

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Southampton Methodist District 2020

Key concepts and definitions

- 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.
- Vulnerable adults: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult, or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Principles

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

Southampton Methodist District is committed to safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and vulnerable adults and firmly believes that the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults are paramount. It acknowledges **that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and no-one is exempt from fulfilling that responsibility.

Southampton Methodist District fully agrees with the Connexional Team statement reiterated in Creating Safer Space 2007: As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

Southampton Methodist District recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

Southampton Methodist District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take many forms such as but not limited to physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery), spiritual abuse..

Southampton Methodist District acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual 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.

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing safe, caring communities, which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse. We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures.

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern, which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

Working with the District Safeguarding Officer, we will support the risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension and the use of safeguarding contracts. We will recognise and apply the restrictions to appointment laid down in Standing Order 010 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

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

The Southampton Methodist District commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** well and without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child, young person 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 especially supports the learning from the Methodist Past Cases Review in its report “Cost, Courage and Hope 2015” and will continue to use this to inform its practice to offer the most sensitive and appropriate response and care to all.

2. Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the Methodist Church 2020; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches. In particular it will support and practice the safer recruitment requirements as laid down by Connexional Policy of June 2013, revised 2015.

3. The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. It affirms the role of the district safeguarding group (DSG), the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and others who hold safeguarding roles in Circuits and churches.

Southampton Methodist District sees safeguarding in its wider sense, not just about harm and abuse but people’s welfare and well-being, relationships between people, day to day vulnerabilities and anything that affects someone’s overall quality of life. Safeguarding is, therefore, at the centre of all our work and at the core of our faith.

Taking account of the learning and recommendation from the Methodist Past Cases Review (PCR), the District commits to:

- promoting a safe environment and culture within our churches;
- safely recruiting and supporting all those with responsibility related to the work of safeguarding;
- responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;
- caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and those affected by it;
- caring pastorally for those who are subject of concerns and allegations of abuse and those affected;
- challenge any abuse of power within church communities by ensuring church officers adhere to safe working practice, and are supported in challenging bullying and abusive behaviour.
- responding to those that may have posed a risk in the past or do so currently.

Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and all those using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2020).

This policy is governed by the above document as approved by Methodist Council and Conference, it is, therefore, mandatory.

Governance

The District Policy Committee has overall responsibility for the work of safeguarding, with the District Safeguarding Group (DSG) taking forward the development and implementation of all requirements as laid down nationally and locally across the District.

The District must employ a District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who will report to the Chair of District and offer support, advice and expert help to promote the work of safeguarding at all levels.

Southampton Methodist District has appointed Jane Fisher as District Safeguarding Officer. Jane may be contacted at: safeguarding@sdmc.org.uk, 07840 186814

At a Circuit level, the Circuit Leadership Team will oversee the work of safeguarding across the Circuit and ensure it implements and complies with safeguarding requirements. In particular, it will appoint and support the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

At a local level, each Church Council will oversee the work of safeguarding in the church and understand their role as trustees to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. It will oversee adherence to letting agreements by outside groups, safer recruitment into church roles and appointing and supporting the work of the Church Safeguarding Officer.

Partnerships

Superintendents and Ministers will work with appropriate church and Circuit safeguarding officers to ensure the right support and action takes place.

Southampton Methodist District will commit itself to working closely with external agencies to ensure the best support for those who need help. It will co-operate, particularly, with statutory agencies in working as a partner and, through DSG and the DSO, ensure working relationships with key colleagues, especially Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO), Local Safeguarding Children and Adult Board colleagues and Public Protection agencies.

The Southampton Methodist District commits itself to working closely with other denominations in the case of LEP's.

District Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The structures in place across the Methodist Connexion allow concerns to be dealt with in a way that ensures advice can be sought from and appropriate action taken by a range of people.

Appendix (i) outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key safeguarding roles and responsibilities in the District.

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent to hold safeguarding officer roles, because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities.

Dealing with concerns

Each church and Circuit must have in place a safeguarding policy for both children, young people and adults. It is likely that these will follow the standard template available on the Methodist/District website.

Every Church will display a copy of the Safeguarding Poster. These will be displayed publicly to ensure all those in the church, visitors to it and those in a role in the church are able to access it.

It is the policy of the District that any concerns will be:

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

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

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

If harm or abuse is experienced outside of the context of the church but becomes known to the people in the life of the local churches, the District will offer support and get the right help especially, if necessary, from external agencies. It is hoped people feel safe enough to tell people in churches of their abuse or concerns, no matter where or when they arose or occurred.

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

Provision of safeguarding training – Creating Safer Space and Advanced Module

The District will develop, implement and deliver training as required by the Methodist Church. Training is seen as critical to the District’s ability to safeguard and protect. Refusal to attend training will be taken seriously and, if necessary, invoke Methodist disciplinary arrangements, including suspension from role, responsibilities or function, a formal complaint under Part 11 of CPS, a disciplinary procedure with a potential for removal from role, membership or full connexion, as applicable, until such training has been completed.

In particular, the District will implement the Methodist Creating Safer Spaces training at Foundation Level every 4 years. The Advanced Module will be required for all those in

leadership roles especially Ministers, including Supernumerary Ministers, and those with pastoral charge and/or local, Circuit or District responsibilities. A full list of those required to undertake training is included in the training section of the website.

Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers will highlight numbers for training, keeping systems for recording who has undertaken which training and keeping people informed of their training requirements.

The DSG will oversee the development of training within the District as a whole and ensure that all necessary requirements are being fulfilled.

Safer Recruitment.

The District will ensure roles are safer recruited through a robust recruitment process.

Letting arrangements.

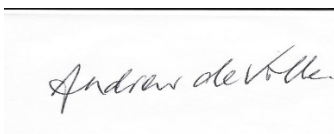
The Church Council as Trustees is responsible for overseeing the use of the church premises by outside groups, making sure they are compliant with requirements and reviewing at least annually the groups using the premises.

All outside groups using church premises will be subject to a letting agreement and be required to produce evidence of their own safeguarding policies and appropriate DBS checks. Should they not have a policy in place, the church that is letting the building will require the group to use that particular church's safeguarding policy.

Ministering those known to pose a risk of harm

Southampton Methodist District will work to support those who are offenders within the church and who desire to worship and maintain contact with the church by ensuring safeguarding Contracts are in place and monitoring and supports groups to oversee them. These replace Covenants of Care.

Dated24 / 11 / 2020.....



Signed

District Chair

Date for review October 2021

Anexe 1

District Chair

The District Chair attends the district safeguarding group and should:

- Manage and support the work of the DSO.
- Through the DSO, ensure that superintendent ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the DSO, district safeguarding group and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the DSO, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the DSO and the district safeguarding group in their work by ensuring that an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.
- Ensure that each superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the DSO for scrutiny by the district safeguarding group. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the district safeguarding group's report to the District Council.

Independent Chair of the district safeguarding group

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults and should have an independent Chair, as set out in the Safeguarding Framework (2010), who:

- should be strongly committed to supporting the DSO
- should be well-respected
- should be able robustly to challenge the district where necessary
- should not be the DSO, the District Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling these roles.

District safeguarding group

The district safeguarding group will promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults across the district. This responsibility includes ensuring that:

- The group is independently chaired; its business managed in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.
- The group provides support and guidance to the DSO, including confidential advice and discussion on complex cases.
- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of the District Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- Publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- District and connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- The Chair, superintendents and District Council are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- A report is delivered to the first District Council meeting of each connexional year by a member of the district safeguarding group, which will include a note on the monitoring of district events.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The DSO has a key role within the Methodist District and is required to:

- oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding procedures
- be accessible by churches about all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts
- liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as necessary
- undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the implementation of safeguarding contracts and relating to specific cases
- take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations
- have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for children and vulnerable adults

- be committed to continuing personal development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the district