

SAFEGUARDING POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE FOR THE METHODIST CHURCH

(Please note that some guidance only sections are still to be written and will not be completed until after this main document is approved)

Contents

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION	7
1.1. STATUS OF POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE	7
1.2. FOUNDATIONS	7
1.3. THEOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	7
1.4. SOCIETAL CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
1.5. LEARNING FROM PAST CASES REVIEW	12
1.6. ECUMENICAL CONTEXT.....	13
SECTION 2 SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT	15
2.1. COMMITMENTS	15
2.2. PUTTING THE POLICY INTO ACTION.....	17
SECTION 3 SAFEGUARDING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	18
3.1. KEY SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	18
3.1.1. At Church / Circuit level	18
3.1.2. District level.....	18
3.1.3. At Connexional level: Safeguarding Advisor and Safeguarding Team.....	19
3.1.4. Responsibilities of the Trustees.....	20
3.1.5. Church Schools.....	21
3.1.6. Methodist Homes	22
SECTION 4 PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING WELL TO SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS	23
4.1. RESPONDING WELL.....	23
4.1.1. Listening	24
4.1.2. Emergency Situations	24

4.1.3.	Assessment of Risk	24
4.1.4.	Referring to Statutory Agencies	25
4.2.	RECORDING	31
4.3.	CARING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED ABUSE	32
4.4.	PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT	32
4.4.1.	Helping Recovery and Responding Well	33
4.4.2.	Disagreement.....	34
4.4.3.	Caring for the congregation.....	34
4.5.	ADDITIONAL ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH WHERE THE SAFEGUARDING CONCERN RELATES TO A MINISTER, MEMBER, EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER OF THE CHURCH	34
4.5.1.	Disciplinary Action.....	34
4.5.2.	Notifying the media office	35
4.5.3.	Notification to Methodist Insurance.....	36
4.5.4.	Notification to the Charity Commission	36
4.5.5.	Consideration of Action Prior to any Court Case.....	38
4.5.6.	References / Court Proceedings / Representative Meetings.....	38
4.5.7.	Notifying other Churches and Community Organisations	38
4.5.8.	Risk Assessments	39
4.5.9.	Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	39
4.6.	DOMESTIC ABUSE.....	39
4.6.1.	Policy	39
4.6.2.	Responding Well	40
4.6.3.	Related Reading	41
4.6.4.	Quick Guide Flow Chart	42
4.7.	RESPONDING WELL TO THOSE WHO MIGHT POSE A RISK	43
4.7.1.	Policy.....	43
4.7.2.	Covenants of Care – What Are They?	43
4.7.2.1.	Arranging a Covenant of Care	43
4.7.2.2.	The Covenant of Care Agreement	44
4.7.2.3.	Additional issues which might need to be considered in the contract.....	45
4.7.2.4.	The Covenant of Care monitoring group.....	45

SECTION 5 PROCEDURES FOR INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY 46

5.1. STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SHARING INFORMATION46

5.1.1. Validation of the person requesting information..... 46

5.1.2. Validation of the nature of the request 47

5.1.3. Obtain consent where possible and appropriate..... 47

5.1.4. Consider the most secure way to provide the information 48

5.1.5. Make a record 48

SECTION 6 PROMOTING SAFER PRACTICE 50

6.1. POLICY.....50

6.2. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS50

6.3. CODE OF SAFER WORKING PRACTICE.....50

6.4. PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUAL WORKERS.....51

6.4.1. Appropriate Conduct 51

6.4.2. Visiting Adults at Home 52

6.4.3. Touch..... 53

6.4.4. Anti-Bullying 53

6.5. PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH SPONSORED ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM53

6.5.1. Recommended Staffing Levels..... 53

6.5.2. Mixed Age Activities 54

6.5.3. Safe Environment..... 54

6.5.4. Special Needs 54

6.5.5. Activity Risk Assessments 55

6.5.6. Specialised Activities 55

6.5.7. Church Photography - the Internet and publicity 55

6.5.8. Safeguarding and the Internet 56

6.5.9. Hire or Use of Church Premises 58

6.5.10. Record Keeping (Church Activities / Events)..... 59

6.5.10.1. Registration with Ofsted (In England and the Equivalent in Wales and Scotland) 59

6.6. HEALTH AND SAFETY60

6.6.1.	Equipment.....	60
6.6.2.	Accident Book	60
6.6.3.	First Aid.....	60
6.6.4.	Fire Procedures	60
6.6.5.	Accessibility	61
6.6.6.	Registration and Consent Forms	61
6.7.	TRANSPORT	62
6.7.1.	Drivers	62
6.7.2.	Private Car	63
6.7.3.	Minibus/Coach.....	63
6.8.	INSURANCE	63
6.9.	REPORTING SERIOUS CASES TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION.....	64
6.10.	TRIPS	64
6.11.	FINANCIAL INTEGRITY	64
6.11.1.	Children’s Ministry (<i>To Be Developed</i>)	65
6.11.2.	Handling money	65
6.11.3.	Pocket money	65
6.11.4.	Youth Group funds.....	65
6.11.5.	Fundraising.....	65
6.11.6.	Adult Ministry (To Be Developed).....	65
6.11.7.	Handling money (See also Visiting Adults at home section 4.4.1.)	65
6.11.8.	Power of Attorney	65
6.12.	HEALTH	65
6.13.	DRUGS POLICY (to be developed)	66
6.14.	SOCIAL MEDIA / IT	66
6.15.	ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES (to be developed).....	66
6.15.1.	Policy statement.....	66
6.15.2.	Missing children /adults	66
6.15.3.	Accident/illness.....	66
6.15.4.	Major incidents.....	66

6.15.5.	Fire safety	66
6.16.	ADVOCACY / ACCESS TO AN INDEPENDENT PERSON	66
6.17.	HOME VISITING	67
6.18.	WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY	67
6.19.	KEY HOLDERS	67
6.20.	TRAINING	67
SECTION 7 PRACTICE GUIDANCE		68
7.1.	DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY AND RECOGNISING ABUSE	68
7.1.1.	Children	68
7.1.2.	Adults	72
7.2.	GUIDANCE RELATING TO ADULTS WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE	78
7.2.1.	Safeguarding and The Care Act 2014	78
7.2.2.	The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (Regularly updated)	79
7.2.3.	The aims of adult safeguarding are to:	79
7.2.4.	Guidance On Capacity	80
7.2.4.1.	Other Considerations	80
7.3.	INFORMATION SHARING GUIDANCE	81
7.3.1.	Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing	81
7.3.2.	Data Protection Principles	82
7.3.3.	Consent	83
7.3.4.	When and How to Share	84
7.3.5.	Recording	85
7.3.6.	Confidentiality	85
7.4.	PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY	85
7.5.	GUIDANCE RELATING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE	86
7.6.	GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE	86
7.6.1.	Recommended Staffing Levels	86
SECTION 8 FORMS		88
SECTION 9 APPENDICES		89
Appendix i – Standing Order 010 & 690		90

Appendix ii - The Safeguarding Committee	94
Appendix iii – Model Safeguarding Policies as amended Oct 2016	99
a) A MODEL CHURCH POLICY	100
b) A MODEL CIRCUIT POLICY	105
c) A MODEL DISTRICT POLICY	109
Appendix iv - Circuit Safeguarding Officer Job Description	113
Appendix v Methodist Structure	115
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	117

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATUS OF POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE

This document sets out the policy, procedures and guidance relating to safeguarding within the Methodist Church. The provisions outlined are informed by current legislation and accepted good practice from within the Church, statutory agencies and other community organisations with safeguarding responsibilities.

Following consultation, the policy and procedures laid down in this document have been approved by the Methodist Conference and therefore are mandatory. Sections that are clearly identified as 'guidance' are regarded as good practice and therefore it is highly advisable, although not compulsory, to adhere to these guidelines.

1.2. FOUNDATIONS

In developing and implementing the Safeguarding Policy the Methodist Church is guided by the following foundations:

- The Gospel (see Section 1.3. Theological Approach)
- Human Rights, International and National Law

The Church fully supports the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It recognises that Safeguarding work is undertaken within a British legislative and associated government guidance framework which sets out a range of Safeguarding duties and responsibilities (see Section 1.4 Societal Context and Legal Framework).

1.3. THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

Every human being has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's recreation 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. Christ saw all people as valuable, especially those who were vulnerable. He gave them status, time and respect.

Every person is equally precious to God. Each one needs the assurance that respect for this brings. Individuals who suffer abuse often experience a loss to their identity and perception of self-worth. They are often burdened with the pain of undeserved shame and guilt. The Church is intended to be a place where men, women, children and young people, those who are hurt and damaged, may find healing and wholeness. It is our calling to be agents of healing and recovery in such a way that enables all who have suffered from abuse to lead lives with dignity in a context that is as safe as possible. It is about speaking words of peace. It is communication of

Shalom that is of justice, healing and peace for the whole of the individual as well as for the community.

God is present and at work in the world in many ways. A Church empowered by the Holy Spirit is a place where the wonderful character of God is manifested. The Church is called to witness to that truth. As individual Christians and as part of the Church, our vocation is to reflect the character of God. We are called to welcome and care for the oppressed, the marginalised and the victims of injustice. Safeguarding good practice concerns the development of safer expressions of care to all and underpins the love and welcome of God for all people.

Justice is part of the outworking of love. The Church must hold in tension concerns for both justice and compassion. Nevertheless, those who have suffered abuse have sometimes not been heard or found an unsympathetic hearing. They may be disbelieved, discouraged and damaged further. Other people tend to side with the alleged perpetrator. This occurs in all parts of society, but it is particularly hurtful when it occurs within the Church. Such actions compound the sense of injustice that many feel. In answer to the question "what does God require of us?" the need to act justly is set alongside the need to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)

Many who have endured abuse consider that mercy towards those who have sinned is set above the need for the victims to be enabled to find justice. Both are essential. In creating humankind God made us to be together, to live in community. When one suffers we all suffer. We are all made poorer by every incidence of child or adult abuse, as by all sin. In finding the grace to act righteously towards those who suffer, we also experience transformation through grace. We become better people and our churches become safer places for all.

In similar ways, offenders may also be assured that they are precious to God and find healing and wholeness. Because redemption and the possibility of forgiveness are so central to the gospel, the Church is not only well-equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders but is also challenged by the issues their presence raises for us. The Church is also part of a society where collusion with violence in families, emotional abuse or certain taboos on sexual abuse often holds sway. Church people have sometimes required those who have suffered abuse to forgive; instead it is our calling to hold on to both justice and grace and to build safer church communities, often in challenging circumstances. We need also to understand forgiving and receiving forgiveness as lifelong processes.

Our congregations can be a refuge for those who have perpetrated abuse but are seeking help in maintaining a non-abusive way of life. We have also to be aware that some who abuse may see church membership as an opportunity to be close to children and other vulnerable groups in order to continue their abusive patterns of behaviour.

Experience shows that whether penitent or not, those who abuse always need support in taking responsibility for their own actions and in stopping their abusive behaviour, and of course the vulnerable need protecting from them.

The genuine penitent will accept the need for careful arrangements, including some restrictions, for their return to church fellowship. This is in line with the Church's realistic understanding of sin and its effects and the Church's responsibility to love all God's people.

The gospel accounts remind us of Jesus' humanity and vulnerability throughout his life. He gave up all but the power of love. He gave up wealth, security and status. He listened to and ministered to those who were powerless and vulnerable; he appointed fallible and weak disciples who needed to discover their limitations and find strength by living in God's grace with each other. Those who are humble and vulnerable themselves are often gifted with a ministry with those who are most in need, including with children and with adults who have suffered. There is therefore a challenge for the Church to encourage ministry, service and leadership in ways that promote discernment of one's boundaries and limitations, reliance on God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, thus developing compassionate, collaborative and enabling ministries which value careful listening to all.

All abuse is an abuse of power and a scourge on individuals, on our Church and in our society whenever it occurs and we must name it as such, doing everything we can to prevent it. We are to nurture children and adults as fully as we can in Christ's name.

A Christian approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults will therefore expect both individuals and communities to:

- create a safe environment for children, adults and their carers
- act promptly on any complaints made
- care for those who have been abused in the past
- minister appropriately to those who have abused
- provide opportunities for healing and flourishing.

God's mission is a message of good news, of love and welcome for the poor and marginalised. The Church must take seriously both human propensities to evil but also the God-given resources of goodness, peace, healing and justice, in short his love, his life.

1.4. SOCIETAL CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal arrangements and requirements vary between England, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Malta. What follows in this section are the general principles as applied to England as much of this is the same in all locations but please check with your DSO for specific differences in your legislature. The rules and regulations for the British Methodist Church are largely consistent throughout the Connexion.

There has been widespread coverage in the media of the failure of various organisations and individuals to adequately prevent and protect children from abuse, the most recent, high profile cases of [Jimmy Saville](#) and [the Rotherham Report](#). In recent years, there has also been a growing understanding of the importance of recognising abuse against adults who are vulnerable, whether inflicted deliberately or as a consequence of neglect. Since the start of the Millenium, a broad spectrum of legislation, guidance, research and reports from all sectors have led to the development of policy and procedures in the safeguarding arena. Closer working partnerships have been forged through both Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards and a growing commitment to all those who work with vulnerable groups is leading to improved working practices.

Relevant reports and legislation in relation to safeguarding practice for adults and children include:

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT 2006	Independent Safeguarding Authority established (later to become Disclosure and Barring Service).
THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1988	Regulation of the possessing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998	Article 8 Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence Article 9 Freedom of thought, belief and religion Article 10 Freedom of expression
THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998	Act to make provision for preventing anti-social behaviour with references to children.
SERIOUS CRIME ACT 2015	Includes offences relating to child cruelty, sexual communication with a child and female genital mutilation (FGM) and coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship

Relevant reports and legislation in relation to the safeguarding practice around children include:

CHILDREN ACT 1989	Introduced comprehensive changes to legislation in England and Wales.
CHILDREN ACT 2004	Result of Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié.
BICHARD INQUIRY 2004	Inquiry into the Soham murders resulting in a registration scheme for those working with vulnerable groups and applied safer recruitment principles across the voluntary and statutory sectors.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN WHOM ILLNESS IS FABRICATED OR INDUCED 2005	Statutory guidance on protecting children where carers or parents fabricate or induce illness in a child.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE LINKED TO A BELIEF IN SPIRIT POSSESSION 2007	Non-statutory good practice guidance intended to help practitioners and line managers apply Working Together (see end of table) to the particular needs of children who are abused or neglected because of a belief in spirit possession.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EXPLOITATION 2009	Statutory guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation.
MUNRO REVIEW IN CHILD PROTECTION IN ENGLAND 2011	Focus on child centred system.
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED 2011	Practice guidance.
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014	Gives greater protection to vulnerable children.
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION JULY 2015	Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED 2015	Guidance to help practitioners identify the signs of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take.
WORKING TOGETHER 2015 (<i>updated version of one published in 2010</i>)	Updated guidance for interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Names Faith Organisations as needing to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Relevant reports and legislation in relation to the safeguarding practice towards vulnerable adults include:

NO SECRETS 2000	Department of Health document developing and implementing Inter-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults and creation of Local Authority Safeguarding Boards.
THE MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005	Identifies principles for the purposes of the Act including issues around capacity and decision making.
ACTION ON ELDER ABUSE REPORT 2005	Report on the project to establish a monitoring and reporting process for adult protection referrals made in accordance with No Secrets.

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT 2006	Defined a vulnerable adult. ISA established.
THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 2007	Amends the Mental Health Act 1983, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.
THE CARE ACT 2014	Introduces well-being principle and term adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
CARE AND SUPPORT GUIDANCE ISSUED UNDER THE CARE ACT 2014	Click here
LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SHARING INFORMATION UNDER THE CARE ACT 2014	States Local Authorities must set up Safeguarding Boards and cooperate with relevant partners.

1.5. LEARNING FROM PAST CASES REVIEW

In 2010, the Methodist Conference agreed the need for a review of past child and adult protection cases. This took place between 2013 and 2015 and the results were published in [‘Courage, Cost and Hope, The Report on the Past Cases Review 2013-2015’](#).

Key findings from the review of past cases identified ten themes which overlap and interconnect in many ways. In summary, these are:

<p>THEME 1: Abuse and risk are still not always recognised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour which might be of concern is still not recognised • In particular, behaviour which is potentially <i>grooming</i> behaviour is not recognised • <i>Patterns</i> of worrying behaviour are not recognised
<p>THEME 2: The huge and ongoing impact of abuse on those who have been harmed The PCR report says “The ongoing pain and distress of victims/survivors is deep and lasting. It is amplified when they feel they have not been listened to. It is still not always recognised/responded to well.” P30</p>
<p>THEME 3: Abuse which has occurred in the church setting is even more distressing and a devastating breach of trust</p>
<p>THEME 4: There is a need for a further development of listening skills</p>

<p>THEME 5: People in the Church are still not responding well to serious situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-meaning people can be naïve • There are still 'lone safeguarding rangers' who think they can manage situations on their own • Ministers can be very anxious about safeguarding and this may lead to concerns not being shared and sometimes safeguarding is not seen as a team activity
<p>THEME 6: People find it difficult to put respectful uncertainty into practice There is a lack of skill in dealing with potentially contradictory views of people, so people find it difficult to recognise that those who are their colleagues and friends – and have done good things- can also do harm.</p>
<p>THEME 7: Responding well to the congregation in difficult safeguarding situations continues to be a challenge Ministers often struggle to deal with conflicts and tensions within congregations. The Past Cases Review Report says “The impact of abuse within a Church community is often deep and lasting and sometimes cannot be resolved by those enmeshed in it”. P35</p>
<p>THEME 8: Recording: Practice has improved but record keeping is still not consistent enough.</p>
<p>THEME 9: Effective working with other agencies still requires development</p>
<p>THEME 10: There has been and remains, insufficient understanding of the significance of safeguarding concerns about those who hold leadership roles in the Methodist Church. There are many instances of people, other than Ministers, who are in roles of Church leadership (for example, local preachers, worship leaders, stewards) and who have behaved in a way that is not consistent with safeguarding. Yet among some in the Church there is limited appreciation that firstly, this may present a risk to others and secondly, that this presents an inappropriate role model.</p>

The Church has created learning material regarding the above, which is aimed at developing the awareness of those who deliver safeguarding training in the Church namely the 'Foundation and Leadership Modules'.

1.6. ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

In the churches, there is a continuing growth in ecumenical agreement and cooperation on Safeguarding, especially between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, as part of the outworking of the Covenant. Our continued participation in Churches' Agency for Safeguarding and the Christian Forum for Safeguarding is of great benefit in building and maintaining relations with all churches, especially the Baptist Union of GB and the United Reformed Church, the Society of Friends, the Catholic Church of England and Wales (CSAS), the Salvation Army, the Church of Scotland, the Assemblies of God and the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service. Furthermore, these bodies enable and enhance our participation in discussions with government departments and agencies.

In a Local Ecumenical Partnership, the governing body of each constituent Church should decide which safeguarding policy is to be followed by the joint LEP and stay with that. The DSO should also be informed of the agreed safeguarding lead in each partnership.

SECTION 2 SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will **promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to **prevent** abuse from occurring, seek to **protect** and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

The Methodist Church affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults has a role to play. This is supported with consistent policies and promoting good practice across the whole church.

The Church and individual members of it undertake to take all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all. It will practice fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

2.1. COMMITMENTS

Based on the foundations above the Methodist Church commits to:

1. Promote a Safer environment and culture

All church officers will respect all children, young people and adults and promote their well-being.

The church will create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning and quality assurance processes.

The church will challenge any abuse of power within church communities by ensuring church officers adhere to safer working good practice and are supported to challenge bullying and abusive behaviour. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and adults with the knowledge that they will be cared for.

2. Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and adults within the Church

The Church will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility related to children and adults within the Church, in accordance with Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

It will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

3. Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully, actively and in the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the designated safeguarding officer to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All Church officers will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to ministers the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and Church standing orders, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

4. Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.

The Church will offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, of when or of where it occurred.

Those who have suffered abuse within the church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and believed. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support, according to their expressed and agreed need, as they seek to rebuild their lives.

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, Church, Circuit and wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

5. Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.

The Church in its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse will respect the rights under criminal, civil and standing orders law of an accused church officer or minister. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

The Church will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any church officer and minister is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding contract.

Church officers and ministers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. The church will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, congregations and wider communities affected by the church officer/minister's changed situation.

6. Respond to those that may pose a present risk to children, young person or vulnerable adults.

The Church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community who may present a risk.

The Church will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and standing order law.

2.2. PUTTING THE POLICY INTO ACTION

All churches, circuit and district bodies need to ensure that these commitments are integrated into a local Safeguarding policy. (See Appendix iii for model policy statements) – Link to current being updated:

http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/669487/safeguarding_model_policies.doc

The policy is an active statement underpinning Safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve practice. All church bodies need to:

- Ensure that all church officers have a copy of the policy
- Promote and publicise the policy
- Communicate the Church's safeguarding message as reflected in the policy
- Develops processes to assess how well the policy is being implemented, lessons that are being learnt and what difference it is making
- Undertakes an annual progress review which is recorded

SECTION 3 SAFEGUARDING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ethos behind the structure of the Methodist Church remains true to the original values of its founder John Wesley, valuing consultation, shared decision making and responsibility in all parts of the Church. An outline of the Church's structure can be found at Appendix v. In line with the values of cooperation and consultation, all members, employees, office holders and volunteer workers at all levels of Church life play a significant role in implementing Safeguarding procedures.

The Charity Commission and Methodist Insurance require all local bodies to have a Safeguarding policy in place. Each District, Circuit and Church will produce a Safeguarding policy, related to work with both children and adults. Model policies are provided in 'Model Church Policies: the Methodist Church 2010' (See S 5.3). These should be reviewed annually and displayed. [Click here](#) (the model policies are being updated)

It is important to recognise that it is people who protect and not only procedures. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in the Church.

The Methodist Church as a Connexion has an obligation to support Churches and those working with children and adults in exercising their primary responsibility for those entrusted to them.

3.1. KEY SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1.1. At Church / Circuit level

The circuit and the Superintendent minister should provide support and oversight for Church Councils and ministers in implementing safeguarding as stated above and ensure that activities with children and adults, both within the circuit and local churches, are provided according to good practice and safeguarding procedures.

Churches and circuits may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures, but it is important to remember that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual churches. It should be noted that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable and care should be taken to implement the policy in full.

The Safeguarding Representative should be a member of the Church council/circuit meeting **or** have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. They should also have the right to attend the circuit staff meeting to discuss urgent confidential concerns and report to the Circuit Superintendent.

3.1.2. District level

The Chair and the District Policy Committee must provide support and oversight for Circuits, Superintendent Ministers and all Ministers in implementing Safeguarding in Churches and circuits.

In particular each District must:

- provide a structure to manage safeguarding issues and practice with a suitably qualified and experienced multi-disciplinary District Safeguarding Group (DSG), including an Independent Chair. The Chair of District or their nominee shall be a member of the group and attend regularly. The members of the group do not have to be members of the Methodist Church but the majority of the team should be either Methodist or members of a church in partnership or covenant with the Methodist Church.
- provide access to a process of local risk assessment reports (see Section xxx for further information on risk assessment procedures) on individuals so that the Chair, the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals and their work or activities within the church.
- provide access to training and support on safeguarding matters to churches, circuits, district organisations and those who work at district level in collaboration with the Training Officers.

The District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for advising and following through safeguarding concerns within the district, supported by the District Safeguarding Group.

The DSO will have a professional background in work with children or adults (or both) and/ or significant experience in this field. They are the main contact point within the district for all safeguarding matters and are supported through the Connexional Safeguarding team. They work with colleagues from the Learning Network (Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network - DMLN) to ensure that core safeguarding training programmes are provided in order that all relevant church workers have the required training and support to deliver the Church's approach to safeguarding in all its work.

The DSG is made up of professional or ex- professional members drawn usually from agencies such as the Police, Probation, Education, Children's and Adult's services, Health services, Law and related services. They meet on a regular basis to support the DSO and advise on policy, practice and training developments within the district.

3.1.3. At Connexional level: Safeguarding Advisor and Safeguarding Team

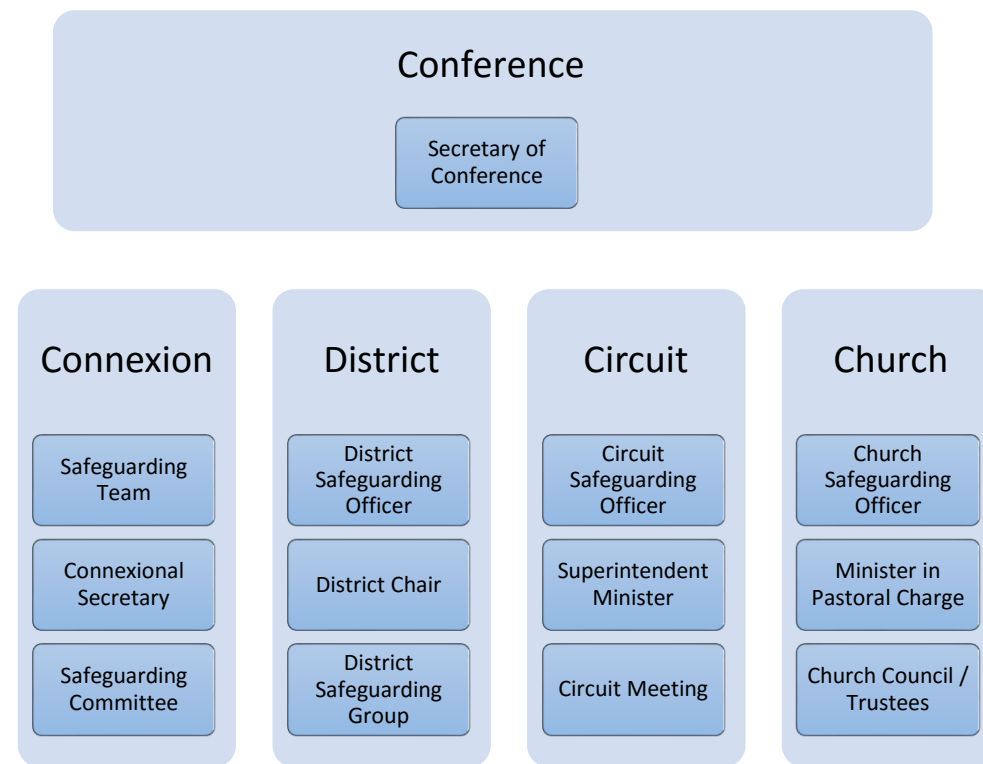
The Connexional Safeguarding Team, led by the Safeguarding Adviser, undertakes support, coordination and development activities in relation to a broad remit of safeguarding areas to Connexional Officers, the Methodist Conference and Council, District Safeguarding Groups, District Safeguarding Officers and District Chairs.

Support is provided in relation to the management of safeguarding issues, principally through liaison with District Safeguarding Officers. The Team is responsible for the commissioning and management of risk assessments and manages and coordinate

the clearance process for blemished DBS checks and have a monitoring role in relation to ministerial DBS renewals.

Current safeguarding best practice is promulgated via an annual conference for professional development and networking, maintaining the Safeguarding website, overseeing Connexional Safeguarding training strategies, development of Safeguarding policies and procedures and regular liaison with relevant agencies including Government departments, relevant voluntary sector organisations and other Churches in Britain.

There is no requirement for those coordinating and advising in Safeguarding at any level of the Church that they be members of the Methodist Church. This gives scope for the most appropriate people with relevant professional backgrounds, to be appointed especially when considering the appointment of Chair of the District Safeguarding Group and the District Safeguarding Officer.



3.1.4. Responsibilities of the Trustees

The responsibility for implementation lies with the relevant trustee body; that is, the Church Council and Circuit Meeting as delegated to the person with pastoral charge. It is the relevant church body and the minister with pastoral charge who is also responsible for ensuring:

- Allegations concerning church workers and office holders are responded to immediately and according to good practice procedures (as outlined in this policy and [Recruiting Safely](#)) including referral to the statutory authorities.
- Reports of abuse (including allegations) are referred to the statutory authorities according to Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and with reference to Guidance provided in this document.

- Standing Orders and the Church Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures are implemented by completing required DBS checks.
- When somebody is appointed to a post in the Church they are subject to the rules and regulations of the Methodist Church. These are contained in Standing Orders. SO10 has specific instructions about sex offenders who are barred from all positions of responsibility within the Church. (See Appendix ii)
- Safeguarding good practice is followed and pastoral care provided in all instances of child or adult abuse and trauma. This includes pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse (*see Tracing Rainbows through the Rain, Methodist Conference, 2006 [click here](#)*) and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children.

In respect of these responsibilities, the Trustee body and the Minister with pastoral charge should also take advice from the District Safeguarding Officer and/or the Connexional Safeguarding Team about:

- referring cases to the DBS or Disclosure Scotland where allegations lead to disciplinary action or someone resigns pending this – the DSO should make any agreed referral.
- making a report to both the Charity Commission (in England and Wales) and the relevant Insurance company in respect of serious safeguarding matters. This should always occur in those cases involving possible reputational or financial risks.
- and notification should be made to the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice for further advice.

3.1.5. Church Schools

The Methodist Church oversees a family of over 80 Schools in both the state and independent sectors.

For the 66 schools within the state sector, the Methodist Council exercises appropriate oversight - differently for Methodist-only schools from Anglican-Methodist schools, where oversight is shared with the relevant diocese of the Church of England. The Council's oversight in all cases is delegated to the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST). The MAST schools are considered as part of the mission of the local circuit with a close relationship through the governors of the school.

In relation to safeguarding, these schools are bound by the policies and procedures of the relevant Local Authority and are inspected by Ofsted. Those that are currently part of academy groups have their own safeguarding policies for which their trust is responsible, and they too are subject to Ofsted inspection.

The MAST schools may deal with safeguarding matters independently from the Church, based on the requirements of their respective policies and procedures. Where any issue raised involves a member of the Methodist Church working within that school, close cooperation will be undertaken with the Connexional Safeguarding Team, the District (via the Chair and District Safeguarding Officer) and the Conference Office.

Safeguarding concerns in relation to MAST schools should in the first instance be directed to the head teacher of the school. If the Church becomes aware of a safeguarding issue relating to a Methodist member who is involved in any way in a school, the relevant Church officer should contact the head teacher and inform MAST.

Methodist Independent Schools are under the overall supervision of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST). They have their own Safeguarding policies which draw upon national guidance for education and/or local guidelines, dependent on the individual oversight arrangements for each school. The safeguarding procedures and policies of these schools have to conform to statutory requirements (e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education - KCSIE); the schools work closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) and are subject to routine inspection under arrangements approved by the Department for Education (DfE) and administered by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

The independent schools may deal with safeguarding matters internally based on the requirements of their respective policies and procedures. Where any issue raised involves a member of the Methodist Church working within that school, close cooperation will be undertaken with the Connexional Safeguarding Team, the relevant Methodist district (via the Chair and District Safeguarding Officer) and the Conference Office. District Safeguarding Officers may be invited by independent schools in their areas or via MIST to support the development of safeguarding practice. The Chair of District is an ex-officio governor of any MIST school in their District.

In the first instance, safeguarding concerns relating to Methodist Independent Schools should be reported to the Head teacher of the school or to MIST's General Secretary.

3.1.6. Methodist Homes

MHA is a charity providing care, accommodation and support services for more than 16,000 older people throughout Britain. MHA is a group structure comprising the charity, Methodist Homes, Methodist Homes Housing Association and MHA Auchlochan.

Methodist Homes Group are regulated and guided by the guidelines and requirements of the Care Quality Commission (England), The Care Inspectorate (Scotland) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (Wales). They have a common policy relating to safeguarding for all their homes and schemes which has been drawn up in line with each of the regulators' requirements.

The Connexional Safeguarding Team and Methodist Homes will work in close cooperation where a safeguarding issue arises and the subject of that concern is a member of the Methodist Church.

Safeguarding concerns relating to Methodist Homes should be reported in the first instance to the manager of the home. Safeguarding is overseen by the Director of Quality and issues are centrally monitored and reviewed by the charity's Quality Committee.

SECTION 4 PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING WELL TO SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS

The Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance of the Methodist Church have been created in order to:

PROMOTE the well-being of children and adults through a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding within clearly assigned roles

PREVENT harm through best practice and the creation of a culture of informed vigilance

PROTECT through responding effectively when safeguarding concerns arise.

This section identifies action that should be taken when receiving a safeguarding concern. This may relate to a situation where allegations are made about Church officer, employee, member or volunteer or about someone not connected with the Church where a Church member or other person is seeking help or support from someone in the Church.

The concerns may be about current and past events but the response should be the same, as past events can still give rise to current safeguarding concerns.

Allegations that do not appear to fall into the above categories but still amount to inappropriate conduct within the Church may mean consideration needs to be given to invoking disciplinary processes or handling it by way of advice, supervision and training. In these situations, the employer / supervisor / line manager will need to consider the course of action.

Where the concern that has been raised relates to domestic abuse, the specific section relating to this type of safeguarding issue should be read in addition to the procedures outlined in this section.

4.1. RESPONDING WELL

There are many situations whereby a member of the Church may have concerns, or be made aware of concerns, regarding a child or adult. The person noticing or being informed of concerns must consult with the Minister, Safeguarding Church or Circuit Safeguarding Officer and DSO within one working day. The only exception to informing any of the above is if one of them is the subject of the concerns and then they will be excluded. At no time should the person who is subject of the allegations be informed and contact should only be made after discussion and agreement with the statutory authorities.

Further action will be decided in discussion and agreement with the statutory agencies

4.1.1. Listening

If approached by anyone wishing to talk about a concern, follow the basic guidelines below:

- Consider whether the time and place are appropriate to listen with care and security.
Do not defer listening but seek the other person's agreement to find a suitable place to listen.
- Stay calm and listen to the information very carefully showing you are taking seriously what you are being told. Do not pass judgement, minimise or express shock or disbelief at what you are being told.
- Listen with undivided attention and help the other person to feel relaxed. Do not put words into their mouth.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding – (it may be appropriate to ask if they mind you taking notes while they talk or at the end so you can check with them you have understood everything correctly - but only if it is appropriate).
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain what you will do with the information (see Information Sharing Policy Section 3 and Confidentiality 3.3)
- Check out what the person hopes for.
- Reflect back key points of what has been said to confirm you have understood what has been communicated.
- Either during (if appropriate) or after, make notes of what was said including the date, time, venue and who was present and sign the record.
- The District Safeguarding Officer should always be advised when a referral is made to children's' services/police.
- Provide the person with the means to contact you and be clear about how and when you will give feedback. Be prepared to continue to be there for the person and be dependable.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.

4.1.2. Emergency Situations

The person receiving the information will need to assess whether the subject of the concern is at risk of immediate harm and if so, take any immediate action necessary to safeguard them including contacting statutory authorities such as Police, Children or Adult Services.

4.1.3. Assessment of Risk

In all situations, consideration of the following risks should be reviewed regularly in regard to the circumstances of any concern raised:

- Risks to the victim/survivor
- Risk to members of vulnerable groups within the Church and involved with Church activities
- Risks to the person believed to be responsible for the issue and their family
- Risks to the wider congregation or attendees at Church activities

- Risk of loss of information/records
- Risk to the reputation of the Methodist Church

It is the responsibility of everyone to consider the risks presented by any situation from the first point that they become aware of a possible safeguarding concern throughout actions taken to deal with that issue. Direction may be given by police/Children Services or Adult Social Care as to how to respond to certain risks when a referral has been made. Advice may be sought from the District Safeguarding Officer in relation to measures that may minimise specific risks in any case. Measures to manage risk could include suspension, an interim Covenant of Care, specific arrangements for activities or church attendance, communication or liaison with others within and outside of the Church. Following the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance outlined in this document may assist in managing risks that are identified.

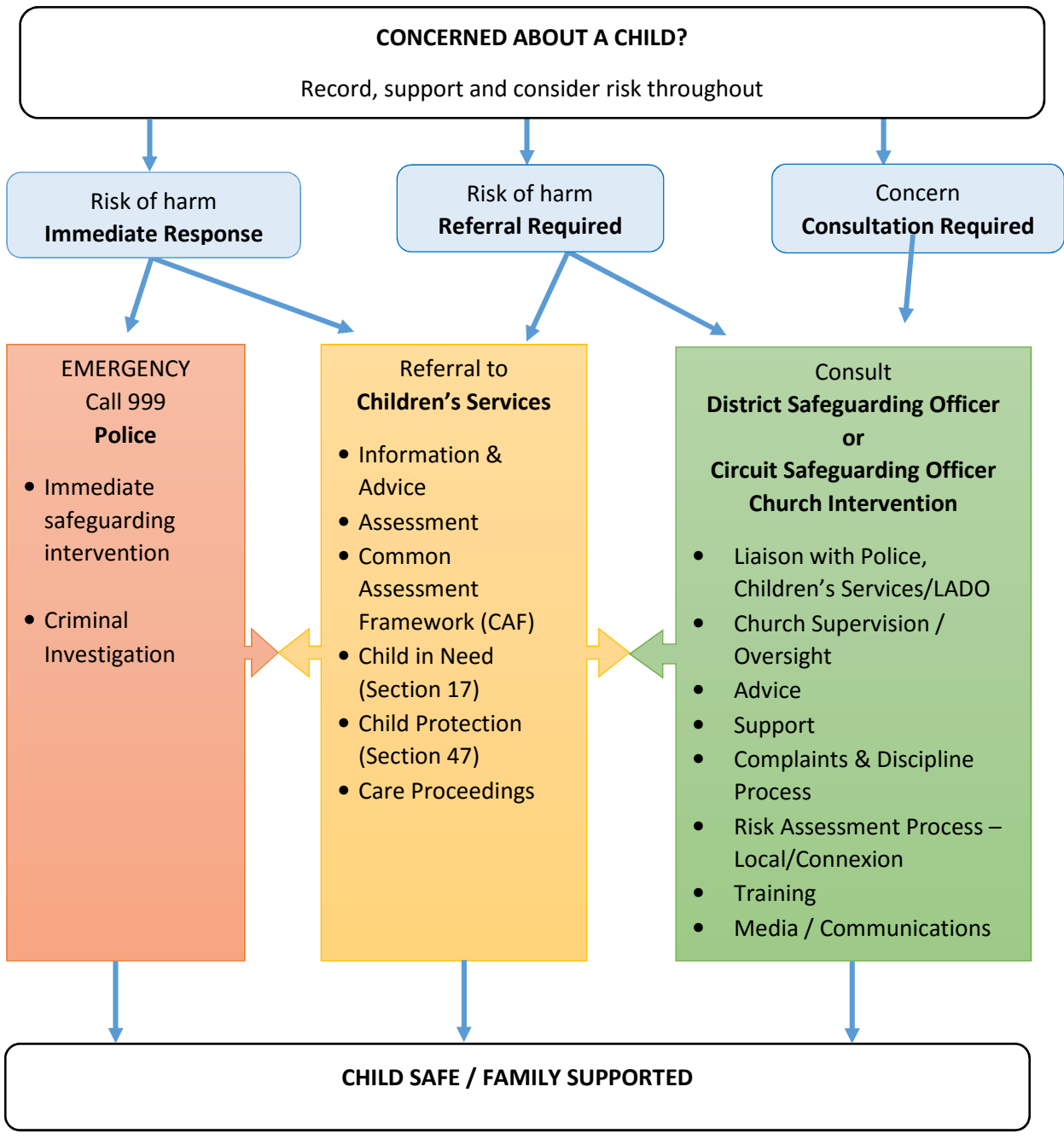
While in some circumstances, there are specific procedures laid down for certain forms of risk assessment (e.g. Covenant of Care) and there is responsibility for particular parties to undertake those assessments, in most cases, the ongoing consideration of risk should be an integral and continuing part of responding well to an incident.

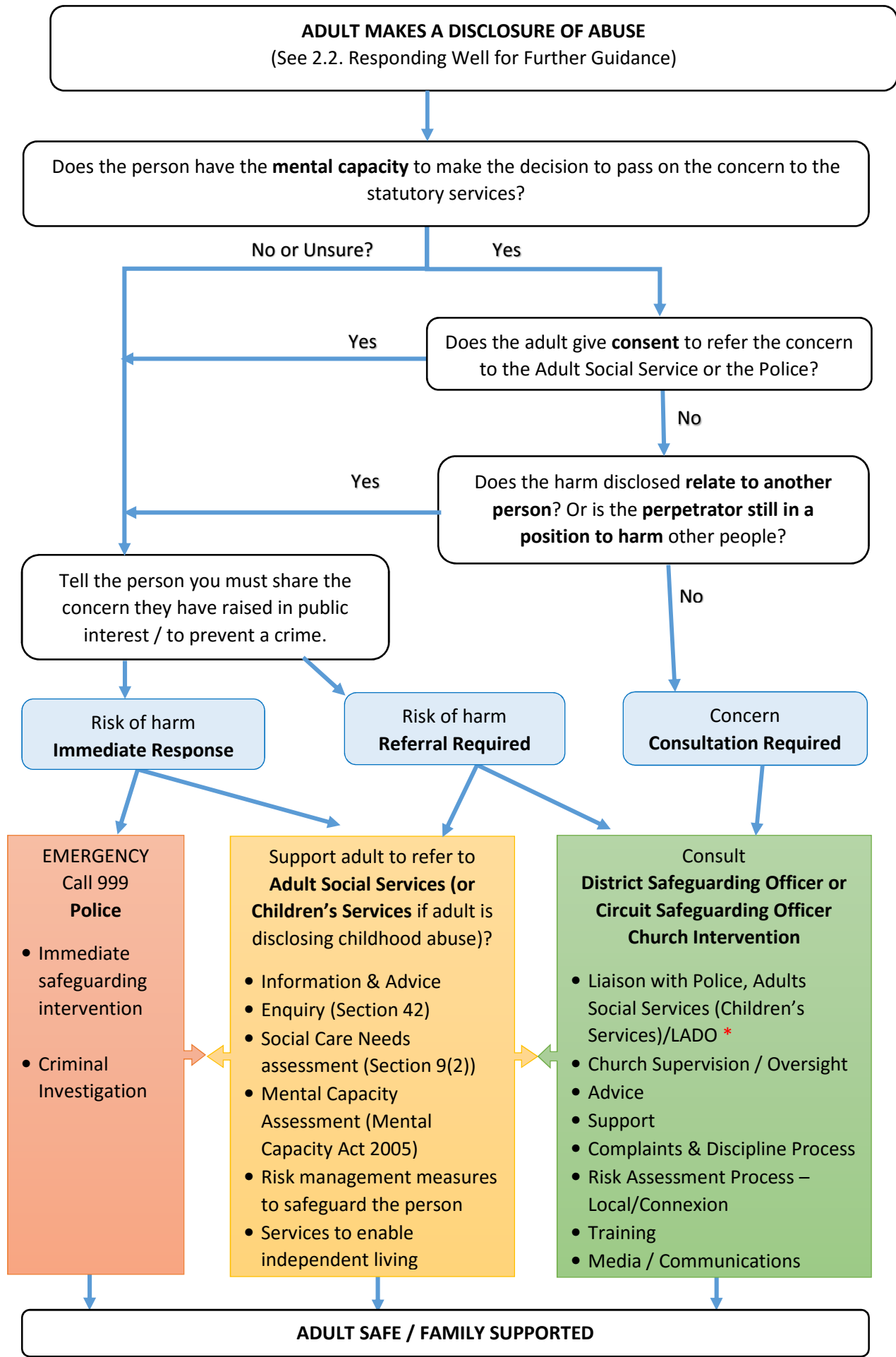
4.1.4. Referring to Statutory Agencies

In most situations a referral to the Designated Officer (formerly LADO) / Children's Services (depending on local provision) or adult safeguarding (Local Authority) in adult services should occur within one working day. It is preferable for the DSO to do this but if the DSO is not available, anyone can do it.

The Church must follow the advice given by statutory agencies (Children's Services, Adult Care/Police) in determining what can be said and when to the subject against whom allegations have been made. While this may be uncomfortable for those who know the person concerned, failure to follow this advice could result in the following:

- Risk to the safety of children or adults
- Loss of evidence which may hinder any investigation
- Increased anxiety for the subject of allegations before adequate information is available to make them aware of the situation and next steps
- Consequent reputational damage for the Church when appearing to collude with a party under allegation





* Unless consent has not been given by adult with capacity about whom the concern is about.

i. When making a referral, have the following information ready wherever possible:

For all referrals

- name, date of birth and address of person at risk;
- names and addresses of parents or carers (as appropriate)
- names of other significant people within the household (including all names and ages of those under 18)
- any other contact details (e.g. others who may be at risk of harm)
- any other professional known to be involved with the person at risk or family (where appropriate)
- date, time, context of the disclosure;
- nature of the alleged abuse/concern including details of the disclosure;
- what impact the alleged abuse is having on the person including their wishes and feelings about the situation and possible outcomes
- any known or previous issues of concern;
- your knowledge of personal circumstances
- any work undertaken with the person at risk or family by the Church;
- names of those who are aware of the referral (person at risk, family, alleged perpetrator etc)
- what the person disclosing the concerns has been told will happen next;
- name and contact details of the District Safeguarding Officer;
- your name and contact details;

In addition, for adult referrals

- whether consent for referral was given and your view on the adult's capacity;
- what the adult has been told will happen next;

Once a decision has been made to make a referral to the statutory agencies, the following information will need to be passed on whenever possible:

If you don't have all the above information, still pass on what you do have. This can be by telephone although some Local Authorities prefer online referrals. If you do refer by telephone, you will need to follow up in writing. 'In writing' includes email correspondence.

If you don't have all the above information at time of referral, still pass on the information you do have as the child/young person's safety is the priority and there must not be a delay.

ii. What can you expect from Children's Services/Adult Social Care / Police?

- they will check previous records to determine what action to take;
- they have a duty to ensure the person is safe from harm and aim to progress an enquiry as soon as possible, including seeing the person;
- their name and contact details;
- what action they intend to take and when;

- advice to you on what to do next;
- a timescale for action and an update to you on action taken (where confidentiality permits)

If you are passing on information by telephone, you will need to follow up in writing by noon the following day at the latest. 'In writing' includes email correspondence. (Note: some Local Authorities will only take referrals via online referral forms).

Statutory agencies have been advised that personal information from referrers who are members of the public should only be disclosed to third parties (including subject families and other agencies) with the consent of the referrer. Some Church workers with children will count as members of the public for this purpose and so the details will not be shared routinely. However, a person making a referral in an official position of trust within the Church cannot expect anonymity. If you have concerns about the disclosure of personal information, discuss this at the time of the referral with your District Safeguarding Officer or the agency to whom the referral is being made.

In each local authority there are published procedures for use by anyone in the area who may find themselves dealing with the possible abuse of a child or adult. Those procedures are usually available online and on open access. No-one should be deterred from making a referral because they are unsure about the formal procedure. Everyone should make themselves aware which Local Authority they need to contact in the event of a referral being necessary.

iii. What will happen next?

There are a range of outcomes open to statutory agencies following referral which include assessment, strategy meetings, case conferences, investigation and longer term interventions. Ministers and other Church members may be asked to attend meetings, provide statements or give evidence in legal proceedings. If this is the case, the District Safeguarding Officer needs to be consulted and the District Chair and Superintendent must be informed.

iv. When do you have to inform the District Safeguarding Officer and Minister?

Remember to inform the District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible or within 24 hours that you have done a referral and record the information.

Some examples:

- a) There has been an incident where an adult member or child has been or is being abused or mistreated by someone connected with the Church, such as a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee (Church council member – see section 2.3)
- b) There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the Church.
- c) Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened, regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place.
- d) There are grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred.

- e) Where there is a current allegation of abuse against a child or adult.
- f) Where someone in the Church has been suspended or dismissed from work or investigated or arrested for allegations of abuse against children or adults.
- g) Where a one or more children or adults are considered to be at risk of harm or at significant risk of harm.
- h) Where a person who is a member or regular attendee is known to have been convicted of sexual offences against children or adults, is currently or has been subject to investigation for any offence against a child or adult in the past year where there has been investigations or convictions for domestic violence.

v. What are the actions of the District Safeguarding Officer on receipt of a concern?

- Consider the child or adult's safety throughout;
- Check whether a referral to Children's Services or Adult Social Care (as appropriate) is necessary and if so, has been made;
- Consider if notification to Connexional Safeguarding Team is necessary (see next section);
- Contact the media office to discuss communications within the Church and circuit;
- ensure management of the case is separate from anyone involved in pastoral support;
- consider support needs to the victim/survivor, family/close friends and the accused and their family;
- Ensure pastoral support is not provided by parties who are directly involved in the management of the case or are in supervision or oversight of anyone about whom there is a concern.
- notify Methodist Insurance or ensure someone has done so;
- liaise with the Connexional Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice to agree if notification to Charity Commissions is necessary;
- notify District Chair and Superintendent;
- consider whether a Covenant of Care is necessary pending any court case;
- consider whether colleagues from other churches or community organisations need to be informed following advice from Children's Service/ Adult social care/Police (as appropriate)

vi. Cases which should be referred to the Connexional Safeguarding Team

- Any concern relating to Deacons and presbyters
- Cases where an independent risk assessment will be needed
- Any serious situation (as in the Leadership Module, [Responding well to serious situations](#)):
 - The arrest of someone holding a position of trust in the church
 - Information about a blemished disclosure
 - Disclosure about non-recent abuse
 - Allegations about abusive behaviour where the District Safeguarding Officer wishes to request additional support or advice

vii. When is a safeguarding case file opened in the Connexional Safeguarding Team?

- For blemished criminal record disclosures.
- For all PCR responses
- When an inquiry or a referral is made by an outside body (e.g. police, LADO, Boys Brigade, another denomination).
- If an alert is made about an individual
- If a concern is raised about a group / day nursery etc. held on Methodist premises
- Self-referrals e.g. survivors.
- If someone in the Methodist Church seeks advice about an individual.
- If the media team have given advice about a statement.
- If a DSO seeks advice about an individual.

All cases are recorded on a spreadsheet and on a system that can be searched. Opening a file does not imply that the Connexional Team holds and works the case.

4.2. RECORDING

Please refer to '[Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church](#)'.

Whenever a safeguarding concern has been raised about a child or adult, anyone receiving a concern or responsible for dealing with the situation, must keep clear and comprehensive records in order to ensure there is:

- a history of events;
- continuity when there are changes of personnel;
- accountability;
- evidence in case of proceedings.

It is important that all records are kept in a secure place and only shared in accordance with legislation, Methodist Church policy, procedure and guidelines (see section 5 Information Sharing Policy).

When making records the following practice should be followed:

- wherever possible, take notes during any conversation or immediately after if more appropriate;
- ask consent to make notes and take into account age and understanding;
- explain why you would like to take notes and that they can have access to the information they have shared with you;
- Include:
 - who* was involved – names of key people;
 - what* happened – facts not opinions;
 - where* it happened;
 - when* it happened;
 - how* it happened.

- keep a log of all actions you have taken and details of referrals to statutory agencies;
- make sure your notes are legible, clear, concise, relevant, thorough, jargon free and use the person's own words and phrases. Do not attempt to sanitise language or improve grammar.
- ensure they are up to date, signed, dated and timed.
- Where possible ask the person to review the notes and confirm that they are an accurate record
- Pass records to the DSO as soon as possible but at the latest by noon of the next day

NB. As part of the Independent Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry led by Professor Alexis Jay, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to child protection and allegations of child abuse made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 1988 for the duration of the inquiry.

4.3. CARING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED ABUSE

The Methodist Church recognises that abuse of an individual by someone within a Church context, can have a negative impact on not only the survivor, but on their family, the perpetrator's family and the Church community among others. The impact will be different for different people and assumptions cannot be made about the severity of the impact and its perceived seriousness. The Church aims to respond to those affected by abuse in accordance with legislation and guidance but also with respect and compassion, providing pastoral support and additional support where appropriate.

The policy and procedures apply to:

- children and young people under 18 alleging abuse by someone within the Church;
- adults alleging abuse as children from someone with the Church;
- adults alleging abuse by an adult within the Church;
- families of those affected by an allegations of abuse within the Church;
- members of the local Church where an allegation of abuse (such as against a Minister) has had an impact on them;

The Church will always aim to provide appropriate pastoral support to those in need, particularly where there maybe survivors of abuse from the congregation. However, those receiving or dealing with reports of abuse should also consider whether other forms of support may be appropriate in addition to or instead of pastoral support within the Church. This may particularly be the case where the person is actively involved with another church or faith or has disengaged from the Methodist Church as a result of abuse.

4.4. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT

The Methodist Church is currently agreeing the terms of a Survivor's counselling service in order to be able to offer short –term counselling to survivors and those affected by abuse in the Church

- If an allegation has resulted in a referral to the statutory agencies, then the provision of support will be discussed and agreed with those agencies.
- Whether or not a referral is made, the support needs of all those affected by the allegations (including the individual and family members, the accused and his/her family members, the Minister and other Church workers) must be considered and should be coordinated by the DSO.
- Support for historical allegations will be treated in the same way as for current allegations.
- Pastoral support will always be offered but there may be times when additional support is identified or requested, such as counselling or financial help. Any such requests must be referred to the District Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Group and the Insurers consulted. The DSO/District Safeguarding Group will be responsible for communicating with the Insurers.
- Where additional support is agreed, the DSO together with the local Church will make the necessary arrangements and ensure a written agreement will be drawn up clarifying the terms of the support offered.
- Where support is offered, it will be provided in a way that respects race, culture, age, language, religious beliefs, gender and disability.
- Any support offered will be decided by focussing on the best interest and welfare of the children and adults involved.

4.4.1. Helping Recovery and Responding Well

Recovery after any form of abuse is complex and will vary among individuals. For sexual abuse particularly it involves a process over a long period of time. The Revd. Dr Marie Fortune has identified seven essential elements to the process that need to be borne in mind when responding.

(from [Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused - Policy and guidance for the Church of England - 2011](#))

These are:

- the opportunity to tell the story (to name the sin and share the experience);
- for someone to hear their story (that is, to believe and acknowledge the harm done and the fact that the victim is not to blame);
- receiving a compassionate response to the victim (that is, to 'suffer with' is to walk with the person rather than try to 'problem solve' immediately);
- an effort to protect the vulnerable from further harm (both the victim and any others who may be at risk);
- the community holding the perpetrator to account;
- an act of restitution in as far as this is possible (though this does not necessarily include institutional or financial liability).

It is important to be clear about what a survivor of abuse expects at any time when he or she shares his or her experience. While it is understandable that those in authority

might be anxious regarding any suggestion of institutional culpability, this should never eclipse our higher duty to provide pastoral care or additional support if appropriate.

4.4.2. Disagreement

If there is any disagreement about the support to be offered, the person affected must put their views in writing to the DSO who will share and discuss it with the District Safeguarding Group. Following such consultation, the Insurers may need to be consulted before a reply is sent.

The decision of the District Safeguarding Group and Insurers will be final.

4.4.3. Caring for the congregation

Consideration must also be given to the impact of an allegation on the congregation. The DSO should discuss the provision of support with the Superintendent who will be responsible for coordinating it. This should be done in consultation with the statutory authorities and the media office and the following areas considered:

- What information can be shared
- When and how information can be shared - this may include a statement to the congregation delivered by the agreed minister (local, superintendent or District Chari)
- Where and to whom people can go for support

At the end of an investigation or actions taken to deal with an issue, which has had a significant impact on the church, consideration may be given to a visit by one or more of the following: DSO, District Chair and Superintendent. It can be difficult to define the right moment for this as the church may continue to manage the situation and the subject's involvement in the church for many years to come but it is good pastoral practice to review the differing needs within the church and its wider community. The aim of the visit is to acknowledge people's pain and listen to how people are feeling; identify support; enable recovery and support future ministry.

4.5. ADDITIONAL ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH WHERE THE SAFEGUARDING CONCERN RELATES TO A MINISTER, MEMBER, EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER OF THE CHURCH

In all cases, whether an allegation is made about a Minister, member or volunteer, the Church will need to consider what additional action, aside from a referral to the statutory agencies, may be necessary to safeguard other people from potential harm.

4.5.1. Disciplinary Action

4.5.1.1. Suspension (without prejudice)

This would be the expected action during any enquiries irrespective of role. However, there are some differences in procedure if the person is a minister, employee or a volunteer.

Where consideration of suspension of a minister is considered the District should make direct contact with the Assistant Secretary of the Conference to discuss the proposed course of action and how this will be carried out. This is essential to ensure compliance with the relevant standing orders of the Church.

For locally employed staff, the local employment adviser (Lay Employment Secretary) for the district should be consulted to ensure action taken complies with relevant employment law.

Volunteers may be asked to step down from their role but can retain their church membership.

4.5.1.2. Resignations

Wherever possible, the subject should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. However, the fact that a person tenders his or her resignation or ceases to provide the services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of a child/adult, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.

The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if that cannot be done and the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is completed, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

4.5.1.3. Compromise agreements

So called 'compromise agreements' by which a person agrees to resign, the relevant Church body agrees not to pursue disciplinary action and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference – must not be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where appropriate, nor can it override an employer's statutory duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

4.5.2. Notifying the media office

It is the role of the DSO to discuss communicating about the matter with the media office and Designated Officer/Adult Safeguarding (Local Authority)/Police. The Connexional Media and Communications Team are able to help with preparing a range of communications including:

- Statements to be prepared in advance and issued if there is an approach by media
- Statements to the congregation by ministers
- Responses for individuals within the Church who may be impacted by specific situations

The District Safeguarding Officer will alert the Connexional Safeguarding Team to any matter that may be of media interest or need sensitive communications. This is to ensure that any information provided is coordinated and for ongoing support. Public

statements delivered to the congregation will be made by the minister deemed most appropriate to deliver them following consultation with those managing the case at District level.

There is a member of the Connexional Media and Communications Team available at all times to allow support to be provided both within and outside working hours (via email mediaoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk and out of hours telephone 0207 467 5170). The Media and Communications Team should be made aware of matters as soon as possible to allow suitable statements to be prepared.

4.5.3. Notification to Methodist Insurance

The District Safeguarding Officer will do this as soon as possible. This is a summary of the guidance on the Charity Commission website, for more details see www.charitycommission.gov.uk/investigations/rsinotes.asp#3 also see [How to report a serious incident](#) and [Guidance for Charity Trustees](#)

4.5.4. Notification to the Charity Commission

Serious Incidents Report to the Charity Commission (England and Wales) or Notifiable Events to the OSCR (Scotland)

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales and Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) for charities in Scotland. Both regulators have a responsibility to investigate mismanagement or misconduct in the administration of a charity.

For the purposes of this guidance, reference is made to a serious incident report but in Scotland it is known as a notifiable event.

A serious incident report is a notification made by or on behalf of the trustees to the Charity Commission, to inform the Commission about an incident or suspected incident that could have a significant risk to the assets, reputation or to the beneficiaries. Safeguarding allegations involving allegations of abuse against children or vulnerable adults that are alleged to have occurred in a local church, circuit or district context must be reported to the Charity Commission. If there is doubt about whether an incident should be reported to the Charity Commission please contact the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, Louise Wilkins at wilkinsl@methodistchurch.org.uk

A serious incident report to the Charity Commission should be made to:
rsi@charitycommission.gov.uk

Further guidance can be obtained from the Charity Commission.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity/>

A notifiable event to OSCR should be sent to:
notifiable@oscr.org.uk

Further guidance can be obtained from OSCR at:
http://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2155/2016-03-15_guidance-for-notifiable-events_web-version.pdf

i. When reporting a serious incident, the following information should be provided:

- whether the incident has happened or whether there have been serious allegations or suspicions that it has happened;
- when the incident happened who was involved, including their position in the church;
- if this person is still involved with the charity and if so, what actions have been taken to minimise safeguarding risks;
- what action, if any, has been taken since the incident;
- if there has been any publicity about the incident;
- if investigations or inquiries are being undertaken, by whom and what the outcome is of any concluded inquiries;
- if the police, another regulator, law enforcement or government agency is involved, the name of the agency and what action it has taken, if any. Where relevant, provide a reference number;
- Confirm that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are being followed, and if not why not;
- It may be helpful to explain the procedures and/or send a copy of any relevant policies;
- Any professional advice the church has obtained.

The Charity Commission and OSCR are likely to respond either by asking to be kept updated on the matter or for further information. The Charity Commission and OSCR want to be assured that the trustees are taking all appropriate and prudent actions to protect the reputation, assets of the church and all children and vulnerable adults that the church has responsibility for.

ii. Confidential and sensitive information

The Charity Commission is a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. There is a possibility that they may have to disclose a report or documents to a third party.

There is likely to be a need in most cases involving safeguarding allegations to preserve confidentiality. To try to preserve confidentiality, churches may wish to consider redacting the names of individuals in any documents that are sent to the Commission and/or not disclose names at all in a report or anonymise names by using initials only or use more generic labels, if appropriate, such as “a child” to protect identity.

All serious incident reports should usually contain the following wording:

Note – this Serious Incident Report, and the information contained in it, is strictly confidential and is disclosed to the Commission in confidence. Please contact us to consult with us before disclosing any information relating to this SIR to any third party, whether under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or otherwise

The District Safeguarding Officer will do this as soon as possible. See links below for more information:

[How to report a serious incident](#)

4.5.5. Consideration of Action Prior to any Court Case

There may need to be an interim contract (Covenant of Care see Section 2.6.2) when people are facing statutory investigation. (This might also apply when a formal complaint has been made about them to the Church).

Statutory agencies will expect that such an agreement has been assessed to consider if it is possible for the alleged abuser to still attend Church. The DSO will ensure arrangements are put in place.

4.5.6. References / Court Proceedings / Representative Meetings

On occasions members, employees and ministers in the Church may receive requests for references either in relation to employment, to give evidence in court proceedings or to attend meetings as a representative of the Church with statutory agencies (e.g. police, Children's Services or Adult Social Care) relating to a safeguarding matter.

When being called to court as a witness, there is a legal requirement to attend in order provide confirmation of a factual account. This is different from being asked to provide a statement relating to the good character of the party in court for the defence. It is important to clarify on which basis involvement is being sought.

When attending meetings as a representative of the Church or with a fellow member of the Church, it is important to understand what is expected and whether attendance is requested in a support role or to contribute to planning or assessment of the situation. When representing the Church, it is important to provide material only about what the attendee knows or reasonably believes first hand, while ensuring, as far as possible, that what is said cannot be interpreted as support for one side or another in a legal dispute.

Character references should not be provided except in exceptional circumstances which should be discussed with District Safeguarding Officer.

4.5.7. Notifying other Churches and Community Organisations

Ecumenical colleagues or those from other community organisations may need to be informed of concerns where the subject has involvement with another organisation. The nature of the person's involvement at the current time should be established before disclosing information.

See section on Information Sharing. Further advice can be obtained from the District Safeguarding Officer or via the Local Authority Designated Officer/Children's Services/Adult Social Care where they are involved in the case.

4.5.8. Risk Assessments

The Methodist Church initiates various forms of risk assessment in a response to safeguarding matters. These may be commissioned by Connexion, completed by the District Safeguarding Officer or conducted at church or circuit level dependent on the circumstances. Proportionality is a fundamental principle in considering the nature or risk assessment that is appropriate in each case. Further details of relevant policies, procedures and guidance is included in the Methodist Church Risk Assessment Policies, Procedures and Guidance [See Link](#).

An interim Covenant of Care may be put in place while a police, Children Services or Adult Care initial assessment or investigation are ongoing. This should also be considered when the Church becomes aware of external employment disciplinary procedures relating to a safeguarding matter that may impact on roles and activities undertaken by church members, staff, ministers or volunteers. However, detailed risk assessments which include in-depth inquiries and interviews with related parties should not be initiated until the statutory or external employment processes are concluded. This is to ensure that actions undertaken in the course of the risk assessment do not contaminate evidence or impact on such proceedings or assessments.

4.5.9. Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS helps employers to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Referrals are made to the DBS when an employer or organisation has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups. An employer or volunteer manager is breaking the law if they knowingly employ someone in 'regulated activity' with a group from which they are barred from working. For a fuller explanation of the duty to refer click on the following links:

[DBS Referrals: Referral Chart](#)

[Guidance about regulated activity with children](#)

[Guidance about regulated activity with adults](#)

[Making referrals to the DBS - Keeping children safe in education 2015](#)

4.6. DOMESTIC ABUSE

This section should be read in conjunction with [Practice Guidelines to Support the Report – Domestic Abuse and The Methodist Church – Taking Action 2010](#) (currently being updated).

4.6.1. Policy

It is the policy of the Methodist Church to encourage all those

- to raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community;
- to ensure that teaching and worship reflect awareness of gender justice, use appropriate language and say clearly that domestic abuse is wrong and must be

condemned and affirm the Methodist Church stance that all human relationships are to be cherished;

- to ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority and to be aware of the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good safeguarding practice; (Amended 2016 to cover children and adults)
- to consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help;
- to encourage discussion of how the Church might ensure that those who feel marginalised are made welcome;
- to inform discussion on implementing the good practice guidelines and the underpinning of theology and principles.

(Ref Section 15, Page 24 Practice Guidelines to Support the Report – Domestic Abuse and The Methodist Church – Taking Action 2010)

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/safe-update-6-1110-domestic-abuse-guidelines.pdf>

4.6.2. Responding Well

(See Quick Guide Flowcharts below)

All forms of domestic abuse are intrinsically damaging and the importance of the safety and protection of those involved must be paramount. Those responding to reports of domestic abuse should ensure that they identify whether any of the following circumstances apply:

- children are living in the household;
- children are regular visits to the household;
- the victim is an adult who lacks capacity;
- the victim is dependent upon the partner for care.

Procedures relating to Children and Adults in the previous section should be followed in all cases.

The following actions should be taken where domestic abuse is suspected:

- if you suspect someone is experiencing domestic abuse but they have not said anything to you, do not be afraid to ask but ask some gentle, non-direct questions, such as:
“How are things at home?”
- reassure the person that it is not their fault;
- consider their safety and yours as well as colleagues and if possible prepare a plan of action to protect anyone disclosing abuse (and yourselves);
- do not investigate;
- do not confront the alleged perpetrator;
- keep confidentiality, all conversations should be treated as confidential within the bounds of safeguarding. Seek consent to share information if you wish to discuss it with someone else unless a child or vulnerable adult is at risk;
- remember to focus on the safety of the victim (and children if they are involved);
- provide information on resources/services available to them;
- do not advise on a course of action but encourage them to explore options;
- record the information and retain securely.

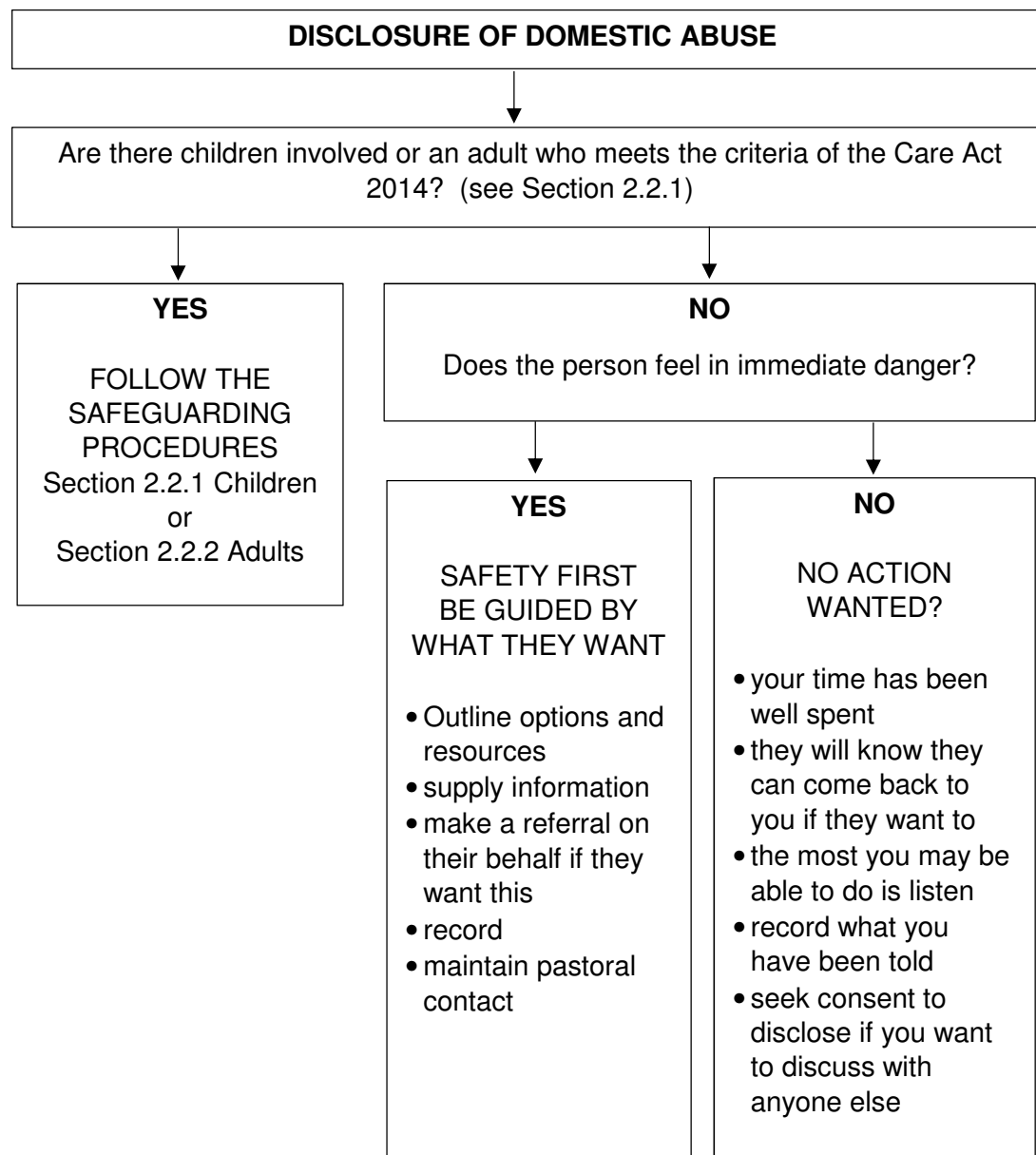
4.6.3. Related Reading

Methodist Church Creating Safer Space Foundation Module and
Foundation Module Refresher Handbook 2016 Edition
See page 29 for section on Domestic Abuse
http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/2394269/2016_css_fm_and_fmr_handbook.pdf

A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan 2014
HM Government – March 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan-2014>

Domestic Violence and Abuse: Multi-Agency Working
Nice Guidance - 26 Feb 2014
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50>

4.6.4. Quick Guide Flow Chart



4.7. RESPONDING WELL TO THOSE WHO MIGHT POSE A RISK

This should be read alongside the section RESPONDING WELL TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN. *The following information is the current situation as of 2016 but it is under review and an updated policy is being written with a report due to the 2017 conference.*

4.7.1. Policy

The Church aims to provide pastoral care for all its members, including those who are suspected of causing harm or have caused harm to others. However, in this context such care must be provided in a way that prioritises the safety of other Church members, while enabling the person who poses a risk to worship and be a part of the Church community.

For those with a criminal conviction or caution for a sexual offence against children or vulnerable adults standing order SO 010 provides specific prohibitions from certain offices, roles or responsibilities within the Church.

The following process was created to support SO 010 but can be used to manage all those who present a risk which does not involve sexual offences and may be referred to as Informal Agreements as distinct from a full Covenant of Care agreement.

4.7.2. Covenants of Care – What Are They?

The Church and sex offender report (2000) recommended the setting up of 'support and monitoring groups' to manage sex offenders within the Church and District (SO 69f and Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance section of CPD)

These arrangements are known as Covenants of Care and set out in writing the boundaries and terms of involvement in the Church of the person about whom there are concerns.

4.7.2.1. Arranging a Covenant of Care

- **When a Church becomes aware of a person who is considered to be a risk, a representative of the Church should be in contact with the appropriate professions.** This may include a probation officer and the police and may also require attendance at a 'multi agency public protection arrangements' (MAPPA) meeting. Guidance for the MAPPA states that religious communities must put in place effective arrangements, which allows them to ensure they are able to protect their community whilst allowing a sex offender to maintain their right to worship in a safe way when possible.
- **A small group of about five people should be set up** (the Covenant of Care monitoring group). This should include the Minister and any people who have agreed to offer pastoral support for the offender and accompany them in worship and other Church activities. It is helpful if at least one member is from outside the local Church, as this helps to promote objectivity. It should also include someone with expertise and experience in this field and someone to represent the wider Church community.

- **A risk assessment must then be carried out.** This should include reviewing the nature of the concerns and risk posed and looking at the Church building and range of activities carried out. Police or Probation should be consulted for advice where they are actively managing the subject as part of the risk assessment. If the Church was originally aware of the subject an independent risk assessment may have already been undertaken (e.g. because of a blemished DBS check or previous notification to the Connexional Safeguarding Team and decisions of a Safeguarding Panel). Where the concern is new and shared by the statutory agencies with the Church, basic safety checks should be undertaken and inform the covenant agreement (e.g. what access to rooms in Church buildings when other activities are taking place etc.) whilst a more comprehensive risk assessment is planned and discussions had with the Connexional Safeguarding team and DSO about who will undertake this.
- **A Covenant of Care group can be set up prior to a prison release,** following a prison release, where the offender is no longer supervised by probation and where there have been no convictions but serious concerns exist. Advice should be sought from the DSO and District Safeguarding Group.
- **Once a group is set up, a meeting should be held** with the subject and a written contract drawn up.

4.7.2.2. The Covenant of Care Agreement

The guidance in Standing Order 69f, also Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance offers a framework for the agreement, but as stated above, a new policy is currently being written. Key points to include are:

- a) The boundaries and terms of involvement in the Church should be written into a contract which clarifies the terms on which the subject is involved in the life of the Church.
- b) The document needs to be signed and dated by the subject of concern and by the Church representatives.
- c) The contract should involve the subject's family and partner who may also be attending Church, where possible.
- d) It should include conditions in addition to pastoral support arrangements. Care should be taken to ensure that the requirements relate to any perceived risk from the subject's behavioural patterns. For example:
 - I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children;
 - I will sit where directed in the Church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children;
 - I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the small group nor any area where children's activities are in progress;
 - I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home;

- I accept that 'x' and 'y' will sit with me during Church activities accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a registered sex offender (if applicable);
- I accept that 'z' will provide me with pastoral care. (and possibly a second pastoral visitor, if there is a potential risk)

4.7.2.3. Additional issues which might need to be considered in the contract

- Residential events.
- Events in another Church or Church organisation, circuit or national events. A joint agreement is often desirable in these circumstances.
- Finding another Church or District when there are victims/survivors in the Church.
- Opportunities for development of the person's Church life once they have demonstrated cooperation and trust with the agreement.

4.7.2.4. The Covenant of Care monitoring group

- The group should meet regularly and keep a record of its meetings.
- A report should be sent to the DSO and/or Connexional Safeguarding team (as per agreement) annually or when circumstances change.
- Training and support should be provided for the group.
- The group should meet the subject to review the arrangements and address any concerns. If boundaries are not being kept, or if the contact is not being kept in other ways, it is important to address the problem. (In situations where boundaries are not being kept, it may be necessary to prohibit the subject from coming onto church premises).
- Where police or probation are actively managing individuals and it is clear that there are significant issues around compliance consideration should be made to making the relevant officer aware of the situation.
- Over time, the regularity of the meetings may be reduced if all parts of the agreement are being fulfilled. The subject should never be left completely without support and monitoring. The minimum provision would be an annual, recorded discussion between the Minister, local safeguarding officer and DSO or appointed DSG member and the subject.
- When Officers and Ministers change in the Church it will be important to ensure continuity of awareness and provision of pastoral support for the subject.

SECTION 5 PROCEDURES FOR INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Methodist Church have been put in place to safeguard the welfare of children and adults in our Churches by ensuring that information is shared appropriately, in accordance with the law and related good practice guidance. People often feel concerned about what is required when making the decision to share information or requesting information from other organisations or statutory agencies. The procedures below are designed to give a simple set of procedures to follow which should be read in conjunction

This section takes into account the Data Protection Act 1988 and HM Government Information Sharing Guidance and should be read alongside the following documents:

Methodist Church: Information sharing guidance

'With Integrity and Skill Confidentiality in the Methodist Church'
[See link](#)

HMG: Information sharing advice for practitioner's March 2015
[See link](#)

Care and Support guidance issued under the Care Act 2014
[See link](#)

Adult Safeguarding: Sharing information – SCIE Jan 2015
[See link](#)

5.1. STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SHARING INFORMATION

Taking into consideration the above documents and the guidance provided in the later section, the following procedure should be adopted when receiving a request for information or making such a request where the information required is personal data:

5.1.1. Validation of the person requesting information

Prior to supplying any information to any third party, it is necessary to ensure that the party requesting is who they say they are and that they are in a role or position which indicates that they are a valid person to make such a request and receive the information you are intending to supply.

In some circumstances you may have prior personal or organisational knowledge of the person concerned and therefore will not need additional validation. However, it can be tempting to be helpful and respond directly, particularly to calls which suggest they may come from a statutory agency, another member of the Church or are deemed by the caller as needing urgent action.

The following actions may be taken to provide validation of the person requesting the information:

- Requesting confirmation of the request via an organisational email
- Calling the person back via a main switchboard number to ensure that the number is linked to that organisation

- Speaking to a manager or other key individual who may be able to verify that person's role or involvement.
- Doing an internet search to identify information about an organisation or individual
- Checking with someone else you know who might be able to verify the person's role and identity.

If making a request for information, offer to provide evidence of your validity to the holder of the information by any of the methods above and clearly identify why you are a valid person to make such a request.

5.1.2. Validation of the nature of the request

Think carefully about whether there is a legitimate reason to disclose the particular information that you are thinking of sending and only disclose that information which is relevant and proportionate in the circumstances.

This could include:

- current risk to a child
- current risk to a vulnerable adult
- request to provide information in relation to a statutory investigation (police, Children Services or Adult Care etc.)
- court order requiring provision of information
- Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 1998

If there is any doubt about whether there is a legitimate reason for providing information, advice can be provided by the District Safeguarding Officer.

If you are making a request, ensure that you identify clearly why you believe there is legitimate reason for the other party to disclose the information, identifying any risk posed by not doing so and how this information will be used. It is often helpful if the third party is not aware of safeguarding processes in the Methodist Church to explain the procedures that are in place.

5.1.3. Obtain consent where possible and appropriate

People often feel concerned about asking or telling someone that information about them is going to be disclosed to another party, particularly when the content may not give a positive impression of the other person. Be prepared to identify at the outset of any situation or arrangement that consideration will be made to sharing information if there is believed to be a safeguarding risk. This often means that there is a greater acceptance when this is necessary and the person sharing the information is perceived as acting in a more open and honest way.

Explain...

- Why the information is being shared
- What will be shared
- How it will be shared
- With whom it will be shared

It may not be appropriate to gain consent or make the person aware that information is being shared prior to doing so.

- prejudice the prevent or detection of crime
- risk the health or safety of a vulnerable adult or child

Where consent for information sharing has been refused by an adult believed to be at risk of harm, consider the following questions:

1. Does the person have capacity to provide the consent?
2. Could they be under duress or in fear of harm if they consent?
3. Are children at risk through the adult's refusal of consent?

If lacking capacity to provide consent, under duress or in fear or where there are children at risk, it may be necessary to share information without consent.

5.1.4. Consider the most secure way to provide the information

While no method of sending personal information is completely fallible, care should be taken to ensure that due regard is given to security or personal data in all circumstances.

If using standard mail, the following options may be used:

- recorded delivery, registered delivery or courier dependant on circumstances
- Do not write private and confidential on the outside of the envelope as this may draw attention to the contents in transit.
- Avoid window envelopes that may allow the contents or name to be viewed from the outside
- Ensure the envelope is addressed to an individual
- Confirm that the address is current and appropriate to receive the material.
- If it is a residential address and a multi-occupancy premise confirm that the mail is delivered to a secure place such as an individual mail box, rather than being left in an open hallway where it can be accessed.

If using electronic mail, the following options may be used:

- Check carefully that you have the correct and current email address
- an encryption system
- a passworded attachment with the password sent in a separate email
- an email with anonymised content with a key sent separately

In all cases, request that the recipient confirms safe receipt and follow up if this is not received.

5.1.5. Make a record

When sharing personal information, you should make a record of the following information:

- What was shared

- With whom
- When
- Why it was felt to be legitimate to share or why not

SECTION 6 PROMOTING SAFER PRACTICE

6.1. POLICY

The aim of safeguarding within the Church is to create safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

Critical to good safeguarding is safer recruitment and safer working practices. The Church has developed procedures for both these areas, informed by legislation and government guidance. As such we aim to:

- carefully select and train all those with responsibility within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles;
- ensure that any Church activities are organised in such a way to avoid the risk of harm to everyone participating;
- promote safe spaces that are inclusive and welcoming.

The following procedures are intended for use by anyone involved in the recruitment of people working with vulnerable groups and for those responsible for organising and running activities with vulnerable groups. They are not exhaustive and members will have to sometimes include additional safeguards for some activities. Advice can always be sought from the relevant DSO or from the Connexional Safeguarding team.

6.2. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS

Safer Recruitment policy, see '[Recruiting Safely](#)'

The Methodist Church in Britain Practice Guidance on carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks as part of Safer Recruitment for England and Wales – August 2015

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1893017/Practice%20guidance%20DBS%20checks%20Aug%202015.pdf>

6.3. CODE OF SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

Every Circuit and Church working with children and adults at risk of harm, should prepare and adopt a code of safer working practice. The model in Section 5.7 can be used as a guide.

6.4. PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUAL WORKERS

6.4.1. Appropriate Conduct

Children

You should:

- treat all children with respect and dignity;
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language is respectful;
- always aim to work with or within sight of another adult;
- ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children;
- ensure that children know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around;
- if any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand;
- administer any First Aid with others around;
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed (see S 4.4.6)
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record (template can be found in S 6)
- always share concerns about a child and the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or Safeguarding Rep.

You should not:

- invade a child's privacy whilst washing and toileting;
- use any form of physical punishment;
- be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun;
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or group;
- permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- show favouritism to any one child or group;
- allow a child to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature;
- give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such circumstances, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity);
- smoke tobacco in the presence of children;
- share sleeping accommodation with children;
- arrange social occasions with children (other than events which also include adult family members/carers) outside organised group occasions;
- allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;
- allow strangers to give children in your group, lifts.

Adults

You should:

- treat all adults with respect and dignity;
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice, and body language is respectful;
- record any incidents of concern and give the information to your group leader, sign and date the record (template can be found in Section 6)
- always share concerns about an adult and the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or Safeguarding Rep.

You should not:

- invade an adult's privacy whilst washing and toileting;
- use any form of physical punishment or restraint (apart from appropriate use of car seat belts);
- be sexually suggestive about or to an adult even in fun;
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject an adult or group;
- permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- show favouritism to any one adult or group;
- allow an adult to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature;
- allow unknown adults access to adults deemed at risk of harm. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;
- allow strangers to give adults in your group, lifts.

6.4.2. Visiting Adults at Home

Most visits to adults in their own home will be straight-forward as they will be well known to the church, however when visiting someone new for the first time, visitors should let someone else know whom and when they are visiting.

- Visiting in twos may be advisable, especially if the adult lacks capacity, as well as taking a mobile phone.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
- Be clear about what support can be offered to the adult if they ask for help with particular problems and refer back to the church if uncertain.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer "over the counter" remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so (also relates to Section 4.12 Health).
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer (also relates to Section 4.11 Financial Integrity).

- Pastoral visitors are encouraged to note the date when they visit people, to report back about their visit to the Pastoral Secretary and say what is concerning or going well. The Pastoral Secretary will report safeguarding concerns to the minister and Safeguarding Rep. as appropriate, agree what action should take place and who should record the incident.

6.4.3. Touch

Church sponsored groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children, young people and adults. Whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made.

(Guidance to be written including reference to:

- *respectful touch*
- *recipients needs*
- *good practice guidance*
- *those with additional needs e.g. disability/special needs*
- *monitoring each other*
- *challenging inappropriate touching*
- *managing challenging behaviour*
- *sanctions (as physical punishment is unacceptable)*

6.4.4. Anti-Bullying

See links to:

[Positive Working Together: A short guide: The Methodist Church](#)

[Positive Working Together: The Methodist Church](#)

6.5. PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH SPONSORED ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM

6.5.1. Recommended Staffing Levels

It is the responsibility of to consider individual circumstances and make appropriate arrangements for sufficient supervision to ensure the safety and effective management of all activities.

The following issues must be considered when determining appropriate numbers of helpers:

- the gender of the group – if mixed, then staff members should also be mixed, where possible;
- children with additional support needs – extra staff may be necessary;
- any behavioural difficulty identified;
- layout of the room;
- young people attending who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping. They should always be overseen by an appointed worker

who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding;

- First Aid cover;
- nature of the activity.
- NSPCC Guidance on staff to student ratios (see guidance section)

There should always be a minimum of two adults present at any activity and the ratios agreed should be based on a risk assessment.

6.5.2. Mixed Age Activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are appropriately supervised. DBS checks are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children.

Separate changing facilities should be provided where necessary for adults and children and the different sexes and children should be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

6.5.3. Safe Environment

When evaluating an appropriate venue, the following should be considered:

- the meeting place should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. It should be kept clean and free of clutter;
- electric sockets should be kept covered (See Section 4.5 Health and Safety)
- toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities;
- appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity;
- if food is regularly prepared for children or others on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Office and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired (See Section 4.4.6)
- children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available;
- groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary;
- adults must be aware of the fire procedures (See Section 4.5.4)
- unaccompanied children or adults deemed vulnerable should be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark and badly lit paths;
- First Aid – (See Section 4.5.3)

6.5.4. Special Needs

If a child or adult has special needs, welcome them to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for their needs (See Section 4.6.5 Accessibility). Ask the parents/carers how best to meet the person's needs. If premises are being redesigned or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

6.5.5. Activity Risk Assessments

While the Church recognises that it is not possible to avoid all risk when working with vulnerable groups it is possible to try and minimise those risks. This can be achieved through careful planning and preparation and by providing a written record of the thought processes and action taken. Activity Risk Assessments should be undertaken before any activity takes place, given approval by the event leader/Minister and retained securely in case they need to be seen at a later date (e.g. as a result of an accident taking place).

Activity Risk Assessments should include:

- the nature of the activity;
- the location;
- transport needed and associated issues e.g. insurance;
- staffing levels/gender;
- experience of staff;
- ages of the group attending, abilities, special needs;
- medical and health needs of the group;
- emergency planning;
- any risks identified;
- action needed to address the risk
- named person for resolving risk issues;

6.5.6. Specialised Activities

Where the group is participating in a specialised activity such as adventure activities, advice should be sought from the relevant licencing authority/organisation. Advice is also available from The Well for Workers:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/downloadable-resources/organising-events>

6.5.7. Church Photography - the Internet and publicity

6.5.7.1. Photographic records

See link to the Methodist Church Information leaflet C14
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/archivecondition.pdf>

6.5.7.2. Photographs of children and young people under 18

Photography and video recording are important ways of recording Methodist activity and providing an historic record – illustrating and validating important moments in people’s lives and the life of our Church. It is, however, a powerful and personal process, and we must therefore respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed.

Use the consent form (see [Forms section](#)) as a matter of course for all groups and events at the same time as you collect contact details, permission slips or registration forms.

At large events make arrangements to provide video or photographic stills of the participants in action or set up photo opportunities at the end. This allows the performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allows any child who is not to be photographed to take part. If there are children or young people at the event for whom you do not have a completed consent form, put the notice about photographs in prominent places or in the event programme and make sure official photographers are aware of the guidelines for photographers.

6.5.7.3. Procedures for photographers at church events

- Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed or who is under a court order (where this is known).
- Photography or recording should focus on the activity, not on a particular young person.
- Images should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
- If a young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
- All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- All people taking photographs or recording footage for official use at the event should register with the event organiser.
- All concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser.

6.5.8. Safeguarding and the Internet

Methodist churches and organisations creating their own websites are encouraged to observe these safeguarding guidelines and to regularly review the pages of their sites so that they remain up to date, effective and safe. The internet is constantly evolving and changing, regular review of the Methodist Church guidelines is strongly advised to ensure your compliance with ever changing guidelines and expected conduct.

See **Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines:**

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

Anyone designing a website for a Methodist church, circuit or district must ensure that it promotes opportunities for all ages – including children and young people - to get involved in the life of the church. While it is important to reflect the full mix of participation in church worship and other activities, care should be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Website builders are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Photographs are 'personal data' as far as data protection legislation is concerned and must be used responsibly.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs of anyone under 18 on a website.

- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email or postal addresses and telephone numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. When a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, names or other personal details should not be used in any caption.
- Care must be taken when advertising special events for children and young people.
- Ensure that the image files are appropriately named – do not use names in image filenames or alt tags.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Consider advertising events simply by giving contact details of the adults responsible.
- When posting activity ideas for children or young people ensure they comply with good safeguarding practice.

6.5.8.1. Using the Internet with children

There may be occasions when church officers, youth or children's workers wish to demonstrate the internet to children or young people, or encourage them to access information online as part of an activity. When this happens, workers are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that parents or carers are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their written permission in advance.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Where children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the internet, the following search engines have been recommended by the Department for Education and Skills
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
 - KidsClick web search for kids by librarians
www.kidsclick.org
 - Superkid
www.superkids.com
 - Yahoooligans! Web guide for kids
www.squirrelnet.com/search/yk/yahoooligans.asp

- Your local authority may also operate a local search engine facility appropriate for children and young people.
- Where children and young people are being encouraged to undertake subsequent searches on the Internet at home, they must only do so with the knowledge/supervision of their parent or carer.
- Warn children and young people about the dangers of giving out personal details on the Internet.
- Children and young people should be regularly informed and reminded of safe internet use and accessing social media. They must be encouraged to access websites such as NSPCC or Child line or talk to an adult if they have any concerns or fears.
- Ensure children and young people obtain parental consent if they wish to develop internet friends into face-to-face friendships. Even then, they should always be accompanied on any first meeting.

See *Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines for Children and Youth Workers*:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/downloadable-resources/social-media-guidelines>

As technology progresses, so must our vigilance in protecting against its abuse. Mobile phones and the Internet provide new and imaginative ways of gaining information and communicating, but while offering a wealth of possibilities, the darker side offers those with intent on harming children new ways in which to abuse them.

Most importantly, communication and common sense are the two key elements to these guidelines and the primary aim is to protect the individual and work to ensure they are aware of their rights and empowered to exercise them, while still offering the freedom to families and friends to record important events in their lives and the lives of those close to them.

6.5.9. Hire or Use of Church Premises

See Lettings Policy/Flowchart and guidance

<http://www.tmc.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use>

Many Churches own buildings which they hire out to community groups and others. Some of these undertake work with children. Note that the observance of 'reasonable care' by both parties is a standard insurance condition.

The hiring body (i.e. the organisation hiring the premises) is required to ensure that children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring and must carry full liability insurance for this.

The hiring body should abide by their own child protection or safeguarding policy if they have one, otherwise it must use the Church's.

For both one-off and regular hiring, it is recommended that a written hiring agreement be used. A full model lettings/licence agreement, including the declaration, is available from Methodist Local Office.

If the hiring body is required to register with Ofsted then the Church should ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.

Where uniformed organisations meet that are not authorised by the Church e.g. Guiding and Scouting organisations (even when they are sponsored), these organisations should be regarded in the same way as other users and hirers. They have a responsibility to abide by their own safeguarding policy.

6.5.10. Record Keeping (Church Activities / Events)

For the recording of safeguarding concerns, see Sections 2.1.5, 2.2.5, 2.3.4 and Section 3.

For other matters, please read, 'Guidance on Best Practice in Retaining Records in the Methodist Church', published 2010, but also see important note below.

http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/document_retention.pdf

As a guide records should be kept of the following:

- safeguarding incidents;
- Church workers employed or working as volunteers with vulnerable groups. This should include start and finish dates, DBS checks, references, application forms, all posts held, training completed;
- Activity risk assessments of Church events;
- hiring arrangements.

IMPORTANT NOTE:-Retention Instructions and Data Protection

As part of the Independent Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry led by Professor Alexis Jay, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to the care of children, child protection and allegations of child abuse or harm made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 1988 for the duration of the inquiry. See further details within Information Sharing Guidance.

6.5.10.1. Registration with Ofsted (In England and the Equivalent in Wales and Scotland)

Some Churches provide groups for children under the age of 6 who attend regularly for more than two hours at a time or more than 14 days in any period of 12 months. Those will need registration with Ofsted unless an exemption applies. Many children's groups provided by Churches will be exempt but will still be required to inform Ofsted of the activity. For further details contact Ofsted through their website or information line on 0300123 1231 or the Children's Information Service of the relevant local authority.

6.6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that proper Health and Safety processes are in place. Health and Safety should be managed as part of all activities and reference should be made to the following policies and guidance.

[Health and Safety Policy of the Methodist Church. Last modified 19/03/2012](#)

[Health and Safety regulation - a short guide \(HSE\)](#)

6.6.1. Equipment

The use of electricity or electrical equipment in Church buildings must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Church members can reduce or remove risks by, for example:

- reporting all faulty equipment
- switching off all equipment when not in use and disconnecting the equipment when leaving the room
- not undertaking electrical repairs unless qualified
- securing trailing leads and cables
- removing trip hazards
- ensuring plug sockets are covered

6.6.2. Accident Book

Any injury suffered by an employee (or volunteer) in the course of his or her employment, however slight, must be recorded together with such particulars as are a requirement by statutory regulations in the Accident Book maintained by the employer.

An accident book should be maintained at all places where activities take place with vulnerable groups and easily accessible.

6.6.3. First Aid

A First Aid kit should be available on the premises where an activity is taking place. The contents of the First Aid kit should be stored in a watertight container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and the Church or Circuit should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of First Aiders should be compiled and kept available. A compliant first aid kit should be carried on all activities off Church premises and in all vehicles used by the Church (Church owned and private).

6.6.4. Fire Procedures

This is not an exhaustive list but some things to consider are: -

- Children and adults should be aware of the fire procedures.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- A fire drill should be carried out regularly by all groups which use the premises regularly.
- Exits and fire exits should be clearly marked.
- Lights should be flashed for the deaf in event of a fire.
- Candles should be placed in safe places.
- Emergency lighting should be in place in case lights go off.

For further advice please see link [Fire Safety Law and Guidance documents for business - UK Gov. Web Archive](#)

6.6.5. Accessibility

The Equality Act 2010 provides disabled people with protection from discrimination and gives legal rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, services and facilities (Disability Rights Guide, updated 18/09/15 – HM Govt.)

The Act makes it a legal requirement to ensure every person has safe and easy access to services and facilities and as such, has a direct impact on activities provided by the Church. Guidance on the Act can be found via the following link:

[Equality ACT 2010 \(Guidance \(Gov.UK\)\)](#)

What does accessibility mean in practice?

Some examples:

- accessible toilets
- installing ramps
- providing information in various mediums e.g. braille, clearer signage
- providing sign language interpreters
- installing T-loops
- ensuring wheelchair access is possible
- providing disability awareness training

6.6.6. Registration and Consent Forms

Where the Church is running a dedicated service for children or vulnerable adults best practice requires that all activities should have:

- a. a registration form
- b. a register

Registration Form

A registration form should be completed for every child/ adult attending the event and include:

- Name and address.
- Date of Birth.
- Emergency contact details.
- Medical information.
- Any special needs including activities person cannot take part in.
- Consent for emergency medical treatment.
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Registration forms should be available at every session of the relevant group for reference and use in case of emergency.

All personal details must be stored securely.

Register

This is not always possible or proportionate but where possible, a register should be taken of those attending an activity and as a guide should include:

- Date of the activity.
- Type of activity.
- List of adults present.
- List of children/young people present.

6.7. TRANSPORT

Transport arrangements to and from church activities are the responsibility of parents (when transporting children) / individuals (when transporting adults) if they make arrangements among themselves but are the responsibility of the church if the church or church activity organises them. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the church. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parent to church worker and at which point it is returned.

6.7.1. Drivers

All those who drive children/adult on church-organised activities/rotas should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years. Drivers who are not children's/adult's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding representative. Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children/adults for the church. Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness. Drivers of church owned vehicles should provide a copy of their Driving Licence on an annual basis.

6.7.2. Private Car

All cars that carry children/adults on behalf of the church should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church sponsored activities.

All cars that carry children/adults should be in a roadworthy condition.

All children/passengers, including the driver, must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts additional passengers should not be carried. If drivers are using their own car, the Church should see the Insurance Certificate and MOT Certificate if appropriate.

When transporting children:

Children should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

When transporting adults:

Care should be taken in assisting adults to board or leave vehicles and putting on seat belts, taking account of the guidance on touch. Drivers need to be aware of moving and handling issues when assisting adults and transferring their mobility aids. If lifts are also provided to GP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities this is regulated activity and attracts a DBS check with barring information.

6.7.3. Minibus/Coach

Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together. If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored. Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.

6.8. INSURANCE

The groups concerned with this document will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of churches, church groups, etc. will be insured with Methodist Insurance who have made the following statement in respect of those policies they have issued for:

- a) Churches, in use for worship
- b) Youth groups.

Public Liability (Third Party) insurance, where in force, will operate to protect the interests of the insured where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party or accidental loss of or damage to third party property, subject to the policy terms, conditions and exceptions. The policy will provide an

indemnity to the insured if they are held legally liable for an incident leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse. It is not Methodist Insurance's intention to provide an indemnity to the perpetrator of an incident of abuse. This statement clearly only applies to policies issued by Methodist Insurance.

Where churches are insured with another company the position of that company should be clarified including confirmation of the scope of cover. Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines. It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer immediately. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy. Public Liability insurance indemnity limits should be kept under regular review. Guidance is available from Methodist Insurance.

6.9. REPORTING SERIOUS CASES TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

This is a summary of the guidance on the Charity Commission website, for more details see www.charitycommission.gov.uk/investigations/rsinotes.asp#3 also see [How to report a serious incident](#) and [Guidance for Charity Trustees](#)

[See Section 2.3.5 for Methodist guidance](#)

6.10. TRIPS

- Day trips
- Residential
- Youth groups

See Methodist Church website, The Well for Workers for guidance:
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/downloadable-resources/organising-events>

6.11. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

(Please see 'Ministerial Code of Conduct Committee' which is due to report to Methodist Conference in 2017)

Financial dealings can have an impact on the Church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers should ensure that Church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by the Church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.

- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they could be accepted.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for Church donations from those who may be vulnerable e.g. the recently bereaved.

6.11.1. Children's Ministry (To Be Developed)

6.11.2. Handling money

6.11.3. Pocket money

6.11.4. Youth Group funds

6.11.5. Fundraising

6.11.6. Adult Ministry (To Be Developed)

6.11.7. Handling money (See also Visiting Adults at home section 4.4.1.)

6.11.8. Power of Attorney

There are particular issues in relation to Lasting Powers of Attorney and Wills. A lasting Power of Attorney can be made by any adult with capacity and can deal with issues of finance and/or welfare. When the person making the Lasting Power of Attorney loses their capacity (ability to make decisions), (see section 3.6.) the person named as Attorney can continue to make decisions on their behalf. The safeguards in this instrument are that it has to be registered with the Court of Protection. It would be appropriate if an individual wishes to name a church worker as Attorney for the individual to receive independent legal advice on the subject before entering into this. This safeguards the Church worker from possible issues of undue influence. However, the Church worker should consider this carefully and may wish to seek their own legal advice which can be accessed through the District Safeguarding Group. This is not a task to be taken lightly.

6.11.8.1. Wills

In relation to Wills, the guidance relating to Lasting Powers of Attorney should be followed where appointment as an Executor is being considered or where the individual is considering a bequest to a Church worker or to a Church. This should always be raised in supervision with the District Safeguarding Group for advice.

6.12. HEALTH

When organising any activity involving vulnerable groups, health issues should be identified before the activity takes place. These may include noting any **mobility** difficulties that need addressing and ensuring the meeting place is accessible (See S 4.5.5). They may also include matters relating to **medication**. In such circumstances, the event leader should identify:

- who is required to administer any medication;

- parents/carers are consulted to ensure medication requirements are fully understood;
- all medication is stored securely;
- consent forms are signed;
- a record is made of any medication given, signed and dated.

6.13. DRUGS POLICY (to be developed)

- medicines and illegal substances
- acceptable behaviour
- possession during Church activities
- medical emergencies
- incident reports
- consequences

6.14. SOCIAL MEDIA / IT

Please see 'Social Media Guidelines'

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

6.15. ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES (to be developed)

- 6.15.1. Policy statement**
- 6.15.2. Missing children /adults**
- 6.15.3. Accident/illness**
- 6.15.4. Major incidents**
- 6.15.5. Fire safety**

6.16. ADVOCACY / ACCESS TO AN INDEPENDENT PERSON

All children and adults who may be vulnerable, should be allowed and encouraged to share any concerns they have with parents, carers or Church staff/volunteers. The Methodist Church aims to create a culture of transparency and accountability, where secrecy will not be tolerated. As such, everyone working with vulnerable groups on behalf of the Church, should know the name of a person to whom they could refer a child or adult for concerns to be discussed.

For adults who lack capacity, advice can be obtained from IMCAs:

<http://www.pohwer.net/independent-mental-capacity-advocacy-imca>

6.17. HOME VISITING

See Section 4.4.1. Visiting Adults at Home

6.18. WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

See link to the [Methodist Whistleblowing Policy](#)

6.19. KEY HOLDERS

(See Section 6 Key holder Declaration Form)

The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to Church premises unless access to the premises is required as part of their role for regular hire. Before any keys are issued, a declaration must be signed acknowledging conditions of issue. See Form **

6.20. TRAINING

All staff working with children and adults are required to attend Creating Safer Space training as follows:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/sf-css-fm-2-attendance-250811.pdf>

Records of attendance should be maintained as follows:

Foundation Module: at both Circuit and District level

Leadership Module: at District Level.

The 2016 Methodist Conference has decided that from September 2017 the refresher interval for undertaking training again will be four rather than the current five years. This is to reflect the pace of change in safeguarding understanding and legislation that the church needs to be conscious of and able to respond to.

SECTION 7 PRACTICE GUIDANCE

7.1. DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY AND RECOGNISING ABUSE

This section provides guidance on some of the key definitions and terminology used for safeguarding children and adults and which are used throughout the procedures. It is not an exhaustive list and if you are unsure what something means you should always check with a safeguarding professional.

7.1.1. Children

7.1.1.1. Safeguarding Definitions

Children	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18 th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection. <i>Taken from Working Together 2015</i>
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	Defined for the purposes of this guidance as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting children from maltreatment; • preventing impairment of children's health or development; • ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and • taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. <i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i>
Child protection	Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. <i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2015</i>
Harm and significant harm	'Harm' means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. 'Significant harm' is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children and is based on comparing the child's health and development to that which could be reasonably expected of a child of a similar age. <i>Taken from Children Act 1989 / Children Act 2004 and Adoption and Children Act 2002</i>

7.1.1.2. Abuse Definitions

Abuse	A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. <i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i>
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Physical abuse	<p>A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i></p>
Emotional abuse	<p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i></p>
Sexual abuse	<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2015</i></p>

Neglect	<p>The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); • protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; • ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2015</i></p>
Domestic abuse	<p>Includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.</p> <p><i>Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i></p>

The categories identified in the table above are those recognised in statutory guidance. However, the Methodist Church recognises other emerging forms of abuse as shown in the following table.

Spiritual abuse	<p>Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'.</p> <p><i>OAKLEY AND KINMOND 2014 Journal of Adult Protection 16.2</i></p>
Abuse using social media	<p>Online abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones, children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.</p> <p><i>NSPCC Website. Online abuse definition accessed June 2016</i></p>
Child Sexual exploitation	<p>Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. <i>(NSPCC)</i></p> <p><i>Please note the Government is currently reviewing the statutory definition.</i></p>
Child trafficking	<p>The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in human beings'.</p> <p><i>Council of Europe, ratified by the UK Government in 2008 (See also Human Trafficking)</i></p>

7.1.1.3. Possible Signs and Symptoms of Abuse - Children

Identifying abuse is not an easy thing to do and the indicators given here are examples only. Some of the indicators can occur in more than one type of abuse and it must be borne in mind that there can sometimes be other non-abusive explanations. However, they may alert you to the need to be aware of the possibility of abuse, to be observant and to record any concerns. If in doubt, you should always seek the advice from a safeguarding professional.

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising in unusual places, patterns or shapes • Burns and scalds, especially in significant shapes (e.g. iron or cigarette end) • Adult human bite marks • Serious injury where there is a lack of, or an inconsistent explanation • Untreated injuries • Unusual fracture <p>Children may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusually fearful with adults • Unnaturally compliant with their parents/carers • Wearing clothes that cover up their arms and legs • Reluctant to talk about or refuse to discuss any injuries, or fearful of medical help • Aggressive towards others
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour extremes: children may be overactive or withdrawn • Lacking in confidence or self-worth • Lack of concentration • Physical symptoms without an apparent cause • Difficulty in trusting adults or very anxious to please adults • Reluctance to go home; fear of parents being contacted • Socially isolated • Behaviour that expresses anxiety, e.g. rocking, hair-twisting or thumb sucking • Self-harming behaviour • Substance misuse • Sleep and/or eating disorders • School non-attendance • Running away

Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children whose personal hygiene and state of clothing is poor • Children who are constantly hungry and frequently tired • Developmental delay • Low self-esteem • Socially isolated • Poor skin tone and hair tone • Untreated medical problems • Failure to thrive with no medical reason • Poor concentration • Frequent accidents and/or accidental injuries • Eating disorders • Begging and stealing
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in behaviour – a child may start being aggressive, withdrawn, clingy, have difficulties sleeping or start wetting the bed • Avoiding the abuser – the child may dislike or seem afraid of a particular person and try to avoid spending time alone with them • Sexually inappropriate behaviour – children who have been abused may behave in sexually inappropriate ways or use sexually explicit language • Physical problems – the child may develop health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas or sexually transmitted infections or they may become pregnant • Problems at school – an abused child may have difficulty concentrating and learning and their grades may start to drop • Giving clues – children may also drop hints and clues that the abuse is happening without revealing it outright

7.1.2. Adults

Adult safeguarding is working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. It is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect.
(UK Government Fact Sheet – Care Act 2014)

7.1.2.1. Safeguarding Definitions

The term ‘vulnerable adult’ has been used to date and has had a number of different definitions but is now being used far less following legislative changes. In order to bring into focus those adults for whom the Church should have a particular care, the Methodist Church has adopted the definition used by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS):

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.

7.1.2.2. Abuse Definitions

Physical abuse	<p>The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment.</p> <p>This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication.</p> <p>Statutory Guidance Care and Support Department of Health 2014</p>
Sexual abuse	<p>The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language (including sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.</p>
Psychological / emotional abuse	<p>Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include scolding or treating like a child, making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour, blaming someone for attitudes or actions or events beyond their control, use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create over-dependence, lack of privacy or dignity, deprivation of social contact, threats to withdraw help and support, denial of cultural and spiritual needs, denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.</p>
Financial / Material abuse	<p>The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds via omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation where there are other forms of abuse occurring, financial abuse is also likely.</p> <p><i>Statutory Care and Support Guidance 2014 Department of Health</i></p> <p>This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan will also be relevant behaviours.</p>
Neglect and acts of omission	<p>The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission.</p> <p>This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. The inappropriate use of medication, lack of attention to hygiene, toe and fingernails, or teeth could also be included.</p>

Self-neglect	This has to be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves.
Discriminatory abuse	This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. <i>Equalities Act 2010</i>

Additional areas of abuse identified and recognised by the Methodist Church include:

Institutional abuse	This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation. <i>Care and Support Statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 - Department of Health</i>
Spiritual abuse	Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'. <i>OAKLEY AND KINMOND 2014 Journal of Adult Protection 16.2</i>
Domestic abuse	Includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members regardless of gender and sexuality. <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015</i>
Abuse using social media and/ or mobile phones	Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation, safety and sexting.
Human trafficking	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is broken down into 3 elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The act (what is done) • The means (how it is done) • The purpose (why it is done) <i>The Palermo Protocol - Article 3</i>

Modern Slavery	<p>The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation or bodies or body parts. <i>Siddharth Kara Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery 2009</i></p> <p>A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited. <i>Kevin Bales, Slavery Today 2008</i></p>
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Additional terminology to be aware of includes:

Safeguarding adults at risk of harm	<p>Means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. <i>Care Act 2014</i></p>
Capacity	<p>A person must be assumed to have capacity (to make decisions) unless it is established s/he lacks capacity. <i>Mental Capacity Act 2005</i></p>
Safeguarding Adults Board	<p>Brings together teams and organisations involved in keeping people safe. <i>Care Act 2014 - Government Fact Sheet</i></p>
Protected Adult Scotland	<p>An individual aged 16 or above who is receiving certain types of services. There are four categories of services specified in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (PVG Act). In summary they are: A service by a person carrying on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a support service; • an adult placement service; • a care home service or; • a housing support service.

7.1.2.3. Possible Signs and Symptoms of Abuse - Adults

As with children, this is not a definitive list of indicators but some examples of what you may come across. Some symptoms occur across the categories and not all categories are covered here. It is important that, where possible, you attend training to familiarise yourself with signs and symptoms. In some of the examples below the action is a clear form of abuse:

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of unexplained falls, minor injuries or malnutrition • Injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the person • Unexplained bruises or untreated injuries in various stages of healing • Injuries to the head, face or scalp • Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene • Dehydration and/or malnutrition without illness-related cause
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken spectacles/frames • Physical signs of being subjected to punishment or signs of having been restrained • Loss of weight • A vulnerable person telling you they have been hit, slapped, kicked or mistreated • Varicose ulcers or pressure sores • Injuries reflecting the shape of an object • Unexplained burns, rope burns or cigarette burns
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult being scolded or treated like a child (infantilisation) • Making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour • Blaming someone for attitudes or actions beyond their control • Use of silence • Humiliation • Bullying/harassment • Verbal abuse • Intimidation • Controlling or over-dependence • Lack of privacy and dignity • Deprivation of social contact • Threats to withdraw help and support • Denying of cultural and spiritual needs • Denying of choice • Failing to respond adequately to emotional needs
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor hygiene and cleanliness • Clothing which is inadequate or in poor condition • Dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment • Persistent hunger • Dehydration • Weight loss • The vulnerable person has an untreated medical condition • Poor physical condition; rashes, sores, varicose ulcers, pressure sores • Evidence of failure to seek medical advice or summon assistance as required • Evidence of failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained changes in behaviour • A significant change in sexual behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour • Pregnancy in a woman unable to consent to sexual intercourse • Bruises around the vagina or genital area • Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting • Torn, stained or bloody underwear • Unexplained infections or sexually transmitted diseases

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hints about sexual abuse • Sleep disturbances • Self-harming • A vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped
Neglect and acts of omission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor hygiene and cleanliness • Clothing which is inadequate or in poor condition • Dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment • Persistent hunger • Dehydration • Weight loss • The vulnerable person has an untreated medical condition • Poor physical condition: rashes, sores, varicose ulcers, pressure sores • Evidence of failure to seek medical advice or summon assistance as required • Evidence of failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
Self-neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration, malnutrition (or obesity), untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene • Hazardous living conditions e.g. improper wiring, no indoor plumbing, no heat, no running water • Unsanitary living quarters e.g. animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet, excrement present • Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids e.g. glasses, hearing aids, dentures • Grossly inadequate housing or homelessness
Institutional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of flexibility or choice for people using the service • Inadequate staffing levels • Inappropriate or poor care • No opportunity for snacks or drinks • Failure to promote or support a person's spiritual or cultural beliefs • A culture of treating everyone 'the same' as opposed to treating everyone 'equally' • Dehumanising language • Absence of individual care
Spiritual abuse	<p>Those who have been spiritually abused experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge betrayal leading to deep distrust and self-isolation • Silencing by their abuser • A changed and damaged view of the church • Feeling misunderstood • Long-term distress • Loss of church as same space • Powerlessness
Domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises or injuries • Unusually quiet or withdrawn • Panic attacks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent absences from work or other commitments • Wears clothes that conceal bruises even on warm days • Stops talking about partner • Anxious about being out or rushes away • Always accompanied by partner • Isolated, withdrawing from friends and family
Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones	See above section for children and adults
Human trafficking/Modern Slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma • Complex medical, emotional, mental and practical needs • Potential for financial, legal and physical impact of experience to affect long-term recovery • Anger and post-traumatic altruism • Apparent high resilience masking trauma • Appears to be in a dependency situation • Travel, identity, financial documents are held by someone else • Unsure of home/work address • May be living and working at the same address • May appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood • May be isolated, with limited social contact or time off and limited contact with family • Seems to be bonded by a debt • Experiences threats such as against themselves or family members • Unable to negotiate working conditions or leave their employment situation • On low pay or has excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport • May look malnourished or unkempt, lacking access to medical care, hygiene facilities and education • May wear same clothes day in and day out • Expression of anxiety, fear or mistrust

7.2. GUIDANCE RELATING TO ADULTS WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE

7.2.1. Safeguarding and The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 has defined an adult as anyone aged 18 or over and puts a responsibility on Local Authorities to make enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):

- a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- b) is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect and risk of it.

(Care Act 2014)

7.2.2. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (Regularly updated)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>)

Chapter 14 defines adult safeguarding as:

“...protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s well-being is promoted, including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances”.

7.2.3. The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to adults with care and support needs;
- stop abuse and neglect where possible;
- safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned;
- raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
- provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different type of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult;
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

The Care and Support Statutory guidance [click here](#) gives six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work:

EMPOWERMENT People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and can directly inform what happens”.
PREVENTION It is better to take action before harm occurs “I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help”.
PROPORTIONALITY The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented “I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed”.
PROTECTION Support and representation for those in greatest need

"I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent that I want.

PARTNERSHIP

Local solutions through services working with the communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and report neglect and abuse

"I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life, and so do they."

The issue of capacity is also important to consider (see S 3.6). Capacity is not a universal concept. It must be applied in a specific context: is this person able to make the specific decision at this particular time? Adults are presumed to have capacity to make all decisions about themselves. Those who work with them should use every reasonable endeavour to obtain the decision from the adult. Advice can be obtained from adult services if there is an uncertainty about an important decision or a situation where harm may occur.

7.2.4. Guidance On Capacity

If there is any doubt that a person has the mental capacity to make specific decisions about sharing information or accepting intervention in relation to their own safety, then the MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005 (MCA) will apply.

It is best to seek guidance from Adult Social Care services about defining a person's mental capacity if there is concern about their ability to understand safeguarding processes.

There are 5 guiding principles of Mental Capacity (from the MCA Code of practice) [See link](#)

These are:

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him or her to do so have been taken without success.
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision.
4. An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his or her best interests.
5. Before the Act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

7.2.4.1. Other Considerations

- Every effort should be made to find ways of communicating with someone before deciding they lack capacity to make a decision.

- Different methods (e.g. pictures, communication cards or signing) should be used to support people with communication difficulties to make sure their views are heard.
- Family, friends, carers or other professionals should be involved as appropriate.
- The Mental Capacity assessment must be made on the 'balance of probabilities' – is it more likely than not that the person lacks capacity'?
You must be able to show in your records why you have come to your conclusion that capacity is lacking for the particular decision in question.

7.3. INFORMATION SHARING GUIDANCE

Working Together 2015 states that sharing information is an intrinsic part of safeguarding and the decision about what to share and when can have a huge impact on individual's lives. The early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems and at the other end of the scale, can be essential in putting in place effective child protection services.

Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

(Working Together 2015 and HMG Information sharing guidelines 2015)

All of the above applies as much to adults as to children.

In the document 'The Protection of Children in England: a progress report,' Lord Laming recommended all staff in every service from statutory services to the voluntary sector should understand the circumstances in which they may lawfully share information. There have been many examples whereby poor information sharing has led to serious harm including the deaths of vulnerable individuals and poor or non-existent information sharing is repeatedly flagged up in government reviews of serious incidents where death has occurred.

7.3.1. Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing

When deciding whether to share information there are **seven golden rules** to remember:

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

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| <p>4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.</p> |
| <p>5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.</p> |
| <p>6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles below).</p> |
| <p>7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.</p> |

7.3.2. Data Protection Principles

In addition to these rules, there are also clear **data protection principles** set out by HM Gov for information sharing that can be applied to children and adults. The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child or adult at risk of harm.

These principles are taken from HM Gov: Information Sharing guidelines 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf

Necessary and proportionate

When taking decisions about what information to share you should consider how much information you need to release. The Data Protection Act 1988 requires you to consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Any information shared must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

Relevant

Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make sound decisions.

Adequate

Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon.

<p>Accurate</p> <p>Information should be accurate and up to date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. If the information is historical then this should be explained.</p>
<p>Timely</p> <p>Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of harm. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore harm to a child or adult.</p>
<p>Secure</p> <p>Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information. http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/document_retention.pdf</p>
<p>Record</p> <p>Information sharing decisions should be recorded whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom in line with organizational procedures. If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester. In line with each organisation's own retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some circumstances, this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case there should be a review process and agreement where the records should be stored..</p>

7.3.3. Consent

The general principle around consent is that you should explain to children and adults at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why and seek their agreement to share personal or sensitive information.

The exception to this would be where seeking consent would put that child or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

You should where possible, respect the wishes of children, families and adults who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information if in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient public interest to override that lack of consent.

You should seek advice from a safeguarding professional when in any doubt. This is particularly recommended in relation to adults as the issues around capacity and consent are slightly more complex. The SCIE document 'Adult Safeguarding: Information Sharing' states 'Adults have a right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves. In the context of adult safeguarding, their rights can be overruled in certain circumstances'. More information on this can be found in the Methodist Church Information Sharing Guidance. [See Link](#)

You should ensure that the information you share is accurate and up to date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it and shared securely (See S3.1)

7.3.4. When and How to Share

When deciding whether to share information, the safety and welfare of a child or an adult should always be the primary consideration. Where there is concern that a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm then information must be shared. Likewise, where there are concerns about the safety of an adult, their welfare takes precedence and information must be shared where a crime is suspected.

When thinking of or being asked to share information, the following questions need to be considered:

WHEN

- Is there a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information? If not, do not share. If there is, then ask:
- Does the information enable an individual to be identified? If yes, consider the next question but if the answer is no, you can still share but should consider how.
- Is the information confidential? If yes, consider the next question. If no, you can share but should consider how.
- Do you have consent? (See 3.2) If yes, you can share but should consider how. If no consider the next question.
- Is there another reason to share information such as to fulfil a public function or to protect the vital interests of the information subject? If yes, you can share but should consider how. If no, do not share.

HOW

- Identify how much information to share.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Ensure that you are giving the right information to the right individual (See Section 2).
- Ensure where possible that you are sharing and storing information securely.
- Inform the individual that the information has been shared if they were not aware of this, as long as this would not create or increase risk of harm

(Taken from HM Gov Information Sharing Advice March 2015)

WITH WHOM

For the purpose of safeguarding children and adults, information may be shared with the following people all of whom are bound to keep information confidential in accordance with inter-organisational safeguarding procedures:

- Statutory services such as:
- Police
- Children's Social Care
- Adults Social Care
- NSPCC

- Church Minister / Superintendent
- Church/ Circuit Safeguarding Officer
- DSO, DSG, District Chair
- Connexional Safeguarding team, Legal Adviser, Complaints and Discipline officer, Conference Office

It is also legitimate to share information with the Insurers and Charity Commission to comply with the Serious Incident Reporting requirements. This is not an exhaustive list and advice should be taken from the District Safeguarding Officer where a need to share is felt to exist and there is uncertainty as to whether this is permitted.

7.3.5. Recording

It is important that any decisions made to share information are accurately recorded. This should include:

- Reasons for sharing or not sharing
- The purpose of sharing
- What was shared, how and with whom

7.3.6. Confidentiality

If any person in the Church has reason to believe that a child or adult is at risk of harm, the procedures in Section 2 must be followed.

There are often occasions when someone may wish to share information of concern 'in confidence'. In such situations, it is important not to promise total confidentiality but explain what needs to happen paying due regard to the procedures as set out in Section 2 and in Section 3.

Confidentiality is often confused with secrecy and a request to remain anonymous when reporting. Anonymity can be agreed if the information is coming from a church member and is being passed on to the statutory agencies through the safeguarding officer or DSO but only with their agreement and in agreement with the statutory agency. Total anonymity cannot be agreed as the incident may result in criminal proceedings.

Persons who have a formal role in the Church E.g. Minister, Safeguarding officer, DSO, cannot raise concerns anonymously.

7.4. PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is possible that relevant information may be disclosed in the particular context of a pastoral conversation. The Methodist Church does not have authorized liturgies for the sacraments of individual confession and The Service of Reconciliation. A Minister is not prevented from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of a pastoral conversation or a confession within that context. The requirements about information sharing apply.

Wherever possible, Ministers and others engaged in pastoral conversations on behalf of the Church should explain the limits of confidentiality in pastoral relationships to those they are offering pastoral care. This should ideally occur at the beginning of a pastoral relationship or meeting. A similar approach should be adopted for spiritual direction and

formal supervision or mentoring arrangements conducted on behalf of or by officers of the Church.

Ministers should be aware that convicted offenders can sometimes come forward with new information. There is no bar in law to prevent ministers passing on such information to the authorities.

7.5. GUIDANCE RELATING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

What is it?

The cross government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

‘Any incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender of sexuality’.

Ref: Home Office:

Domestic Violence and Abuse, Published 26/03/13, Updated 08/03/16

COERCIVE behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

CONTROLLING behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Domestic abuse is usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their partner or a family member. It is rarely a one-off incident. It occurs across all of society. In some communities this can also take the form of ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

A further hidden form of abuse that is often not spoken about is that of adolescents to parent violence and abuse (AVPA). The Home Office is working with its partners to develop and disseminate information for practitioners working with children and families on how to identify and address the risks posed by adolescents to parent violence and abuse.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420963/AVPA.pdf

For a long time, domestic abuse was not acknowledged in society as being criminal violence towards another – usually women – and resulted in a reluctance on the part of individuals and agencies to intervene in what was seen largely as a private matter. Fortunately, this position has changed and legislation has been passed to try and address these situations.

7.6. GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

7.6.1. Recommended Staffing Levels

The NSPCC advise voluntary organisations that “when working with groups of children or young people, it is important that the level of supervision is appropriate to their age group and their needs, which may be very specific. In general, young children need to be more closely supervised and will require a higher adult to child ratio.”

The following are the adult to child ratio recommended by the NSPCC:

0 – 2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2 – 3 years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4 – 8 years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9 – 12 years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8
13 – 18 years	1 adult to 10 children	1:10

(NSPCC FACT SHEET 2013)

SECTION 8 FORMS

The following forms are in current use in relation to safeguarding matters:

- Covenant of Care agreement / contract
- Local Church Safeguarding List
- List of responsibilities – Circuit / Church / District / Community
- Incident Report Forms
- Risk Assessment for activities – Check list
- Methodist property forms
- Sample Registration Form
- Sample Consent Forms
- Sample request for reference for, to facilitate Safer Recruitment

The following forms are available on the safeguarding webpage:

[Confidential Declarations](#) - All office holders should complete a confidential declaration.

[Keyholder Declaration](#) -The Methodist Church is not obliged to give anyone access to church premises unless access to the premises is required as part of their role or for regular hire of premises. Before the keys can be issued the keyholder is asked to sign the declaration and acknowledge the conditions of issue.

[Users And Hirers Of Methodist Premises](#) - Church councils are required to ensure that those who use their premises under license or who hire the premises for regular or occasional use are given a copy of the local church safeguarding policy and declare their willingness to comply with the safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy).

[Exemptions From Dbs Checks For Ministers No Longer Exercising A Public Ministry](#) - Checks are required for all ministers, provided that they are capable of a preaching or pastoral ministry i.e. a public ministry. Chairs should notify the Secretary of the Conference on an annual basis in October, of those ministers who have made a declaration that they no longer wish to exercise such a public ministry and so may be exempt from DBS checks. The final decision about whether the checks are required will rest with the Secretary of the Conference. Where a minister is unable to complete the relevant form due to ill health, there is a provision for another appropriate party to do so on their behalf by completing the correct section of the form.

SECTION 9 APPENDICES

Appendix i – Standing Order 010 & 690

Appendix ii – Constitution of Safeguarding Committee

Appendix iii – Model Safeguarding Policies

Appendix iv – Role of Circuit Safeguarding Officer Job Description

Appendix v – Structure and Organisation of the Methodist Church

Appendix i – Standing Order 010 & 690

010 Qualification for Appointment.

- (1) No person shall be appointed to office in the Church who teaches doctrines contrary to those of the Church, or who holds doctrines likely to injure the peace and welfare of the Church.

For the doctrinal standards of the Church see cl. 4 of the Deed of Union (Book II, Part I).

- (2) Subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force and any regulations or orders made or having effect thereunder)
 - (i) no person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution from the police concerning an offence mentioned in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (as amended) or who otherwise poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults shall undertake work with children, young people or vulnerable adults in the life of the Church;
 - (ii) no person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution from the police concerning sexual offences against children or vulnerable adults shall be appointed or re-appointed to any office, post or responsibility or engaged or re-engaged under any contract to which this sub-clause applies unless authority for the appointment or employment has been obtained under clause (5) below.

See also S.O. 1101(1)(i)(b).

- (3) Sub-clause (ii) of clause (2) above shall apply to:
 - (i) *[deleted]*
 - (ii) *[deleted]*
 - (iii) first appointment to a station as a presbyteral or diaconal probationer or, if no such appointment has been made, admission into Full Connexion as a presbyter or deacon;
 - (iv) first appointment to a station as a presbyter or deacon recognised and regarded as such under the Deed of Union or first entry upon the stations as a person authorised by the Conference to serve as a presbyter or deacon;
 - (ivA) first appointment to undertake specific acts of ministry under permission given by the Conference to a person granted the status of associate presbyter or deacon;
 - (v) re-admission into Full Connexion as a presbyter or deacon;
 - (vi) any other appointment or re-appointment to any office, post or responsibility or any engagement or re-engagement under a contract of service or for services which is at the date of appointment, re-appointment, engagement or re-engagement specified for this purpose by the Methodist Council, either generally by reference to categories or by a ruling in the particular case.

The Conference of 1999 directed that the appointments and engagements specified under this head by the council, together with any rulings made in particular cases, should be published in Book VI below. See Part 1 of that book. See Part 1 also for the directions requiring criminal record disclosures.

See also S.O. 1101(1)(i)(b).

- (4) Clause (2) above shall have effect in relation to persons in any jurisdiction within the home Districts other than England and Wales as if, in any such jurisdiction in which any of the legislative provisions there mentioned does not have effect, there were substituted a reference to the legislation, if any, of similar substance in force in that jurisdiction from time to time.
- (5) (a) If a church court or other appointing body wishes
- (i) To grant permission to undertake work with children, young people or vulnerable adults in the life of the Church to a person who is not prevented from undertaking such work by legislation but, in the absence of authority under this clause, is disqualified from undertaking such work by virtue of clause (2)(i) above; or
 - (ii) to appoint to an office, post or responsibility a person who is not prevented from holding such office, post or responsibility by legislation but, in the absence of authority under this clause, is disqualified from holding it by virtue of clauses (2)(ii) and (3) above, the secretary or convener of the body concerned may request the Secretary of the Conference to refer the proposed permission or appointment to **[...] the safeguarding officer as defined [...] in Standing Order 232(1A)**. Any such request shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for which it is made.
- (b) On receiving such a request, the Secretary of the Conference shall refer it to the **[...] safeguarding officer**, who shall arrange for the determination of the reference **by the Safeguarding Committee** in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 232. If following the reference an authorisation to permit or appoint is given, the body concerned may, but need not, proceed to grant the permission or make the appointment notwithstanding the provisions of sub-clause (2)(i) or (as the case may be) (ii) above.
- (c) No such authorisation shall be given unless the nominated members of the Safeguarding **[...] Committee** are satisfied that:
- (i) the circumstances are exceptional; and
 - (ii) the granting of the permission or making of the appointment will not expose children, young people or vulnerable adults to the risk of harm.
- (d) If an employing body wishes to engage under a contract a person who is not prevented from holding such office, post or responsibility by legislation but, in the absence of authority under this clause, is disqualified from being so engaged by virtue of clauses (2)(ii) and (3) above, the secretary of that body may request the Secretary of the Conference to refer the proposed contract to the Safeguarding **[...] Committee** and the procedure set out in sub-clauses (a) and (b) above shall be followed. No authorisation to employ shall be given unless the nominated members of the Safeguarding **[...] Committee** are satisfied as set out in clause (c)(i) above and that the entry into the contract will not expose children, young people or vulnerable adults to the risk of harm.
- (6)(a) Subject to paragraph (b) below, a minister or a person holding any other office, post or responsibility or engaged under any contract to which sub-clause (ii) of clause (2) above applies who acquires a conviction or who receives a simple or conditional caution from the police of a kind specified in that sub-clause subsequent to being appointed to the office, post or responsibility or engaged under the relevant contract shall cease to exercise any of the duties of a minister or of a person holding that office, post or responsibility or engaged under that contract unless authorised to do so under clause (7).

- (b) In relation to a person employed under a contract of employment, paragraph (a) above has effect only so far as is consistent with the terms of that contract and employment legislation.
 - (c) Any person to whom paragraph (a) above applies must inform the responsible officer for the purposes of Standing Order 013 (if a person holding an office, post or responsibility) or his or her employer (if a person engaged under a contract of employment) of the fact of the conviction or caution as soon as is reasonably possible after it is acquired or received.
 - (d) Nothing in this sub-clause (6) prevents the exercise of the power to suspend contained in Standing Order 013.
- (7) If:
- (i) a church court or other body wishes to obtain authority for a minister or other person falling within clause (6) above to continue to exercise any of his or her duties; or
 - (ii) such a minister or other person wishes to obtain such authority; the secretary or convener of the church court or other body or that minister or other person (as the case may be) may request the Secretary of the Conference to refer the matter to the Safeguarding [...] **Committee** and the provisions of clause (5) above shall apply with any necessary changes.
- (8) The provisions of clauses (6) and (7) above shall cease to have effect if as a result of a conviction or caution by virtue of which clause (6) applies to a minister or other person a complaint within the meaning of Standing Order 1101 has been made against that minister or other person or the matter has been referred to the connexional Complaints Panel under Standing Order 1121(14) and the responsible person has exercised the power of suspension given by Standing Order 1105.

Section 69 Involvement of Sex Offenders in the Local Church

As to undertaking work with children and young persons, and as to appointment to any office, post or responsibility or engagement under a contract, see S.O. 010.

690 Arrangements for Involvement. (1) When a person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution in respect of a sexual offence worships in a Local Church or seeks to become involved in its life, he or she may only do so in accordance with the provisions of clause (2) below.

(2) (a) The Local Church in question, acting by the presbyter in pastoral charge, must establish a small group, which will include that presbyter, to provide appropriate support to the person concerned. In establishing the group, the presbyter should whenever possible act together with the Church Council or, if that cannot be done, the church stewards. The provisions of Standing Order 607 shall not apply to the group.

(b) The group so established must undertake a risk assessment (where possible with outside assistance) in order to minimise the risk to others presented by the person concerned and to determine on what terms he or she may attend for worship and become involved in the life of the Local Church.

(c) The person concerned must agree to enter into a written contract setting out the terms determined in accordance with sub-clause (b) above and the contract must be signed and dated by him or her and by the members of the group.

(3) When a written contract has been made with a person under the provisions of clause (2) above, its terms must be regularly reviewed by the group. The group may at any time require the person concerned to agree any variation which it believes necessary for the avoidance of risk.

(4) The guidance approved by the Conference from time to time shall be followed in carrying out the requirements of clauses (2) and (3) above. For the current guidance, see Book VI, Part 4.

(5) A person to whom clause (1) above applies shall not be placed on the community roll maintained by the Local Church in accordance with Standing Order 054(7) before signing a contract in accordance with clause (2) above.

691 Changes in Church Representatives. The members of any group established under Standing Order 690(2)(a) above shall be responsible collectively for ensuring that:

- (i) the presbyter in pastoral charge of the Local Church is aware of any circumstances making a change in the membership of the group necessary or appropriate; and
- (ii) information is passed on and pastoral support continues to be provided when there is a change of presbyter in pastoral charge of the Local Church or of other members of the group. Changes in the membership of the group shall be made by the minister in pastoral charge and Standing Order 690(2)(a) shall apply so far as circumstances permit.

692 Transfer.

(1) If a person to whom Standing Order 690 applies and whose name is on the community roll of a Local Church (whether or not as a member) removes from one Circuit to another, the presbyter in pastoral charge of that Local Church, in carrying out his or her responsibilities under Standing Order 055, shall ensure that the recipient presbyter or presbyteral probationer is aware of the existence and terms of the contract made in accordance with Standing Order 690.

(2) A presbyter or presbyteral probationer receiving notice that a person removing from one Circuit to another has made a contract with a Local Church in accordance with Standing Order 690 shall ensure that the provisions of that Standing Order are applied again if the person concerned wishes to attend worship or to become involved in the life of a Local Church in the new Circuit.

(3) If a person to whom Standing Order 690 applies and whose name is on the community roll of a Local Church (whether or not as a member) ceases to attend worship or to be involved in that Local Church but wishes to attend worship or be involved in another Local Church within the same Circuit, the presbyter in pastoral charge of the first Local Church shall ensure that the presbyter in pastoral charge of the second Local Church is aware of the existence and terms of the contract made in accordance with Standing Order 690 and the second presbyter shall ensure that the provisions of that Standing Order are applied again.

Appendix ii - The Safeguarding Committee

232 Safeguarding Committee. (1) The Methodist Council shall annually appoint a [...] **committee** of persons consisting of a [...] **chair** and up to eighteen other persons, to be known as the Safeguarding [...] **Committee**, with the functions set out in clause (2) below. The members of the [...] **committee** shall all be members of the Methodist Church and shall include:

- (i) at least ten persons having experience in safeguarding matters and the consideration of disclosures, and
 - (ii) at least five persons who, by virtue of seniority, experience or office held, will in the judgment of the council command wide respect.
- (1A) For the purposes of this Standing Order:
- (i) a 'disclosure' is a disclosure document, received from anybody with official responsibility for providing information about the criminal records of individuals, which contains convictions, cautions or any other adverse entry;
 - (ii) 'the safeguarding officer' means the person **or one of the persons** in the Connexional Team responsible for issues relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- (2) The functions of the Safeguarding [...] **Committee** shall be:
- (i) to [...] **give directions to and offer guidance on the steps to be taken by the relevant appointing body** in respect of any disclosure or any related matter or application [...];
 - (iA) to determine any appeal brought by a person dissatisfied with a [...] **direction** made in respect of any disclosure or other matter as mentioned in sub-clause (i) above;
 - (ii) to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Conference as to the action to be taken in respect of any minister, local preacher or member of the Church who, pursuant to the Church's policy for safeguarding children, [...] **young people and vulnerable adults**, signs a form in which he or she declares a conviction or caution in respect of an offence of the kind specified in sub-clause (i) or (ii) of Standing Order 010(2);
 - (iii) to determine whether to authorise the making of an appointment or entry into a contract following a reference under the provisions of Standing Order 010(5);
 - (iiiA) to act upon any referral to it by the safeguarding officer, following referral to that officer made under any of Standing Orders 713(7A), 725(6), 761(15), 1102(9) or 1102(10) or otherwise made as a result of the operation of any of the processes of the Church as determined by Standing Orders by carrying out such investigations and making such recommendations to the referring person or body as it thinks fit;
 - (iiiB) to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Conference, upon a reference by the safeguarding officer, as to the action to be taken in respect of any minister, local preacher or member of the Church who has been the subject of a complaints and discipline process (whether under Part 11 of these Standing Orders or a previous form of process) and in respect of whom a safeguarding risk remains or where new information requires a reassessment of the risk;
 - (iiiC) without prejudice to paragraph (iiiB) above, to recommend to the Secretary of the Conference that a direction under Standing Order 013C be given to any minister, local preacher or member of the Church and to review any such recommendation. Any such recommendation shall be in writing and may be made only on the ground that there is a safeguarding risk in respect of that person, and the reasons for which the Panel believes that ground to exist shall be set out as part of the recommendation;

(iv) to carry out such other functions as the Conference by Standing Order or otherwise may direct or request;

(v) to be available for consultation by those members of the Connexional Team whose responsibilities include the Church's policy for safeguarding children, [...] young people **and vulnerable adults**.

(3) The [...] **chair** of the [...] **committee** shall nominate such members of the [...] **committee** (including himself or herself but not being fewer than three in number) as he or she thinks fit to **be the panel to** make any determination or recommendation in discharge of the [...] **committee's** functions set out in sub-clauses (ii) to (iv) of clause (2) above. [...] **For the purpose of giving directions or advice** under clause (2)(i) above [...], the safeguarding officer shall convene a [...] **panel** of not fewer than three members of the [...] **committee** having regard to the expertise required in the particular case.

(3A) (a) When discharging the functions specified under clause 2(i) and (ii) to (iv) above, the [...] **panel** nominated shall contain two persons referred to in clause (1)(i) and one person referred to in clause (1)(ii).

(b) When discharging the functions specified under clause 2(iA) above the [...] **panel** nominated shall contain one person referred to in clause (1)(i) and two persons referred to in clause (1)(ii) one of whom shall be a former President or Vice-President, who shall chair the [...] **panel**. No member of the [...] **panel** shall have been involved in making the [...] **direction** which is the subject of the appeal.

(c) Requests for consultation by members of the Connexional Team under clause 2(v) above shall be made to the [...] **chair** in the first instance.

(4) (a) For the purpose of carrying out [...] **its** functions **under clause (2)(i) to (iv)**, [...] **a nominated** panel (**[...] the members of which** shall as far as possible act together) [...] **may** make such inquiries, meet such persons and obtain such expert advice in each individual case as the [...] **panel** thinks fit.

(b) If the panel judges that a risk assessment is desirable for the carrying out of its functions, it may appoint a suitably qualified assessor to conduct that assessment.

(c) A panel may choose to hold any meeting by telephone if so agreed by all members of the panel.

(5) The [...] **committee** shall report to the next ensuing Conference each determination or recommendation made under clause (2)(iA) to (iv) above. Any such report shall be made to the Representative Session in closed session and shall be confined to the number of appeals under each category of case, the number of persons concerned who were lay and the number who were ordained, the number of appeals allowed and dismissed, the number of authorisations given and refused and the number of recommendations made and their nature in each case.

(6) In addition to any report under clause (5) above, the [...] **chair** shall make a general report to the Conference in its Representative Session at least once every three years. This report shall deal with any questions of principle raised in the matters dealt with, but without reference to any personal details, and it shall be open to the Conference to debate those questions.

232 Safeguarding Committee. (1) The Methodist Council shall annually appoint a committee of persons consisting of a chair and up to eighteen other persons, to be known as the Safeguarding Committee, with the functions set out in clause (2) below.

The members of the committee shall all be members of the Methodist Church and shall include: (i) at least ten persons having experience in safeguarding matters and the consideration of disclosures, and (ii) at least five persons who, by virtue of seniority, experience or office held, will in the judgment of the council command wide respect. (1A) For the purposes of this Standing Order: (i) a 'disclosure' is a disclosure document, received from any body with official responsibility for providing information about the criminal records of individuals, which contains convictions, cautions or any other adverse entry; (ii) 'the safeguarding officer' means the person or one of the persons in the Connexional Team responsible for issues relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults; (iii) a 'relevant party' means any person who is the subject of a decision, determination or recommendation made by the committee in the exercise of its functions under clause (2) below or in relation to whom a risk assessment has been carried out for purposes connected with the exercise of those functions, and references to "the Superintendent" and "the District Chair" or "the District Safeguarding Officer" in relation to

[232]

368 The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016
Book III Standing Orders

a relevant party are references to the Superintendent of the Circuit in which the relevant party is stationed or is a member and to the Chair or safeguarding officer of the District of which that Circuit forms part. (2) The functions of the Safeguarding Committee shall be: (i) to give directions to and offer guidance on the steps to be taken by the relevant appointing body in respect of any disclosure or any related matter or application; (iA) [revoked]; (ii) to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Conference as to the action to be taken in respect of any minister, local preacher or member of the Church who, pursuant to the Church's policy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, signs a form in which he or she declares a conviction or caution in respect of an offence of the kind specified in sub-clause (i) or (ii) of Standing Order 010(2); (iii) to determine whether to authorise the making of an appointment or entry into a contract following a reference under the provisions of Standing Order 010(5); (iiiA) to act upon any referral to it by the safeguarding officer, following referral to that officer made under any of Standing Orders 713(7A), 725(6), 761(15), 1102(9) or 1102(10) or otherwise made as a result of the operation of any of the processes of the Church as determined by Standing Orders by carrying out such investigations and making such recommendations to the referring person or body as it thinks fit; (iiiB) to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Conference, upon a reference by the safeguarding officer, as to the action to be taken in respect of any minister, local preacher or member of the Church who has been the subject of a complaints and discipline process (whether under Part 11 of these Standing Orders or a previous form of process) and in respect of whom a safeguarding risk remains or where new information requires a reassessment of the risk; (iiiC) without prejudice to paragraph (iiiB) above, to recommend to the Secretary of the Conference that a direction under Standing Order 013C be given to any minister, local preacher or member of the Church and to review any such recommendation. Any such recommendation shall be in writing and may be made only on the ground that there is a safeguarding risk in respect of that person, and the reasons for which the Panel believes that ground to exist shall be set out as part of the recommendation; (iv) to carry out such other functions as the Conference by Standing Order or otherwise may direct or request; (v) to be available for consultation by those members of the Connexional Team whose responsibilities include the Church's policy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

[232]

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016 369 368 The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016

Book III Standing Orders Part 2 Methodist Council and Connexional Committees

(3) The chair of the committee shall nominate such members of the committee (including himself or herself but not being fewer than three in number) as he or she thinks fit to be the panel to make any determination or recommendation in discharge of the committee's functions set out in sub-clauses (ii) to (iv) of clause (2) above. For the purpose of giving directions or [...] guidance under clause (2)(i) above, the safeguarding officer shall convene a panel of not fewer than three members of the committee having regard to the expertise required in the particular case. (3A) (a) When discharging the functions specified under clause (2)(i) and (ii) to (iv) above, the panel nominated shall contain two persons referred to in clause (1)(i) and one person referred to in clause (1)(ii). (b) [revoked] (c) Requests for consultation by members of the Connexional Team under clause (2)(v) above shall be made to the chair in the first instance. (4) (a) For the purpose of carrying out its functions under clause (2)(i) to (iv), a nominated panel (the members of which shall as far as possible act together) may make such inquiries, meet such persons and obtain such expert advice in each individual case as the panel thinks fit. (b) If the panel judges that a risk assessment is desirable for the carrying out of its functions, it may appoint a suitably qualified assessor to conduct that assessment. (c) A panel may choose to hold any meeting by telephone if so agreed by all members of the panel. (4A) A panel appointed in accordance with clause (4)(a) above shall send a written notice to the relevant party, informing him or her of the direction, recommendation or determination given or made by the panel and providing a copy of any risk assessment. A copy of the notice and a summary of the assessment shall be sent to the District Chair and Superintendent. (5) The committee shall report to the next ensuing Conference each determination or recommendation made under clause (2)([...]) to (iv) above. Any such report shall be made to the Representative Session in closed session and shall be confined to the number of appeals under each category of case, the number of persons concerned who were lay and the number who were ordained, the number of appeals allowed and dismissed, the number of authorisations given and refused and the number of recommendations made and their nature in each case. (6) In addition to any report under clause (5) above, the chair shall make a general report to the Conference in its Representative Session at least once every three years. This report shall deal with any questions of principle raised in the matters dealt with, but without reference to any personal details, and it shall be open to the Conference to debate those questions.

233 Grounds of Appeal. (1) A relevant party, that party's District Chair or Superintendent or the safeguarding officer may appeal against a direction or determination under Standing Order 232(2)(i) or (iii) and the effect of the direction [233]

370 The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016

Book III Standing Orders

or determination shall be suspended pending the hearing of the appeal. The person appealing is hereafter referred to as the appellant. (2) The grounds of appeal for the purpose of this Standing Order are: (i) that there was a material irregularity in how the matter was dealt with by the safeguarding panel or the risk assessor appointed under Standing Order 232(4)(b); (ii) that the panel or the risk assessor failed to take into account all relevant matters or took into account irrelevant ones; (iii) that in the light of events occurring since the direction was given or the determination was made (as the case may be), or of evidence of which the appellant could not reasonably be expected to have been aware at the time, substantial doubt has been cast upon the correctness of the direction or determination. (3) The appellant shall within fourteen days of receiving written notice of the direction or determination give notice of the appeal in writing to the chair of the Safeguarding Committee. (4) The notice of appeal shall be accompanied by a written statement indicating on which of the grounds in clause (2) the appeal is brought and the specific nature of any error, omission or other matter relied

on. The chair of the Safeguarding Committee shall pass it to a safeguarding officer, as defined in Standing Order 232(1A)(ii), who has not been involved in the direction or determination against which the appeal is brought. The safeguarding officer shall act as the convener of the panel hearing the appeal.

234 Appeal Process. (1) The convener shall arrange for the appeal to be heard by an appeal panel which shall include one person referred to in Standing Order 232(1)(i) and two persons referred to in Standing Order 232(1)(ii) one of whom shall be a former President or Vice-President, who shall chair the appeal panel. No member of the appeal panel shall have been involved in giving or making the direction or determination which is the subject of the appeal. (2) The appeal will be by way of report and there will be no rehearing or further evidence, except evidence admitted under Standing Order 233(2)(iii) above. Any such evidence not already supplied with the notice of appeal shall be provided by the appellant to the convener no later than 14 days before the date of the meeting and copies shall be provided by the convener and the members of the appeal panel no later than seven days before the date of the meeting. (3) At the meeting of the appeal panel a member of the safeguarding panel which gave the direction or made the determination appealed against shall first present that panel's report. (4) The appellant shall have the right to attend and put forward his or her case on the basis of the grounds of appeal specified, and to be accompanied by a friend or the relevant party (if not the appellant), who shall also have the right to speak. (5) Members of the appeal panel who wish to raise any matter not referred to in the report given under clause (2) above shall do so before the appellant leaves the
[233]

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016 371 370 The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church 2016 Book III Standing Orders Part 2 Methodist Council and Connexional Committees meeting and both the presenting member of the panel and the appellant shall be given an opportunity to deal with it (for which purpose the meeting shall be adjourned if necessary); no fresh matter shall be raised after the appellant has left. (6) The convener shall make the appellant aware of the importance of attending the meeting. If he or she then refuses or fails to attend, the panel must consider the reason for his or her absence and may adjourn for that purpose. The panel may then, if it thinks fit, hear the appeal and reach a decision in the absence of the appellant.

235 Appeal Decision. (1) The panel shall decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal or refer the matter back to the Safeguarding Committee for further consideration or a further risk assessment. The decision of the appeal panel shall be reached solely on the basis of the documents relied upon by the original safeguarding panel or supplied in accordance with Standing Order 234(2), the submissions presented at the meeting and any other documents which both the person representing the original panel and the appellant agree the appeal panel may consider. The appeal panel shall give reasons for its decision and shall embody them in the document announcing the decision. (2) The decision of the panel shall be communicated to the appellant (and the relevant party if not the appellant) in writing. If the appellant is the relevant party, a copy of the decision shall also be sent to the District Chair, district safeguarding officer and the Superintendent.

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of humans in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 and registration with¹ the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

¹ Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

a) A MODEL CHURCH POLICY

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Methodist Church

This policy was agreed at a Church Council held on

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation 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 Church 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 Church 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 Church 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.

The Church 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. The Church 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.
2. The Church commits itself to ensuring the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. The Church 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.
4. The Church **AFFIRMS** and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The Church appoints (*name*) as Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and (*name*) as Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports him/her/them in his/her/their role which is to:

- i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
 - ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
 - iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers
 - iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers.
 - v) Ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns according to Methodist policy and practice see.....
 - vi) Ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available
 - vii) Attend training and meetings organised to support the role
 - viii) Oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church e.g. lettings, groups property,
 - ix) Report to the Church council annually
 - x) Ensure the church completes a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups and lettings in the church and that these have been annually reviewed
 - xi) Ensure the church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity in the church and this is stored and reviewed at least annually. This should be made available if asked for.
 - xii) Ensure that the church recruits safely for all posts
 - xiii) Ensure that the church has a safeguarding noticeboard with copy of the current, signed safeguarding policy, contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information
- a) Purpose
The purposes of this safeguarding policy are 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 using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2017).

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- ii) Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
- iii) The church premises will be assessed by the church Safeguarding Officer with the property steward and/or their representatives at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Church Council will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate. An agreed record kept in the church file for each driver/car.
- v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Church Council will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

c) Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first year of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.

e) Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A leaflet will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems. The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy [Church Councils may produce their own material or use appropriate Connexional leaflets (Quick Reference Guide)].²

f) Ecumenical events

Where ecumenical events happen on church premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of this Church Council.

² These have yet to be produced for vulnerable adults.

- g) Events with church groups off the premises
Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event to be given to the church safeguarding officer PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to (name). The Church Safeguarding Officer will forward it immediately to the circuit safeguarding officer in order that an appropriate response can be made. The District Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Group will need to be informed of all off site events.

- h) Other groups on church premises
Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement [which should include Safeguarding Form E],³ will be given a copy of this policy and the leaflet. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings⁴. All lettings will be notified to the church safeguarding officer who will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from both the DSO and CSO.

- i) Complaints procedure
It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Church Council and who is currently (name). If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to (name) who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer who is (name).

- j) Review
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is

³ To be found in Recruiting Safely in the Methodist Church 2010.

⁴ Such as the code of practice or the pocket guide.

k) Key concepts and definitions

- i) 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.
- ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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.

Dated

Signed Chair of Church Council

b) A MODEL CIRCUIT POLICY

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for

..... Circuit

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on It will be reviewed on

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 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 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 Circuit 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.

The 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, institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking. 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 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.

The Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The Circuit 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.

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 Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2017).

The Circuit appoints (*name*) as Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and (*name*) as Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports him/her/them in their role.

a) Roles and responsibilities

Superintendent

1. Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of sex offenders.
4. 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.
5. Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and a Safeguarding Children Coordinator and that the details of that person are passed to the District office.
6. Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
7. Support the Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and the Safeguarding Children Coordinator in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Circuit Stewards

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

Circuit Safeguarding Officer

1. Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards in fulfilling their roles.
2. Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues.
3. Liaise with the District Safeguarding Group(s).

4. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.
5. Attend the circuit meeting and report on the implementation of circuit safeguarding policy and practice.
6. Receive risk assessments, policy and training schedules from churches across the circuit and report on these to the circuit meeting annually.
7. Attend the circuit staff meeting as necessary to discuss concerns brought to their attention.
8. Liaise with the individual church safeguarding officers to ensure that they are being compliant with Connexional policy, procedures and guidance.
9. Work with ministers and the District Safeguarding Officer to address safeguarding concerns
10. Work with the superintendent minister regarding any safeguarding concerns
11. Inform the District Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding concern or incident in the circuit within 24 hours on the referral form (please see the [Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church - 2015](#))
12. Agree with the superintendent minister about how and where records are stored and who should have access
13. Meet with the church safeguarding officers at least annually
14. Attend training as necessary
15. Attend district safeguarding events
16. Work with local ecumenical partners and their safeguarding representatives
17. Review the circuit safeguarding policy at least annually and send an updated copy to the District Safeguarding Officer.
18. Advise churches where necessary on their policies
19. Keep up to date with current policies and practice in statutory services and within the church
20. Meet for supervision and these records to be signed and stored
21. Annually appraise the role of the CSO and the suitability of the post holder

b) **Procedures for circuit events involving children 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 to be notified to the DSO prior to these being agreed to ensure that all permissions, risk assessments and good practice guidelines are in place.

c) **Responsibility for those planning and leading the event**

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

The event should have been planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:

Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises.

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.

Numbers of children or vulnerable adults involved.

Transportation following good practice guidelines.

This information to be sent to the DSO PRIOR to the event being agreed for approval

d) **Key concepts and definitions**

- i) **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.

- ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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.

Dated

Signed Chair of Circuit Meeting

c) A MODEL DISTRICT POLICY

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for

..... District

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/people 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 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 is paramount.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

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

The 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.

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 Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church (2017).

a) Roles and responsibilities

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.
- b) Key concepts and definitions
- i) 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.
 - ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
 - iii) 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.

- iv) 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.

Dated

Signed District Chair

Date for review

Appendix iv - Circuit Safeguarding Officer Job Description

Role of Circuit Safeguarding Officer

Reporting to : The Circuit Superintendent

Experience and skills needed:

- a) Administrative side of role – confidentiality, organisation, detailed record keeping, administration
- b) Interactive side of role – confidentiality, ability to respond quickly to issues, willingness to train others, good interpersonal attitude, sensitivity

Training Requirement:

Methodist Church Safeguarding Foundation and Leadership Training Modules as a minimum (can be completed immediately following appointment)

Continuous professional development to include 3 yearly or more frequent training updates

Routine and regular awareness of the evolution of Safeguarding legislation, principles and associated legal requirements

Other Safeguarding training as found appropriate.

Key purposes of the Role:

To ensure the safe wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults within the Circuit.

To be the point of reference for individual church Safeguarders throughout the Circuit to guide and advise them upon Methodist Church Safeguarding policy requirements, to ensure timely delivery of appropriate training for all in need of it across the Circuit, to act on behalf of and consultant to the Superintendent with regard to reports required by the District or Connexion and to act a verifier where Circuit roles require DBS checks to be undertaken or updated and to be a member of and actively participate in District Safeguarding Liaison Meetings as called by the District Safeguarding Officer.

To work closely with the District Safeguarding Officer on all safeguarding matters.

Administrative responsibilities:

Draft, maintain and ensure application of the Circuit Safeguarding Policy

For any volunteer appointed to a Circuit role the individual concerned has to agree to be approved for the post by the Circuit Safeguarding Officer before they take up job including ensuring relevant checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the control, distribution, receipt, and recording of Self-Disclosure Forms.

Maintain comprehensive records and information on behalf of the Superintendent and District as set out in Policy documents and guidelines.

The key tasks of the role are as follows:

1. Attend applicable training.
2. Keep yourself informed of safeguarding issues.
3. Keep a record of names of those at Circuit level who have DBS checks, with dates and the named activity.
4. Remind Church Safeguarders about the need to apply or reapply for checks in accordance with the Methodist Church policy (for updates the period is currently every 5 years).
5. Ensure that all persons receive appropriate training when working with children & vulnerable adults, hold an office of responsibility, or are in other applicable roles as defined in the Methodist Church policy
6. Keep a record of all people within the Circuit who have received Foundation Module training, with dates.

- 7.** Advise and assist the Superintendent about safeguarding issues when needed and to ensure he/she complies with District and Connexional requirements, drafting and submitting required reports on the Superintendent's behalf.
- 8.** Ensure a record of all safeguarding issues is kept and report (in conjunction with the Superintendent and relevant Minister) any concerns to the District Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- 9.** Request and review copies of the Safeguarding Policy for each church in the Circuit each year after and amendments by the churches.
- 10.** Ensure that Safeguarding is placed on the Circuit Meeting Agenda as a "standing" item and make a Report to each meeting about Safeguarding events (but noting the need for relevant confidentiality regarding specific cases or concern events) .
- 11.** Be prepared to assist in forming a small group to make provision for people who may pose a risk to others, participating in Covenants of Care and ensuring periodic reviews of them.
- 12.** Ensure that all Circuit Churches adopt a safer recruitment policy when appointing staff.
- 13.** Ensure Churches in the Circuit are using the CAS on-line DBS check process
- 14.** Keep a directory of useful names and contact details.
- 15.** To act as DBS verifier on behalf of Circuit

The Circuit Safeguarding Officer needs to 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.

The Circuit Safeguarding Officer will be expected to organise and contribute to safeguarding training for all those working in voluntary and paid roles within the Circuit.

Appendix v Methodist Structure

The Methodist Church is still organised in a methodical way using many of the structures introduced by its founder, John Wesley. However, the Church is quite pragmatic and is willing to make changes where they seem desirable.

Structures are there to enable decision making that takes account of all concerns and views within the Church. No one is given supreme authority – consultation is vital. At the same time, Churches cannot simply arrange their own affairs, but have some shared disciplines and ways of working.

The Conference

The annual Methodist Conference meets annually and is the supreme decision making body of the Church. At the start of conference a new **President** and **Vice-President** are appointed to preside over that conference and spend the year travelling around the connexion and abroad representing the Methodist Church.

The Connexion

Methodists are linked together in a 'Connexion of Churches', circuits and districts.

The District

The district serves a geographical group of circuits and is led by the **District Chair** (see website for the structure [Click here](#)). For District Chair responsibilities see Appendix i.

The Circuit

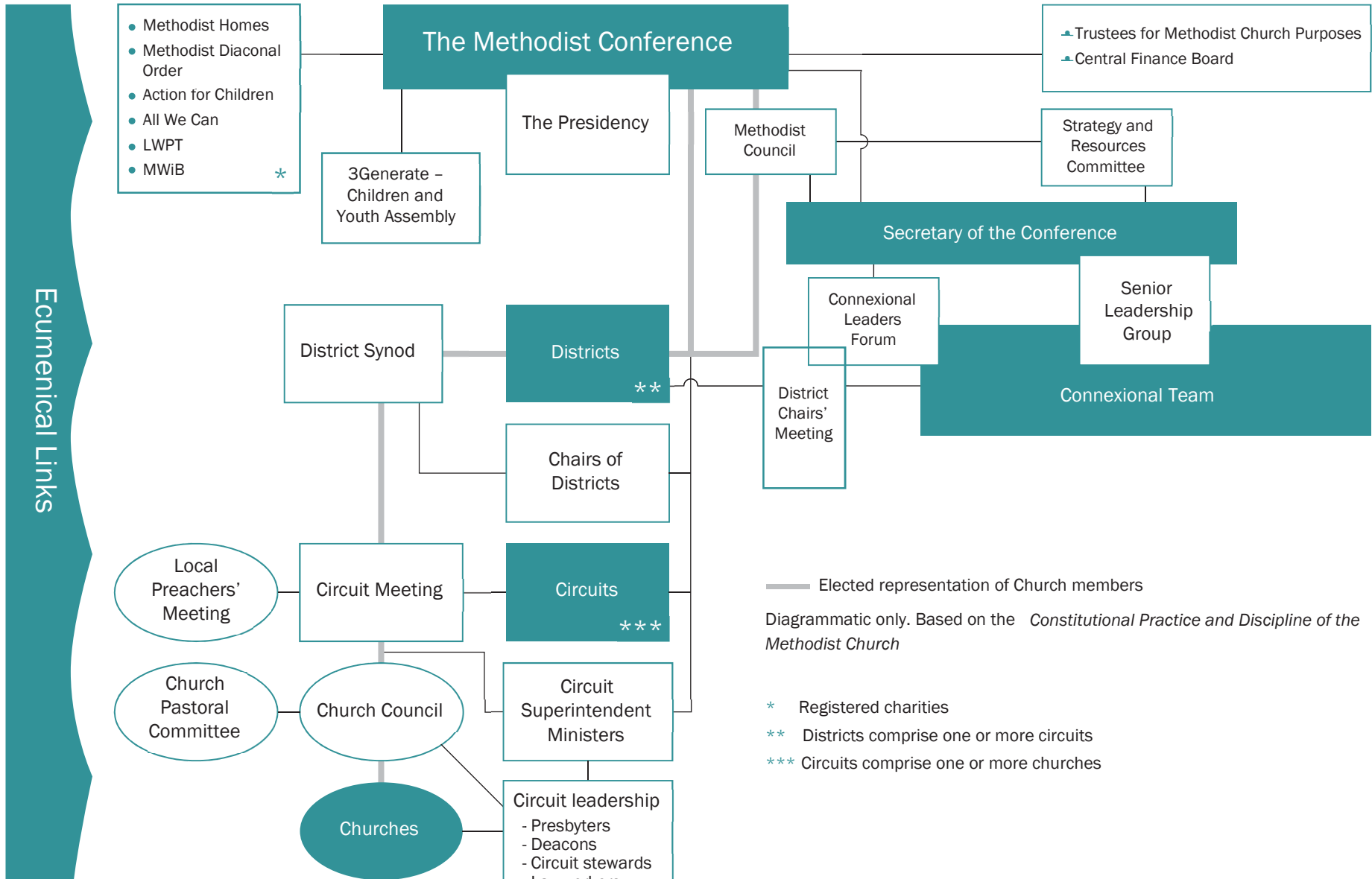
A circuit is a group of local Churches, served by a team of **Local Preachers** and **Ministers** including **Superintendent** Ministers.

The Local Church

The local Church is the congregational place of worship where Methodist district members and attendees are nurtured.

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITAIN

Its Structure and Organisation



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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