

SAFEGUARDING

Creating Safer Space

Advanced Module 2023 Edition

Unit 1a:

Preparing the ground



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Introduction

Course structure

This face-to-face safeguarding training is split into three parts:

- Unit 1a: Preparing the Ground booklet – an hour of self-study.
- Core learning session (Units 1b-5) – minimum of four hours taught.
- Handbook – to support learning during the Advanced Module and for further study and resources.

This pre-course booklet contains resources for your self-study before you attend a core learning session, usually delivered face-to-face. It underpins the core learning session and is an essential part of the overall learning for this course.

Aims

The aims of the Advanced Module are to consolidate and develop your previous safeguarding learning and:

- extend your understanding of responding well to groups within our different church communities
- further equip you with skills and resources to be confident in promoting good practice in the church and community
- explore what this means in your designated role of responsibility within the Church.

Engagement in all three elements of the Advanced Module will enable you to meet these aims.

Objectives

These will be demonstrated by:

- appreciating the Methodist Church's theological understanding of safeguarding
- learning from the Methodist Church's ongoing witness to improved safeguarding practice and lessons from the Past Cases Review, new research and evidence-based practice
- understanding how a positive safeguarding culture may deter abusive and grooming behaviour
- identifying and understanding the reactions of groups and individuals who are impacted by safeguarding incidents or concerns
- having a clear focus on listening well; particularly to hearing and responding to those who have been hurt or abused
- understanding effective record keeping
- knowing how to take appropriate action to share relevant information or concerns within the boundaries of your role
- applying today's learning to your role and future steps you will take.

Look after yourself

These materials contain content that some participants may find distressing.

It is important that you look after yourself and take time out if needed. If any part of the Advanced Module training raises painful issues for you, please share this with the chaplain (at a training session), your local minister or someone else you trust.

Safeguarding in the Methodist Church:

the underpinning of our faith and mission (5 minutes)

The Methodist Church is a community that welcomes and values each and every person with hospitality and openness. Our church communities, in whatever form they take, are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied in the safety which is offered to all people.

This safety is offered in such a way that it goes to the heart of what we are about. In its simplest form, when we talk of safeguarding we are describing relationships – how do we want to be treated by others and therefore, how we treat others ourselves. To live out the gospel values means working in a way and creating environments that are safe, feel safe and offer hope and care for people. In these communities we will work to challenge bullying, discrimination and abuse in all its forms. We will become known as a Church which holds these standards high and has clear mechanisms for dealing with situations when the standards are transgressed. It will be embedded in our culture.

To this end, a proactive safeguarding approach is central to our mission because we undertake our missionary activities with a clear set of principles about how we will treat others and how we will respond to concerns. This requires us to seek justice for those who have been abused. It offers constructive care and challenge to those who have abused. This provides us all with a safeguarding programme worth celebrating! It is about transformation and new life.

This commitment to be an inclusive, growing, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church affirms the Methodist Church's policy of promoting safe environments where children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected.

This includes:

- taking proactive measures to prevent abuse by safely recruiting those with any responsibility for vulnerable members, worshippers and users of our services
- minimising risk and putting safety measures in place
- responding promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- caring pastorally for those who have experienced abuse and other people who have been affected

- ensuring that survivors of abuse or trauma find a warm welcome within the Methodist Church, and feel accepted and understood
- working safely with those who are the subject of convictions, concerns or allegations of abuse.

Whether an established church community, a new church on the margins or a new place for new people, safeguarding and the promotion of well-being has to be everyone's responsibility. There is an expectation that all those involved will work safely and challenge bullying and abusive behaviour where identified. In all environments, children, young people and vulnerable adults will be listened to, supported and know they will receive care.

All safeguarding measures must be carried out in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance.

Over the course of the last 30 years the Methodist Church has developed its understanding and practice of safeguarding alongside colleagues in other denominations and professionals from statutory services. We are proud of the decisions we have taken during this time to learn from the experience of those who have been abused and mistreated and to push our training and practice forward. There have been notable milestones along the way with various reports including the major undertaking of the 2015 Past Case Review Report and Ten Themes leaflet (methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/resources-archive/courage-cost-and-hope-past-cases-review/) and the Government's independent inquiry into child sexual abuse (iicsa.org.uk/final-report).

The Church has demonstrated its commitment to learn and move forward in its safeguarding practice. Thank you for your commitment to this and we do hope and pray that you will gain much from undertaking this training together.

The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, Secretary of the Conference
Judith Davy Cole, Chair of the Safeguarding Committee
Tim Carter, Director of Safeguarding

April 2023

Devotions and theological reflection

(10 minutes)

Reading

Luke 6:46-49 (Building on a solid foundation)

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’, and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”

Reflection

For people who experience any form of abuse it can be like having their foundations taken away from them. This can be especially destructive when the person is abused as a child in a place that should be considered safe, like home or church. Then it can feel as though their foundations are laid upon ever-shifting sand: unstable, dangerous, likely to collapse at any moment.

So whilst doing this course may take some time out of our lives, for people who have experienced abuse, the impact may be a life sentence. We need to make our churches as safe as possible for all who access them, acknowledging that abuse has, and does, occur in churches and that we all have a role to play in supporting those who have experienced abuse to stand more firmly, to withstand the floods of destruction.

Prayer

Dear Lord, we come to this learning with open minds and open hearts, willing to be receptive to what this course offers and to acknowledge the depth of suffering experienced by those who have been abused in any way.

Lord, it can be difficult to hear that the Church has been part of the abuse, rather than the support to the abused. Enable us to recognise this truth and work towards change, so that those who have experienced abuse are supported and empowered to rebuild their foundations upon the solid rock of your love with faith, hope and trust.

Lord, guide us and protect us during this time of learning, as we face often challenging and distressing realities. Enable us to reach out to one another in faith and care when emotions may be stirred within us.

Lord, we offer our time and ourselves, to help create safer spaces for all your people through the strength of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Devotions written by Vivien Almond, local preacher and member of the Methodist Survivors Reference Group.

Theological reflection

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. It is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church and a part of its response and witness to the love of God in Christ.

The *Theology of Safeguarding* report was adopted by the 2021 Methodist Conference and is therefore a significant report in the life of the Methodist Church. The report emphasises that safeguarding is not something we do because we have to, but because it relates to the heart of Christian faith. All Methodists are encouraged to read and discuss it as they continue to think about how they live out their beliefs in their ways of relating, working and worshipping.

The report will be covered in more detail in Unit 2, but if you want to look at the report now, it can be found at methodist.org.uk/media/21753/conf-2021-27-the-theology-of-safeguarding.pdf

Domestic abuse

7. The number of police-recorded domestic abuse-related crimes (in England and Wales) in the year to 31 March 2022 increased by 7.7% compared with the previous year, but what was the actual number?

745,651 896,431 910,980 1,050,649

8. The Crown Prosecution Service for England and Wales (CPS) domestic abuse-related charging rate increased during the year ending 31 March 2022 for the first time in four years. What percentage of suspects were charged?

24.3% 38.6% 50.4% 72.6%

9. How many support sessions did the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for England and Wales deliver through phone calls or live chat?

19,573 28,679 41,934 50,791

All figures and data were correct at the time of print (April 2023). The figures relate to England and Wales only as there are no combined statistics for the whole of the United Kingdom.

1, 2, 3, 4 – Characteristics of children in need, 2021-2022, GOV.UK

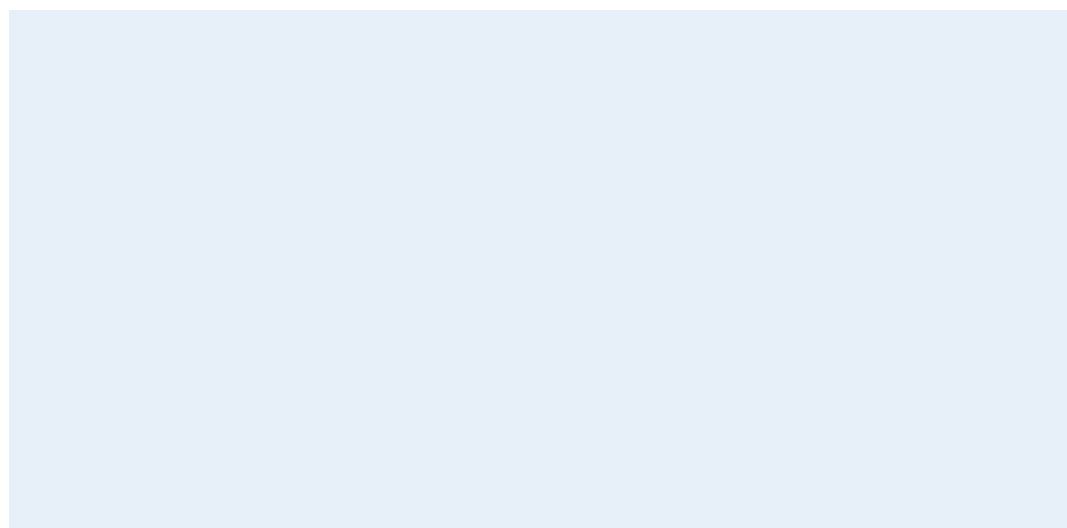
5, 6 – Safeguarding Adults, England, 2021-2022, NDRS

7, 8, 9 – Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview, Office for National Statistics

The answers can be found on page 17, along with further safeguarding statistics.

Once you have checked your answers, answer the following questions:

- Which of the answers was most surprising to you?
- Why do you think that was the case?



Voices of safeguarding

(5 minutes)

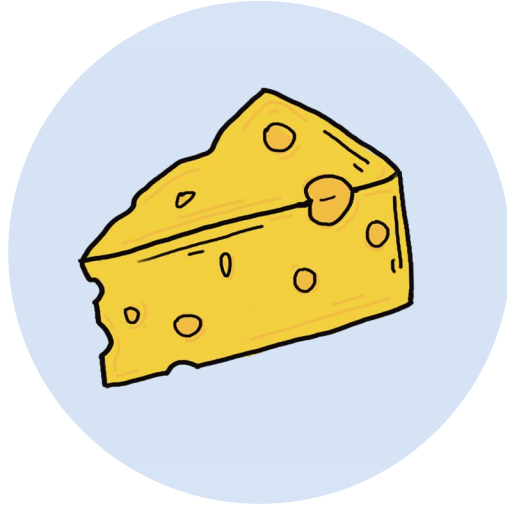
Listen to the short podcast, which highlights some of the safeguarding experiences of people within the context of the Methodist Church (methodist.org.uk/voices-of-safeguarding).

As you listen, consider how what you hear might relate to your role. Please note, there is a transcript of the *Voices of safeguarding* podcast at the back of this booklet.

Safeguarding in context

(20 minutes)

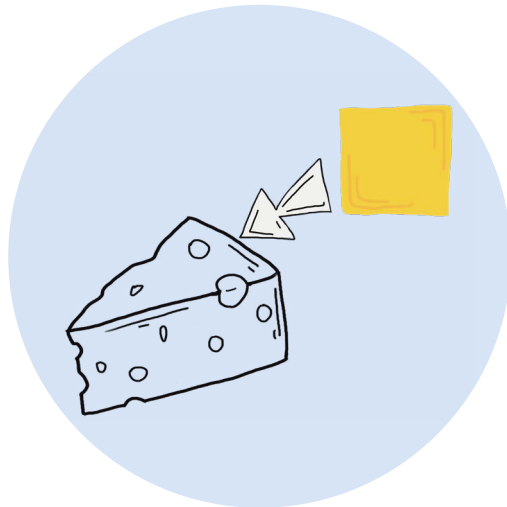
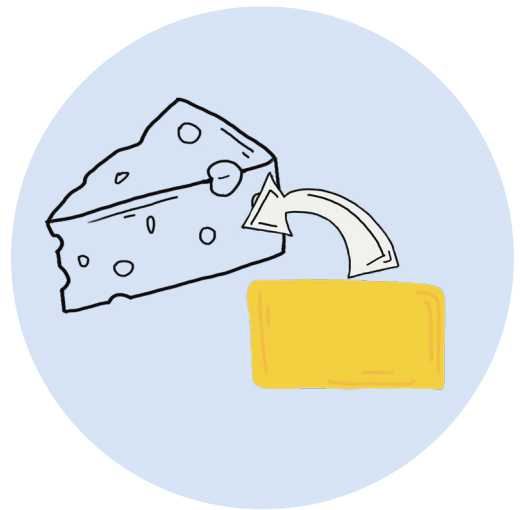
It is simply a piece of cheese, right?



We all see the same piece of cheese, but do we see the piece of cheese the same?

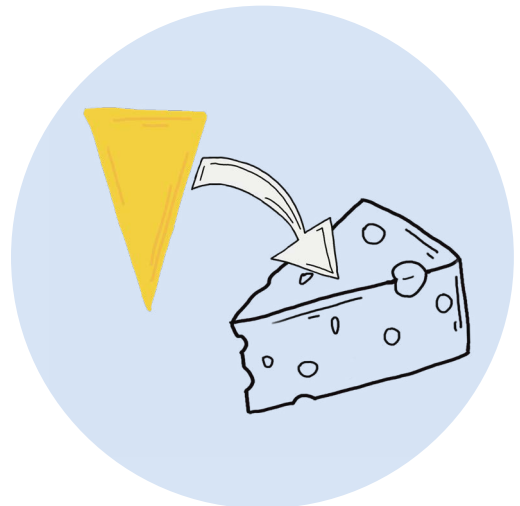
It all depends on our perspective – where we are seeing the cheese from.

Some will see a rectangle >

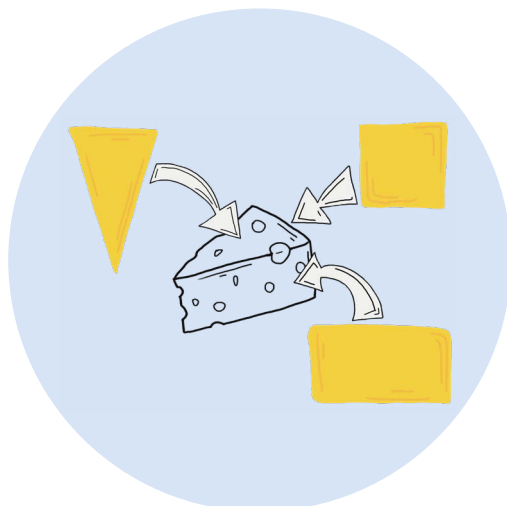


< Some will see a square

Some will see a triangle >



< Some will be able to see them all.



Sometimes we need to move and stand in others' places to see it from their point of view.

"What I told you was true, from a certain point of view. You're going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view."

Obi-Wan Kenobi, *Return of the Jedi*, 1983

We all view the world from a different perspective, due to our different experiences and backgrounds. This affects how we engage with what we experience, including learning resources such as this module. Take the above quote as an example. For some of us, it is a seminal moment in movie history that has helped shaped our lives. For others, including it in a training module for the Methodist Church seems inappropriate and makes us uncomfortable. The metaphor of a point of 'view' will be received differently by those of us who are sighted than those of us who live with sight loss.

That will be true of the whole of this Advanced Module. Consider for a moment your own context. That may be pioneering, a church that meets online or a church that meets together on a physical site. You are likely to 'view' the module through this 'lens' and this may lead you to 'filter' what you read or hear. However we all need to be aware that safeguarding principles apply in all contexts within the Church. We all need to be able to apply them, even in contexts with which we are unfamiliar.

Activity: Glass of water



If you are able, get a glass of water.

You can see through the water. It is clear. Objects the other side are visible.

However, the water still affects our perspective.

Place a straw, or another object such as a piece of cutlery, in the water. The water is clear. Yet refraction will still distort how we view the object. Though it is straight, it will not appear so.



The same is true with how we view others. Even if we believe we perceive a situation clearly, our perspective can still distort the impression we get.

Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias is the beliefs we hold about others that we are not aware of and that affect our behaviour and decisions. This bias occurs when our brain takes shortcuts, assuming a person or situation is like another with which we are familiar or have come to expect due to media representation. So, we perceive what we expect, rather than how things really are. We should all try to become aware of our biases and of the assumptions we make. This can help us set aside these assumptions and make more accurate judgements. The Methodist Church provides training on this. This training can be accessed at methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/learning-network-courses/unconscious-bias-training/

This is especially important when it comes to safeguarding. Being aware of our own biases helps us evaluate situations in terms of people as they are, rather than how we assume them to be. For example, a common unconscious bias is to treat children from ethnic groups that are minorities in the UK, especially Black children, as older than they actually are. This can lead to errors when considering the behaviour of, and risks to, children from ethnic minorities. If we are aware of this bias, we can self-correct for it. This helps us evaluate situations accurately and keep children safe.

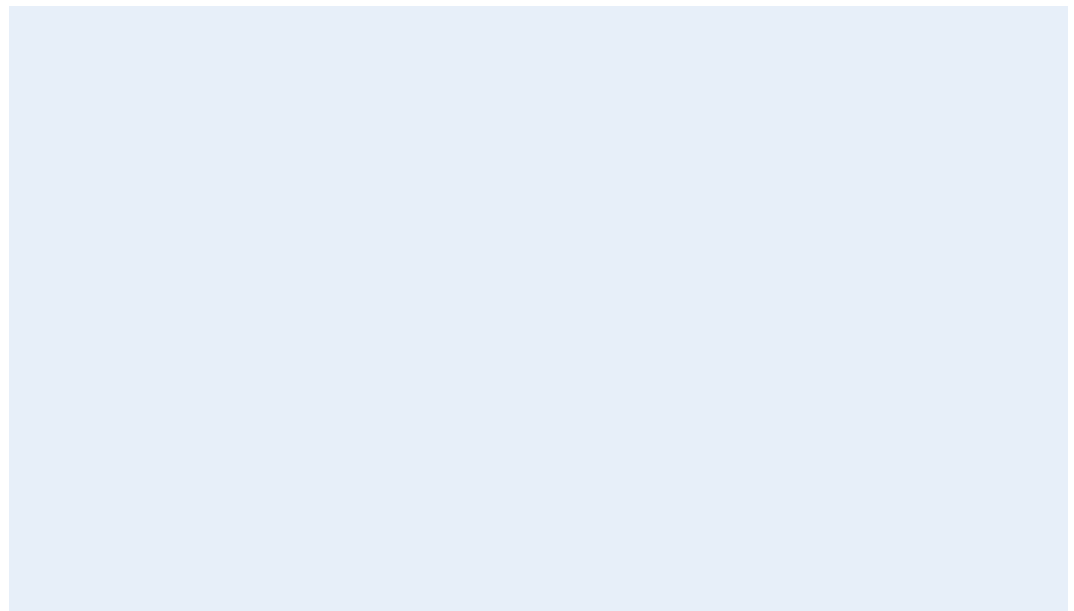
Another risk is that we view people as belonging to separate groups and communities. This can lead us to thinking we only have to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in our own cultural group or community, whilst those in a different group are someone else's responsibility. We must avoid thinking this. We need to safeguard everyone, including those who are different from ourselves. This is known as 'safeguarding across difference'. Safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.

We also need to be aware of our own culture and background and how it affects our perception and the way we understand the world. For example, some of us were brought up to value punctuality and see lateness as very disrespectful. This forms part of our culture. We can feel uncomfortable when people arrive late to church or meetings. Similarly, those of us brought up in a heteronormative culture can feel uncomfortable when other expressions of sexual orientation are displayed publicly. This discomfort is different from the concern we feel when someone is acting in an unsafe way. However, it can be mistaken for it. If we are aware of our own culture, we will recognise things that go against our cultural norms and make us uncomfortable. This can help us accurately recognise when something is a cause for concern.

Activity: Self-reflection

Take some time to consider these questions for yourself.

1. From what context am I approaching this training module?
2. What are the main features of my own culture and background?
3. What biases towards those different from me am I aware of? If I am not aware of any biases, how can I access training so I can become more aware of them?



Thank you

Thank you for engaging with this preparatory work. Please bring any notes or questions you may have to the core learning session.

APPENDICES

What's the problem? Answers

Child protection

1. How many children were on child protection plans in the year to 31 March 2022?

There were 50,920 children on protection plans in 2022, this is a rate of 42.1 per 10,000 children. These figures represent a rise on 2021 but a fall on 2020.

A child becomes the subject of a child protection plan if they are assessed as being at risk of harm at an initial child protection conference.

2. In the year to 31 March 2022, there were 650,270 referrals about children to Children's Social Care. What was the percentage increase from the previous year?

There were 650,270 referrals in 2022, up 8.8% from 2021 and 1.1% from 2020. After falling in 2021 referrals in March 2022 were at the highest level since 2019, mainly due to an increase in referrals from schools.

A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by Children's Social Care and is regarding a child believed to be in need of additional services.

3. What percentage of these 650,270 referrals were re-referrals?

Of the 650,270 referrals 21.5% were re-referrals, which represented just over a fifth of referrals in 2022, a similar level to previous years.

The number of re-referrals also increased from 2021, but at a slower rate (up 2.7%). A re-referral occurs when a child is referred within 12 months of a previous referral.

4. What was the main type of abuse of children reported in 2022?

The most reported type of abuse was neglect; in 2021/2022 the NSPCC's helpline contacted agencies on behalf of 8,389 children due to concerns of neglect.

Adult safeguarding

5. How many adult safeguarding concerns were reported to Adult Social Care in the year to 31 March 2022 (according to Safeguarding Adults, England)?

There were an estimated 541,535 concerns of abuse raised during 2021/2022, an increase of 9% on the previous year, which was slightly above the average annual growth rate per year for the previous four years.

6. What was the most common type of safeguarding enquiry made concerning adults during 2021-2022?

The most common type of safeguarding enquiry was Neglect and Acts of Omission, which accounted for 31% of abuse, and the most common location of the risk was the person's own home at 48%.

Domestic abuse

7. The number of police-recorded domestic abuse-related crimes (in England and Wales) in the year to 31 March 2022 increased by 7.7% compared with the previous year, but what was the actual number?

The number of police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales increased by 7.7% compared with the previous year, to 910,980 in the year ending March 2022. This follows increases seen in previous years and may reflect increased reporting by victims.

8. The Crown Prosecution Service for England and Wales (CPS) domestic abuse-related charging rate increased in the year ending 31 March 2022 for the first time in four years. What percentage of suspects were charged?

The proportion of suspects charged (out of all legal decisions) was 72.6%, which was slightly higher than the previous rate of 72.2%.

9. How many support sessions did the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for England and Wales deliver through phone calls or live chat?

In the year ending March 2022, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline delivered 50,791 support sessions through phone call or live chat; similar to the previous year.

All figures and data were correct at the time of print (April 2023). The figures relate to England and Wales only as there are no combined statistics for the whole of the United Kingdom.

1, 2, 3, 4 – *Characteristics of children in need, 2021-2022, GOV.UK*

5, 6 – *Safeguarding Adults, England, 2021-2022, NDRS*

7, 8, 9 – *Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview, Office for National Statistics*

Voices of safeguarding – transcript

Voice 1

“Each one of us is of infinite value. Each one of us is made uniquely in God’s own image, and so each one of us has a responsibility to protect others from harm. So wherever we might be throughout the Methodist Connexion, safeguarding is obviously something that we all have in common because these are the principles that underpin our Christian faith and these are the principles that are at the core of the mission of the Methodist Church. Yet we sometimes still come across situations where safeguarding is viewed as a ‘thing’. A ‘thing’ that is somehow separate to all of this, a ‘thing’ that can be seen as purely ticking boxes and a ‘thing’ that we ‘have’ to do. So I think we can all be challenged, particularly as leaders within the Church, to take safeguarding forward not as a thing that we *have* to do, but as a thing that we want to do, a thing that we shout about and profess to be at the heart of our faith. A thing that we are joyous about because we are proud of the values it represents, and a thing that is all about us living out the gospel.”

Voice 2

“I met him on the internet. It was all OK at first, but he started calling all the time and sending texts saying some really horrible things. He called when I was at the youth club and that’s when the youth leader saw my phone and what had been happening. I am so glad that I told her.”

Voice 3

“Do you know, I really feel for her. It can’t be easy for her having to deal with him when he’s so low. Do you know, he used to be so full of life and I just wonder what we can do as a church to help them both? There must be something.”

Voice 4

“I felt like an outcast. I thought it must have been obvious to others what was going on, but nobody said anything. It was as if people were avoiding me like the plague.”

Voice 5

“It has taken courage and audacity for each victim to come forward and relive their experiences after so long, for which I commend them. I thank the Methodist Church Safeguarding Team for their collaboration in the investigation.”

Voice 6

“The thing that I can find difficult is holding in careful balance the tensions that we can face as we strive to be a hospitable church and an inclusive community for all people. Reflection about questions such as risk, all being welcome, forgiveness and justice are so important for each of us to consider.”

Voice 7

“I couldn’t believe it. She had been really quite involved in the church until a few months ago when she seemed to disappear from the face of the earth. And then there she was, as I turned on the news last night it was all over the headlines. I was, well am, in complete shock.”

Voice 8

“We were offered a lot of support from the church and I don’t know what we would have done without them. We really do have a great network of safeguarding expertise throughout the Connexion and this experience has just proved that we must always use that – so thank you.”

Who needs to complete the Advanced Module 2023 Edition?

Core list – required attendance

- Safeguarding officer – district
- Safeguarding officer – circuit
- Safeguarding officer – church
- Members of the District Safeguarding Group
- Members of the District Policy Committee
- All presbyters or deacons with an active preaching or pastoral ministry (including supernumerary ministers)
- Those who are in paid employment or a voluntary role which includes leadership within the Methodist Church, involving direct work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Those with responsibility for supervision (either training or trained and accredited under the Methodist Church Reflective Supervision Policy 2021-2026)
- Lay persons who are appointed to exercise pastoral leadership within a local church
- Local preachers should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after receiving a Note to Preach and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their second interview on trial, whichever occurs first.
- Worship leaders should enrol and complete the Advanced Module at the earliest opportunity after commencing training and completing the Foundation Module. Both modules must be completed by the end of the second year of training and before their appointment by the Church Council, whichever occurs first.
- Those who deliver the Foundation Module
- Members of the Connexional Complaint Panels, Discipline Committees, Pastoral and Appeals Committees
- Those in recognised roles involving pioneering, fresh expressions or evangelism
- Mentors for the Youth Participation Scheme
- Members of the Safeguarding Committee.

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- Supernumerary ministers apart from those who have an active preaching or pastoral ministry.

Recognition of Church of England training

The Methodist Church recognises the Church of England Leadership Module (previously called C2) as equivalent and qualifying training to the Advanced Module. Therefore, those who have undertaken that Church of England course will have satisfied attendance requirements listed above in the Methodist Church.

Renewing training

The requirement to renew training every four years will only apply to the highest level of safeguarding training undertaken by an individual. Where the Foundation and Advanced Modules are required, following attendance at both courses, only a repeat of the Advanced Module will be necessary in future years.

These lists are as approved by the 2016 Methodist Conference:

methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-34-Past-Cases-Review-Implementation.pdf

and updated by the 2017 January Methodist Council:

methodist.org.uk/media/1400/counc-mc17-13-the-2016-conference-resolutions-34-2-and-34-3-january-2017.pdf

The 2016 Conference decided that the frequency of undertaking Creating Safer Space training should change from five to four years from September 2017 in order to make sure that training content can keep pace with changes in legislation and safeguarding practices:

methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-30-Safeguarding.pdf

The **Methodist** Church

Produced by Safeguarding Training Working Group
on behalf of the Connexional Safeguarding Team

methodist.org.uk