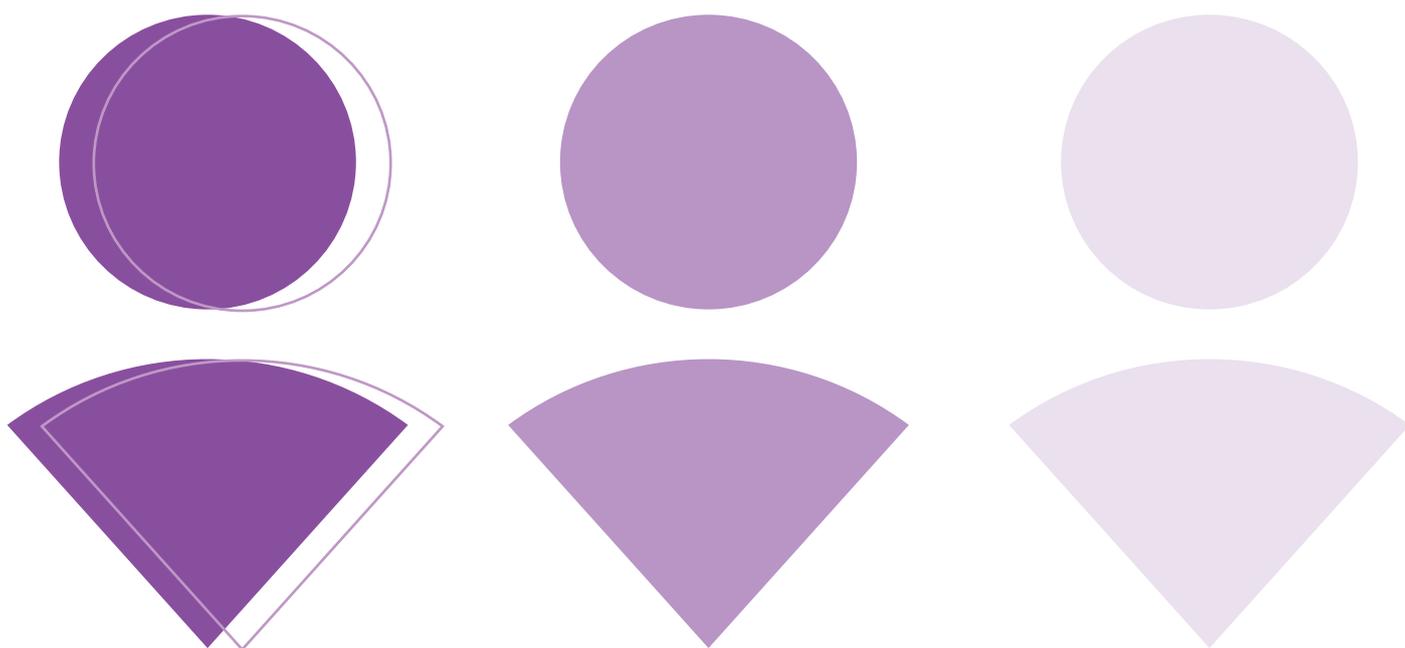


Policy and guidance for working with victims and survivors of abuse

within the Methodist Church in Britain

A Short Guide for Victims and Survivors



Policy and guidance for working with victims and survivors of abuse within the Methodist Church in Britain

Safeguarding is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church to value every human being as part of God's creation. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.

We, as the Body of Christ, should be providing a safe haven for our hurt, abused siblings in Christ. However, too often, victims and survivors of abuse or trauma have not felt believed, welcomed or included within the Methodist Church.

This new policy details the Methodist Church's commitment to respond well to survivors of all forms of abuse, whether perpetrated within the life of the local church or in other contexts.

Our commitment to victims and survivors

The Methodist Church has listened to victims and survivors, and commits to the 18-point Charter for Survivors, written by the Methodist Survivors Advisory Group. The full charter is taken from 'Reflect and Respond Study Guide' (The Methodist Church, 2020) and can be found at methodist.org.uk/SurvivorResources

The Methodist Church commits to:

- enabling every survivor to know they matter
- working for the expression and celebration of the full humanity of survivors whose personhood and flourishing must be about more than just survival
- understanding that there is a shared responsibility of being fully present to the abused. Should a victim or survivor wish, the whole community should offer support – it is a congregational responsibility
- resourcing people who support historical survivors
- promoting the declaration that the Methodist Church has a zero tolerance response to abuse.

Our ongoing support for victims and survivors

- **Pastoral support:** Whether a victim or survivor has just disclosed an abusive situation that they were recently in or whether they have been living for many years as a victim or survivor of abuse, the Methodist Church will offer appropriate pastoral support.
- **Counselling:** The Methodist Church will pay for therapy for survivors of abuse perpetrated within the Methodist Church. This means the perpetrator who caused harm has to have been a minister, leader, employee, member of, or otherwise involved with the Methodist Church. Please see section 8b of the policy for further details.
- **The Methodist Church's Discrimination and Abuse Response Service:** This service is designed to help people who are experiencing discrimination or harm, and feel they need support in dealing with it. This would include cases where someone feels they are being unfairly or differently treated because of telling someone in church that they are a survivor of abuse.
- **Peer support:** It may help a victim or survivor of abuse to speak to someone who has been through a similar experience and who can understand and share what they are going through on a peer basis. The Connexional Safeguarding Team can put victims or survivors in touch with a peer supporter.
- **Signposting:** There will be some instances when a victim or survivor may need more specialist or professional help. The District Safeguarding Officer or the Connexional Safeguarding Team can signpost to specialist charities or statutory services that may be able to help.

The Methodist Church's Survivor engagement work

- **Survivor Engagement Forum:** This is a regular introductory service for survivors that offers them an opportunity to meet (via Zoom) with others and access support from peers who understand their situation.
- **Methodist Survivors Advisory Group (MSAG):** This group meets four times a year to enable the Methodist Church to understand better the perspective of victims and survivors of abuse and to teach the Church to better meet the needs of victims and survivors.
- **Methodist Survivors Policy Group (MSPG):** The Methodist Survivor Policy Group works in a co-productive way with survivors of abuse to design Methodist Church policies, training and other strategic documents. It is primarily a place for active scrutiny and engagement with new policies at each stage of their development.

Contact us

methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding

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