

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. The Policy

1.1 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 male and female 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.

1.2 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

1.3 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District fully agrees with the Connexional 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.

1.4 The Manchester & Stockport 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.

1.5 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District 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 or institutional abuse or neglect. 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.

1.6 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District 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.

1.7 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

1.8 The Manchester & Stockport Methodist District commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable. It affirms the role of the District Safeguarding Group.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place across the Manchester & Stockport District and that people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and who use our premises.

It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010) and the Connexional Policies approved by the Methodist Council.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 District Chair

The District Chair attends the District Safeguarding Group and should:

- Manage and support the work of the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable mandatory and skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Officer, District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the District Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Group in their work by ensuring 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 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 District Safeguarding Officer for scrutiny by the District Safeguarding Group.

Action The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group report to the District Council.

3.2 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 District Safeguarding Officer.
- Should be well-respected.
- Should be able robustly to challenge the District where necessary.
- Should not be the District Safeguarding Officer, the District Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling those roles.

3.3 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 District Safeguarding Officer, 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; these will be coordinated by the District Administrator.
- 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.

3.4 District Safeguarding Officer

The District Safeguarding Officer has a key role within the Manchester and Stockport District and is required to:

- Oversee Church, Circuit and District compliance with the Methodist Church's Safeguarding Procedures
- Be the focal point of contact for advice and the taking of referrals on all safeguarding matters; the District Safeguarding Officer MUST always be informed of a disclosure or concern about abuse.
- Be contacted by churches about all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all covenants of care
- Liaise regularly with Designated Officers of the local authority and the police as necessary.
- Undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the Connexional Safeguarding Advisory Panel.
- 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 churches a safe place for children and vulnerable adults.

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

4. Recruitment

The Manchester & Stockport District will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within the church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles. (See Appendix A)

5. Training

In order to fulfill the requirement of this policy, the Manchester & Stockport District will enforce the requirement of the Methodist Conference about attendance at relevant modules of the *Creating Safer Space* training. (See Appendix B)

5.1 Foundation Module

Office holders must complete the Creating Safer Space Foundation Module. Each Circuit must ensure that the Foundation Module is offered at least once every six months, although this can be done in conjunction with other Circuits.

Five years after completing the Foundation Training office holders will complete an additional 'refresher' training element (this refresher programme will be available from September 2016).

5.2 Leadership Module

It is for Superintendent Ministers to ensure that relevant Circuit post-holders are aware of the requirement to attend this training and the Chair of District to ensure the attendance of those with relevant District responsibilities.

The District Safeguarding Group will facilitate the sharing of training opportunities with Circuits in the District, via the Circuit Safeguarding Officers, and audit completion of these modules by those required to have attended this training.

6. Covenants of Care

Circuits, with the District Safeguarding Officer in attendance, must review Covenants of Care at least annually.

7. Social Media Guidelines

Manchester & Stockport District notes the significant use of a variety of social media to provide information about events and services, and as an opportunity for church communities and individuals to communicate with each other. The District recognises that the Methodist Church has given active consideration to ensuring the safe use of social media and electronic communication systems with children and young people in particular so as to minimise the risk of inappropriate usage that can potentially lead to abusive situations developing.

The District therefore commends the social media guidelines set out on the Connexional Safeguarding website to all churches and circuits for incorporation into their own policies but specifically requires that all District originating communications and planning for District events complies with these guidelines.

They can be accessed at: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/technology-and-church/social-media-guidelines> (See also Appendix D)

8. Photography of children and young people at church events, including junior church and youth events

Where it is planned to photograph children or young people taking part in any event organised by or through the District, a consent form signed by their parent or appropriate carer is required for every child and young person under the age of 16 who may be photographed. (A model consent form is attached as Appendix E)

The use of these consent forms by Circuits and individual Churches is actively encouraged.

9. Key concepts and definitions

9.1 A child is any child or young person under the age of 18 years. It does not matter if the young person is in employment and living alone or is in the Armed forces, if they are under 18 they are defined as a child or a young person.

9.2 Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

9.3 Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

9.4 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.

9.5 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.

9.6 Survivors are those victims of abuse, whether perpetrated in a church setting or not, who may be seeking care and support from the church or some form of individually defined restoration. Other survivors, whose abuse was perpetrated in a church setting, may not wish for any involvement from the church on their journey but expect the church to offer swift and easy access to services that offer support to make a disclosure and provide ongoing care.

10. Conclusion

This policy is intended to promote and facilitate good practice. None of the foregoing should prevent anyone from taking appropriate and prompt action to ensure the well-being of children and vulnerable people.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____ **Rev Dr Andrew Lunn, District Chair**

Date for review: _____

Manchester & Stockport District of the Methodist Church: District Safeguarding Policy

Appendix A

Safer Recruitment

The Methodist Church is 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 the church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

1. The Practice Guidance 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. It replaces the interim *Safer Recruitment* guidance (2013).
2. The guidance is based on legislation which applies to the mainland of England and Wales, in particular the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.
3. The guidance complies with one of the Government requirements for 'faith communities' as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*. '*Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check*'. (Page 53)
4. No district is entitled to amend this policy although additional references to local arrangements can be inserted as an attachment.
5. The guidance should be used in the appointment to all new paid posts, including people moving from one Methodist 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.
6. The guidance addresses Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all those working and/or volunteering within the church.
7. 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: *The danger is that too much reliance will be placed on CRB [now DBS] checks... There is a concern that many abusers do not have convictions and no intelligence is held about them. Therefore the selection and recruitment process if properly conducted is an important indeed essential safeguard* (The Richard Inquiry Report, 2004).

For further information, see:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/guidance-for-dbs-verifiers>

This will also have the latest guidance in an area where there are frequent and often last minute changes to practice and policy.

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Appendix B

Who needs to attend training?

In order to fulfil our Safeguarding Policy, the Manchester & Stockport District will enforce the requirement of the Methodist Conference that the following office holders must complete the *Creating Safer Space* training:

ATTENDANCE PROVISION

From Appendix 2 Safeguarding Report, The Methodist Conference 2012

Amended following the Methodist Conference 2015 acceptance of Recommendation 10 of the Report on the Past Cases Review

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 and volunteer workers with pastoral responsibility
- ❑ Pastoral visitors
- ❑ Anyone working with 0-18 year olds in the name of the church
- ❑ Anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable (eg luncheon club for the housebound)
- ❑ 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 District Council members, complaints and discipline, mediators
- ❑ Core teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions
- ❑ Connexional staff with direct safeguarding links eg children and youth workers
- ❑ 'Covenant of Care' group members
- ❑ **Members of the Connexional Complaints Committee**

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- ❑ Evangelism/mission enablers
- ❑ Leaders of other organisations, working with 0-18yr olds or vulnerable adults, who use church premises
- ❑ 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 keyholders
- ❑ Caretakers
- ❑ Church/circuit meeting secretaries
- ❑ Church/circuit/district administrators
- ❑ Remaining District and connexional staff
- ❑ Remaining teaching staff at Methodist Church Training Institutions

Leadership Module

Core List – Required Attendance

- ❑ Safeguarding coordinator – Circuit
- ❑ Safeguarding Officer – District
- ❑ Members of the District Safeguarding Group
- ❑ Members of the District Council
- ❑ All presbyters or deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry including those supernumerary ministers who have pastoral care of a church
- ❑ Those who are in paid employment with the Methodist Church, which involves direct work with children, youth or adults
- ❑ **Members of the Connexional Complaints Committee**

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- ❑ Safeguarding representative – church
- ❑ Supernumerary ministers apart from those who have pastoral care of a church
- ❑ It has not been possible to create a standard list. There should not be too many varied roles and responsibilities represented at the training since the material focuses on leadership responsibilities rather than general safeguarding awareness. However there needs to be flexibility for inclusion where this would be helpful. This decision making should form part of the responsibility of the District Safeguarding Group when planning the provision of Leadership Module day sessions, across the District.

All those who have not completed the Foundation Module will be suspended from office until such time as the course has been successfully undertaken. The one exception will be for those who are new to one of the roles or offices listed above.

A new office holder will be required to successfully complete the Foundation Module within six months of taking up such a post and if not, be suspended until the training has been completed.

The District Safeguarding Group will ensure that each Circuit offers the Foundation Module at least once every six months, although this can be done in collaboration with other Circuits.

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Appendix C

Keeping Records

See *Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church (January 2015)*

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. Records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise, and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. They should clearly differentiate between facts, opinion, judgements and hypothesis.

In the church context, records are needed in order to:

- Ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- Provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- Record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers
- Promote the exercise of accountability
- Provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity
- Allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel

The following approach is helpful in considering what should be written.

- **A written record** of the event or conversation should be made as soon as is practicable (after the event or conversation but always within 24 hours.)
- **Who** is it about? (the names of all key people including any actual / potential witnesses)
- **What** happened? (use exact quotes where possible, in quotation marks)
- **How** did it happen? (for example, if someone is alleged to have assaulted a child, did they use an implement? Or was it a kick? Or a hit?)
- **Where** did it take place?
- **When** did it take place?
- **Why** did it happen? (this allows you to record any explanations offered to you by the people involved. It is not the place for your own analysis.)
- **What should happen next** (what action will follow, for example, what are you going to do next, what is X going to do next, making sure it is the diary in Y days' time as a reminder).
- **Recording what did happen next and the checks made to ensure effective follow up** (did X do what they said they were going to do?).
- **Include the views / perspective of the child or adult who is vulnerable**
- **Analysis.** The District Safeguarding Officer should analyse all the information gathered to decide the nature and level of the child's needs / the needs of the adult who is vulnerable and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing.
- **Records must always be dated and the author identified.**
- **Indexing.** The Safeguarding Adviser should ensure that District records are able to be searched or indexed so that previous names and concerns can be easily retrieved.
- **Summary.** The Safeguarding Officer should ensure, if a church worker has a separate personnel file, that a summary of any concerns and the outcome is filed on the personnel file.

Suggested Model Templates for Safeguarding Records

Two model templates can be found at

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1517149/Safeguarding%20recording%20guidance16%2012%2014>.

These are models of good practice which can be used or amended as required.

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Appendix D

Social Media

Social media, whilst bringing many benefits also has some inherent risks for people of all ages. This is a fast-moving area, and it is recommended that reference be made to the following link;

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/technology-and-church/social-media-guidelines>

This includes specific information for

- Children and Youth Workers in the Methodist Church
- Training ideas for Children and Youth Workers
- Children 5-10yrs
- Young people 11-18yrs
- Parents

The Methodist Church Social Media Policy is:

- You should participate online in the same way as you would with other public forums. You take responsibility for the things you do, say or write.
- Never share personal details like home address and phone numbers except with someone you know and trust, and if you decide to do so then use a private message. Be aware an address can be disclosed in many ways for example via photos or a GPS position as well as in written form.
- Always remember that participating online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Once something is posted to a blog or other internet site, it should be assumed to be still available even if it is later deleted from the original site.
- Stay within the legal framework and be aware that safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws apply, as well as the [Constitutional Practice and Discipline \(CPD\)](#) of the Methodist Church.
- For general guidelines on confidentiality, refer to [With Integrity and Skill](#) - if telling a story about anyone, ask yourself - *Is this my story to tell?*
- Be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice, but remember that you are responsible for your online activities.
- Staff should be aware of and act in line with [Speaking for the Methodist Church](#), the Team email policy and the Team policy on the use of IT equipment, as well as “With Integrity and Skill” and the whistle blowing policy where necessary.

[Read Part 2 of the Social Media Guidelines: Understanding social media and applying the guidelines](#)

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Appendix E Model consent form for photographs and publicity

xxxx Methodist Church

Consent Form for Photographs and Publicity

At xxxx Methodist Church (“the Church”) we take the issue of child safety very seriously and this includes the use of images of children. We ask that parents or carers consent to the Church taking and using photographs and images of their children. Any use of images is underpinned by our Safeguarding Policy. We will never include the name of a child alongside an image.

Please complete, sign and return this form to _____

I consent to the taking of photographs and digital images (including DVD recording) of the child named below which will only be used for the following purposes:

- For display within the Church premises;
- In Methodist Church printed publications or websites; or
- In publicity for events held by the Church.

I understand that the images will be used only for the purposes of the Church and/or the Methodist Church and the identity of my child will be protected. I acknowledge that the images may be used in and distributed using a variety of media including CD, CD-ROM, DVD, memory stick, email and printed form.

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

Address: _____

Signed : _____

Date: _____

Queries regarding this form should be addressed to:
(Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer)