibility for:

- The security of the premises during the letting period
- Rubbish removal, locking up and leaving the premises secure at the end of the letting period
- The safekeeping of the key provided - Wesley will charge £60 for each lost key

#### 8.2.2 Ad hoc / irregular bookings where the activity is not open to general public

The hirer must nominate a **keyholder** willing to supply their name, address and telephone number and sign Wesley's Keyholder Declaration form. The key must be returned no later than 1 week after the end of the booking. This person takes personal responsibility for:

- The security of the premises during the letting period
  - Rubbish removal, locking up and leaving the premises secure at the end of the letting period
  - The safekeeping of the key provided - Wesley will charge £60 for each lost key
- Any variation on this must be agreed with the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator.

### 8.2.3 Ad hoc bookings where the activity is open to the general public

Wesley will appoint and provide a warden to open the premises and stay on site during the letting period. This person will be responsible for building security during this time. Please note, a fee may be charged for the warden.

### 8.3 Emergency Contacts

If a group has booked the premises outside of public opening hours and security of the building is compromised during the booking period, they can contact:

Kate Matthews on 07950 392166

Brian Heald on 07734 582061

Stephen Bowden on 07739 278206.

## **9. Responsibilities**

### 9.8.1 Health and Safety:

The group must identify an individual to act as a health and safety representative for the duration of the booking. The health and safety representative will carry primary responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of those involved in the booked activity, including members of the general public for events which are open to the public.

#### 9.1.1 Accident Reporting

Should an accident happen during the booking period when the Centre is open, the health and safety representative must report it to a member of staff and record the accident in the **Accident Report Book** kept in the Office.

If an accident occurs during a letting period outside the Centre's normal opening hours or when the Office is closed, the health and safety representative must submit a written report to the Wesley Centre Co-ordinator as soon as possible using one of the 'Accident Report Forms' found at the top of the stairs on the small notice board.

The church carries responsibility for notifying the group of any significant or new risks presented by the premises themselves.

#### 9.1.2 Fire Safety

If the fire alarm sounds during the booking period when the Centre is open, the Centre fire wardens are responsible for ensuring the safe evacuation of the premises.

If the fire alarm sounds during a letting period outside the Centre's normal opening hours or when the Office is closed, it is the health and safety representative's responsibility to call the fire brigade and ensure swift evacuation of the premises through the nearest exit.

Kate Matthews (Centre Co-ordinator) should then be contacted on 07950 392166. (If Kate is unavailable, Brian Heald should be contacted on 07734 582061 or Stephen Bowden on 07739 278206). These contacts should be notified immediately if a false alarm is suspected and there would be no need for the fire brigade.

Groups should note and familiarise themselves with the fact that until further notice the rear emergency exits from the building lead to a tunnel under the council's scaffolding structure supporting the City Walls/diverted City Walls walkway, and then via a push bar escape door and an unlocked gate into the passageway to St John Street.

#### 9.2 Use of equipment and spaces:

The **group** is responsible for leaving hired spaces as they were found (e.g. restoring the original layout of furniture). If you have a mobile phone we advise that you take a photo of the layout before you move any furniture to ensure you can restore the layout correctly. Tables in the Hall, Atrium and Coffee Lounge must be lifted, and not dragged, as dragging damages the table legs. Likewise, furniture in the Worship Area should be lifted rather than dragged to protect the floor surface.

#### 9.3 Safe use of electric wheelchairs, scooters, etc on the premises:

The individual operating the controls is responsible for controlling movement of electric wheelchairs and scooters within crowded areas. The onus is on the individual operating the controls to be mindful of others and to ensure that due care is taken while moving around on the premises. Vehicles may, for example, need to be guided through at a different time from the main flow of people to ensure safety.

#### 9.4 Safeguarding:

Where an activity involves people aged under 18 or vulnerable adults as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (appendix 1), the hirer must identify an individual who will act as the safeguarding representative.

If a booking is made without filling out the online form, the hirer must complete and sign a declaration to confirm that its safeguarding arrangements comply with the standards laid down by the Methodist Church, as described in Appendix 1 of this policy.

If the booking has been made online, by answering 'yes' to the questions regarding safeguarding, the hirer is declaring that its safeguarding arrangements comply with the standards laid down by the Methodist Church, as described in Appendix 2 of this policy.

#### 9.5 Damage:

The group is responsible for the costs of putting right any damage that occurs to the premises, its equipment, goods or materials, which can reasonably be attributed to the activity of the group. The person making the booking is responsible for ensuring that the group accept their liability.

#### 9.6 Contents insurance:

Wesley's insurance policy will not cover losses to equipment belonging to lettings groups. Hirers storing equipment on our premises should arrange their own cover.

### 9.7 Portable Appliance Testing

Portable appliances belonging to the Wesley Church Centre are PAT tested every 18 months. Hirers bringing electrical equipment into the building should ensure it is maintained and in safe working order. Groups storing portable electric appliances on our premises should ensure they have a PAT test certificate.

### 9.8 Public liability insurance:

Our insurer (Methodist Insurance) limits cover to the policyholder's own activities. Lettings groups must therefore obtain their own policy cover. The only exception is that **private social** events held by lettings groups **may** be covered **by Wesley's public liability insurance**, up to a maximum of three events by any one group in any 12-month period.

A copy of the public liability certificate should be sent to the Wesley office to be kept on file.

### 9.9 Copyright / performing rights:

Wesley is not a licensed performing rights venue and the onus is on the person making the booking to ensure compliance with all prevailing copyright and performing rights law, and to pay any fees due.

*Kate Matthews  
Updated January 2024*

## **Appendix 1**

### **Definition of ‘vulnerable adult’ as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (<https://www.dbschecks.org.uk/identifying-and-assisting-vulnerable-adults>)**

*“Vulnerable adults are typically over 18, who aren’t capable, or unable to provide care for themselves, hence needing a caregiver. Vulnerable adults include sick or frail people, people with mental issues, and physical or functional disabilities.”*

## Appendix 2

### **WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH CENTRE: SAFEGUARDING POLICY SUMMARY FOR LETTINGS AND KEYHOLDERS**

In accordance with the principles and guidance of the Methodist Church, Wesley Methodist Church Centre is committed to ensuring that the church provides a Safe Space for all, and particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults, for whom we have a special responsibility.

As a keyholder, or as a representative of a group which uses our space, we ask you to sign up to the Methodist Church's Safeguarding Principles. We ask you to do this whether or not you have a policy of your own. Wesley's policy can be found on the notice board by the window in the foyer. This policy is reviewed annually in June and is in line with the Methodist Church's Model Policy. Our list of Keyholders and Group Lettings is reviewed annually in January.

Should any safeguarding concerns arise in connection with your group or activity, please contact any of the following church safeguarding officers:

- Revd Neil Stacey (Superintendent Minister), Wesley Methodist Church (01244 675967)
- Jane Krause (Church Safeguarding Officer), Wesley Methodist Church (01244 323037)
- Chris Lewis (Chester and Stoke Methodist District Safeguarding Officer) (07305 141501 – 24 hours)

The following is a summary of the principles underpinning our policy:

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 complaint made which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, cooperating 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

For further information, go to:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/>

This website contains all of the guidance, policy and training information on safeguarding in the Methodist Church.