

District Safeguarding Officers – increasing time across districts

Contact Name and Details	Tim Carter; Safeguarding Adviser; cartert@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>14/1. The Council receives the Report.</p> <p>14/2. The Council agrees the suggested method for calculating District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) hours for each district.</p> <p>14/3. The Council agrees the suggested job description and person specification for the DSO role.</p> <p>14/4. The Council commends these recommendations to the Conference.</p>

Summary of Content and Impact

Subject and Aims	To bring forward proposals to enable Districts to calculate how much DSO time is required to meet safeguarding requirements across the Connexion
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles adopted • Proposed formula • How to calculate • Examples • Proposed common DSO job description and person specification
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	<p>The 2012 Conference recommended that Districts implement a minimum of 14 hours per week of DSO time to undertake safeguarding responsibilities in each district.</p> <p>Whilst two thirds of districts have achieved this (some employing more than the minimum) this has not been consistent.</p> <p>During this period the demands on safeguarding responses has grown and it is now felt appropriate to ensure that there is greater consistency in the provision of support across the districts, in a manner which can take account of differing needs and demands.</p> <p>A formula to aid this is proposed with a common job description for DSOs.</p>
Consultations	The Safeguarding Committee, District Chairs, DSOs and District Safeguarding Groups.
Impact	<p>Standing Orders Cross reference to the work of the Law and Polity Committee.</p> <p>Finance Increased district budgets for safeguarding, in some cases, which will provide better resourcing of safeguarding, consistency across the Connexion and ability to fulfil the Church's core mission in providing safe environments for all.</p>

District Safeguarding Officers - increasing time across districts

Introduction

1. The 2016 Conference Resolution 30/3 states:

“The Conference directs the Methodist Council to oversee work on the practical and financial implications of increasing the minimum required number of hours worked by District Safeguarding Officers and to bring clear recommendations to the 2017 Conference.”
[DR 7/12/3]
2. The work of safeguarding across the Connexion is carried out through DSOs working in collaboration, and with the support of, the connexional Safeguarding Team.
3. DSOs are critical to promoting and ensuring safeguarding practice is understood and delivered in each District. This meets our Christian obligation to take care and safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities as well as ensuring that the Methodist Church’s reputation with statutory agencies and the wider general public is protected and enhanced as we demonstrate professional competence in making churches truly safe spaces for all.
4. The strengthening of the role of DSOs envisaged in the President’s Inquiry (Report 20 to the 2012 Conference) continues. This established a recommended minimum commitment of 14 hours per week of (paid in the majority of cases) professional DSO time and two-thirds of Districts have now implemented this. That report envisaged that for some large districts this would need to be increased. In some cases this need has been recognised with some Districts achieving 17.5 – 21 hours as a minimum and others planning to do this. In one case the District has approved plans of introducing a full-time paid position in 2017/18. There are also examples where dedicated administrator time has also been allocated to support the role.
5. Given this experience, and the continued importance of robust safeguarding structures to support the mission of the Church, the Conference has instructed that suggestions should be brought forward to address increasing the minimum number of hours. In order to achieve this, a formula has been developed that can enable each district to assess the level of support that should be provided to meet their safeguarding needs and responsibilities.

Principles

6. In order to produce a formula a number of principles have been established:
 - The trajectory of safeguarding work over the last 15 years has been upward with more expectations and legislative demands made on all organisations. There is no sign that this is going to stop in the near future, both in the area of protecting children and developing understanding of adults with vulnerabilities. The Church should therefore be building capacity into our safeguarding structures in order to deal with problems in their infancy rather than when they have become more serious, complicated and expensive to resolve.
 - Whilst districts vary in many ways including size and safeguarding demands, in order for officers to be appointed in a way that will enable a basic presence to be established, a minimum posting of 1 day (7 hours) a week has been written into this formula.
 - The formula should be read in conjunction with the proposed DSO job description which has been produced from reviewing the job descriptions that districts currently use.
 - There is an expectation that the role is not just reactive but also proactive in being able to account for how safeguarding practice is being implemented in each district and

providing the evidence to show this. This includes provision for DSOs to be active across district committees and events and make advice and support around safeguarding practice as accessible as possible.

- It is not intended that this formula should be used to reduce the current level of resource that districts have already committed to safeguarding and should also recognise existing caseloads in calculations.
- In exceptional circumstances where a district is struggling to meet its needs the Chair is invited to have a conversation with the Safeguarding Adviser so that interim or further measures to enable sufficient safeguarding support provision can be agreed.

The formula

7. The formula for working through how many hours would be applicable for each district to employ a DSO is based on a 35-hour week.

Factor 1. Basic duties to fulfil DSO role

This includes supporting the District Safeguarding Group, Synod and district meetings, receiving professional supervision, updating on professional practice, learning and research, case work, training and auditing of church safeguarding procedures, emergencies and unforeseen events Total = 7 hours

Factor 2. Church population

Size of district in relation to numbers of churches/ members/activities, including areas of deprivation and greater need – up to 7 hours

Factor 3. District size

Geographical size of district (including ease of travel time or transport links)- up to 7 hours

Factor 4. Training commitments

Training – amount (now or anticipated) with training re-refresh every 4 years from September 2017 and revised leadership Module due to be introduced during 2017/18 – up to 7 hours

Factor 5. External relationships/ covenants of care

External relationships with Local Authorities (LADOs), Police, Health, Education, Probation and other public agencies (including Covenants of Care work and liaison) up to 7 hours

Calculating number of hours required

8. The minimum requirement will be 7 hours (Factor 1) regardless of other factors.
9. In addition to the minimum 7 hours allocation factors 2, 3, 4 and 5 should then be considered.

Each of these factors offers a maximum of 7 hours to be allocated each week and there are three levels for each factor:

Minimum – 2.5 hours

Medium – between 2.5 - 5 hours

Maximum – 5 - 7 hours

10. Each district should assess the level of activity or demand under factors 2, 3, 4 and 5 and decide if this is minimum, medium or maximum in intensity and time demands. From this an hourly rate can be identified.
11. Time allocation for each factor is then totalled and an indicative number of DSO hours arrived at for each District.

Examples of using the formula

12. In a district where the safeguarding need is assessed as minimal the total would be 15 hours (ie basic 7 hours + up to 2.5 hours for each of factors 2, 3, 4, 5).

In a district where the safeguarding need is assessed as maximum the total would be 35 hours (ie basic 7 hours + 7 hours for each of factors 2, 3, 4, 5)

13. In practice we would expect most districts to come somewhere in between these two points. It also allows districts to review and reassess demands as work varies or increases over time.
14. The calculation should be undertaken by the District Safeguarding Group and recommended to the District Policy committee. The connexional safeguarding team are happy to advise in this process.
15. It may be that it is considered there should be some external scrutiny of this process and this could be provided by the connexional Safeguarding Adviser reviewing the district calculation with the District Chair.

***RESOLUTIONS

- 14/1. The Council receives the Report.**
- 14/2. The Council agrees the suggested method for calculating District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) hours for each district.**
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JOB DESCRIPTION

Post:	District Safeguarding Officer (PT and FT) referred to as a DSO
Location:	Home or District Office based
Purpose & Objectives:	To take a lead for the Methodist Church in the District on issues relating to the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults
Responsible to:	The DSO will be employed (or appointed?) by the District and will be under the line management of the District Chair or designated person
Responsible for:	No line management responsibility (apart from admin in some cases)
Relationships:	District Chair; Members of District Safeguarding Group; Superintendent Ministers; Warden of the Diaconal Order where safeguarding concerns relate to a deacon; District and Regional Colleagues (other DSOs); The Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network; Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers; The connexional Safeguarding Team; Ecumenical and regional safeguarding colleagues; Statutory agencies especially adult and children's services, CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services), police, probation, MAPPA, (multi-agency public protection arrangements) and MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) staff – usually through individual casework

Summary

The DSO will work closely with the District Chair in providing leadership for good safeguarding practice throughout the churches and Circuits of the District. This is achieved through complying with the policies and strategies of the Methodist Church; adhering to legal requirements on matters to do with safeguarding; developing good practice and effective training; providing advice concerning responses to queries; and undertaking risk assessments in individual cases.

Main Responsibilities

Compliance with policies and strategies:

1. Have oversight of church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Safeguarding Procedures and report quarterly any non-conformance and concerns to the District Chair.
2. Provide policy advice and other guidance to churches and Circuits.
3. Ensure that all work, and other safeguarding work in the district is supported by full case recording.

4. Serve on the District Safeguarding Group and attend other meetings as required and directed

Developing good practice and effective training:

5. Keep up-to-date with relevant national and Methodist legislation.
6. Ensure that the circuit safeguarding trainers, superintendent ministers and circuit representatives are kept updated on any relevant matters.
7. Promote good communication and effective information sharing, including a proper understanding of the bounds of confidentiality.
8. Co-ordinate the provision of opportunities for safeguarding learning/training across the District.
9. Work with the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network in the delivery of Foundation and Leadership Modules Safeguarding (Creating Safer Space) training in accordance with the agreed protocol.

Providing advice:

10. Be available to offer advice which will include:
 - Individual cases
 - Oversight of covenants of care
 - Representing the Church in meetings with external organisations

Undertaking risk assessments in individual cases:

11. Take a lead on working with individual cases in the District including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations.
12. Undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the connexional Safeguarding Committee.

General:

13. Implement and follow district policies and procedures.
14. Maintain accurate records in the various media specified for your areas of responsibility.
15. Be committed to personal continuing professional development, undertake any training necessary and participate in the organisation's supervision and appraisal system.
16. Be able and willing to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends.

Management

- The Chair of District (or designated other) will be line manager who will monitor and evaluate progress with the DSO on a regular basis (meetings will take place monthly during the probationary period and quarterly thereafter).
- The District Safeguarding Group, with the DSO, will determine priorities for the work in line with connexional requirements.
- Professional supervision will be provided.

Terms and Conditions

Terms of appointment:	Permanent						
Health and Safety:	The post holder will be subject to the Methodist Church's Health and Safety policy.						
Equal Opportunities:	The district is committed to equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-oppressive policy and practice. No one we have contact with may be discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, religion, cultural group, marital status, sexual orientation, age or impairment. The policies apply to job applicants, employees, volunteers, users and beneficiaries of our services						
Physical Conditions:	Home or District office based						
Remuneration:	For lay employees: The salary will be £xxx per annum or £xxx per hour						
Disclosure:	The Methodist Church has identified this role as one which will require an enhanced criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This role will bring you into direct contact with children and vulnerable adults. It will also give you access to sensitive material or information.						
Work Permit:	Appointment will be subject to documentary evidence of the right to live and work in the UK						
Hours of Work:	Normal working pattern is XXX hours per week worked flexibly, including evenings and occasional weekends. Some weeks may require more hours, others less.						
Holiday Entitlement:	<table><tr><td>During the first to fourth years</td><td>25 days</td></tr><tr><td>During the fifth to ninth years</td><td>28 days</td></tr><tr><td>During the tenth and subsequent years</td><td>30 days</td></tr></table> plus Bank Holidays and an extra three days at Christmas and New Year. For an ordained appointment: The normal terms and conditions for a presbyter or deacon will apply.	During the first to fourth years	25 days	During the fifth to ninth years	28 days	During the tenth and subsequent years	30 days
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During the fifth to ninth years	28 days						
During the tenth and subsequent years	30 days						
Pension:	Eligible employees will be auto enrolled into a Pension Scheme.						
Probationary Period:	Appointments for lay employees are made subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.						
Travel expenses:	All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Mileage is paid at 45p per mile.						
Equipment:	A laptop and mobile phone will be provided to be used solely for this work						

Person Specification

Post: DSO

Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment
1. Relevant Training & Education	Educated to degree level or equivalent in a relevant field (Child Care, Social Work, Psychology, Health, Probation, Police etc) or relevant professional training	A qualification in the supervision of others, eg in Social Work, Probation or other Child Protection or Church related work	A ,Q
2. Proven abilities	Ability to appreciate the different dimensions of safeguarding within the Methodist Church.		A, I
	Proven track record in working in a training / educational role		A,I
	Experience of working with volunteers		
3. Skills and Competencies	IT literate		A,Q
	Excellent written and oral communication skills		A,I
4. Special Knowledge and Expertise	Expertise and experience in child and/or adult protection		A, I,
	An understanding of confidentiality and information sharing		A, I,
	Specialist knowledge of safeguarding		A,I
5. Personal Qualities	In sympathy with the ethos of the Methodist Church		A , I
	Professional and positive approach, with a commitment to professional development and self-improvement.		A , I,
	The ability to develop constructive working relationships		A,I

Method of Assessment A – Application Form, I – Interview, W – Written exercise, P – Presentation, G – Group exercise, R- References, Q – proof of qualification (certificates or transcripts)

We reserve the right to introduce a written exercise or group exercise as part of the recruitment and selection process.