

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for West Devon Methodist Circuit

This policy was agreed by the Circuit Meeting Members by postal vote on 3rd July 2020.
It will be ratified when the Circuit Meeting is next able to meet. It will be reviewed in June 2021.

1. THE POLICY

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The West Devon Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

The West Devon Circuit recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people. This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support the Church in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

The West Devon Circuit fully agrees with the statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space 2007*:

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

The West Devon Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The West Devon Circuit commits itself to:

- **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.
- Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the Circuit and in the churches.
- The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults.
- **AFFIRM** and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable people who are on our premises.

2. PURPOSE

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the *Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2019)*. The full implementation of these policies should ensure that:

- The Church (and all associated activities) is a safe place for everyone.
- Communities we serve have confidence that children and vulnerable adults are as safe as possible and that their wellbeing is enhanced in the life of the Church.
- People in the Church are alert to unsafe practices and are able to challenge them.
- Office holders are safely recruited, trained for their roles and are accountable for their activities.
- People who have experienced abuse are accepted, empowered and supported in maintaining control over their lives and making informed choices without coercion.
- People who abuse are held accountable to the law and their risk is managed while there are supported and challenged to address their motivations and behaviour.

3. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Circuit Meeting

It is the responsibility of each Circuit Meeting to appoint a Circuit Safeguarding Officer and there should be no gaps in this crucial provision. It is not appropriate for any minister to fill any gap, because of the potential conflict of roles. The role will usually be undertaken on a voluntary basis although expenses should be met. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within the circuit lies with the Circuit Meeting.

The West Devon Circuit appoints **Mr Kevin Down** as Circuit Safeguarding Officer for adults and children, and supports him in his role.

Superintendent Minister

- a) Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
- b) Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
- c) Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of those who present a safeguarding risk.
- d) Ensure training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, vulnerable adults, for staff of the Circuit and for members of the local churches in the Circuit in accordance with Appendix III of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2019).
- e) Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Circuit Safeguarding Officer/s and that the details of each person are passed to the District Office.
- f) Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
- g) Support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer/s in his/her/their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.
- h) Ensure supervisory oversight of the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, or nominate a substitute to do so, with signed and agreed records of meetings.
- i) Advising all churches in the circuit of the requirement to adopt a safer recruitment policy and to carry out required procedures when appointing staff or volunteers. Ensuring that a safer recruitment policy is also adhered to in relation to the appointment of Circuit volunteers and staff.
- j) Assisting the DSO with setting up Monitoring and Support Groups for those subject to safeguarding contracts and reminding the chairs of groups when reviews are due.

Circuit Stewards

- Ensure that agreed procedures are in place for Circuit and ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults.

Circuit Safeguarding Officer

- a) Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards regarding safeguarding matters.

- b) With the support of the Superintendent Minister, prompt recording and reporting of any safeguarding concerns of which they are made aware. This will include appropriate referral to statutory agencies and DSOs, as required by Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance.
Know how to respond to any concerns raised if somebody believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have suffered, may be suffering or is at risk of harm. They should take the concerns seriously and always, without delay, make an immediate referral to a statutory agency. In all cases, the District Safeguarding Officer should be informed.
- c) Promoting the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults within the circuit.
- d) Make sure that safeguarding is placed on the Circuit Meeting agenda as a 'standing item' and present a report to each meeting about safeguarding events (noting the need for relevant confidentiality regarding specific cases).
- e) Working in collaboration with the Circuit Administrator and the Circuit Leadership team, receive and review church risk assessments and training schedules for each church in the Circuit.
- f) Attend the Circuit Staff Meeting as necessary to discuss any concerns.
Liaise with individual Church Safeguarding Officers to offer guidance and check they are complying with Methodist Church Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance. This should include at least one annual meeting. Work with the Superintendent Minister, ministers and the District Safeguarding Officer regarding safeguarding concerns.
- g) Attending and active participation at safeguarding training, district safeguarding events and meetings
- h) Work with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives.
- i) Keep themselves informed of safeguarding issues.
- j) Liaise with the District Safeguarding Group. Act on behalf of and be a consultant to the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the District or Connexion.
- k) Keep up to date with current policies and practice in statutory services and within the church.
- l) Ensuring that training is offered to those working with children and vulnerable adults, holding an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in Appendix III of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church.
Oversee timely delivery of appropriate training.
- m) Make sure that safer recruitment policies are adhered to when appointing staff, or volunteers.
- n) Assisting the District Safeguarding Officer and Superintendent Minister to set up Monitoring and Support Groups for those subject to safeguarding contracts.
- o) Maintaining a directory of useful names and contact details.

Circuit Administrator

- a) Support the Superintendent Minister and Circuit Safeguarding Officer with reviewing copies of the safeguarding policy for each church in the Circuit each year after any amendments by the churches.
- b) Support the Superintendent Minister with the annual review of the Circuit Safeguarding Policy and send a copy to the DSO.
- c) Maintain a record of all people within the Circuit who have received Foundation Module training and Foundation Module Refresher training together with dates of attendance.
- d) Act as DBS verifier on behalf of the Circuit.
- e) Keep a detailed record of names of those within the Circuit who have DBS checks.
- f) Remind volunteers and employees about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates, the period is currently every five years).

PROCEDURES FOR CIRCUIT EVENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

It is essential that circuit events that involve children or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church. Circuit events must be notified to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer prior to final agreement with the event organiser to ensure that all permissions, risk assessments and good practice guidelines are in place.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE PLANNING AND LEADING THE EVENT

All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of the procedure.

- a) Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and premises.
- b) The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel (particular health or ability needs should be taken into account)
- c) Numbers of children, young people or vulnerable adults involved.
- d) Transportation following good practice guidelines.

KEY CONCEPTS and DEFINITIONS

- a) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the Armed Forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- b) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care of or protect themselves.
- c) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- d) Adult/child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- e) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community or in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers, by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated: 16/09/2020

Signed: E. Singleton Chair of the Circuit Meeting