

Sheffield Methodist District

Safeguarding Policy

**September 2006
Updated: April 2007**

Principles

The Sheffield Methodist District is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in its church communities and activities.

The Sheffield Methodist District recognises that child abuse can be detrimental to a child's development, including their religious and spiritual identity and beliefs.

The Sheffield Methodist District will respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child has been or may be harmed.

Recovery from abuse can be a complex and painful process for survivors, offenders and their communities. Where possible the Sheffield Methodist District will support, give voice and facilitate healing to survivors, offenders and those who care for them.

Aims

To implement government legislation and guidance and Connexional safeguarding policy in circuits and churches.

To provide 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.

1. Connexional statement

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. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people.

2. Key definitions and concepts

Children

In this policy, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health and development; and
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;

and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum chances and to enter adulthood successfully. (**Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2006**)

Child protection

Is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Effective child protection is essential as part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

What is Abuse and Neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploring 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 causing children 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.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or at the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/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 provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It

may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3. Roles and responsibilities

a. District Chair

Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of Safeguarding policy.

Action: Safeguarding to be included on the agenda of the first superintendent's meeting in the connexional year.

Use the expertise and advice of the Training and Development Officer.

Action: The Training and Development Officer will ensure the Chair, superintendents and District Policy Committee on updated on any changes to safeguarding policy and guidance.

Ensure that all members of the District Policy Committee or District Synod are made aware of the terms of S.O 010 'no person who has been convicted of or has a caution from the police concerning sexual offences against children shall be appointed to any office, post or responsibility or engaged under any contract to which this sub-clause applies' (S.O. 010(2)(ii)).

Action: The District Policy Committee Secretary will send Form C to all new members of DPC.

Include a statement about S.O. 010 in District Policy Committee and Lay Employment sub-committee agendas.

Action: This will happen annually at the first meeting in a connexional year.

Ensure that the Lay Employment Sub-Committee addresses the issues.

Action: This will happen through the Personnel Office and District Administrator.

Ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.

Action: At the first superintendents' meeting in a connexional year superintendents to share concerns about individual churches implementation. Chair of District to pass information on the District Safeguarding Group.

Ensure that, where there are district groups or events, the district policy is implemented (Appendix)

Ensure that those elected as representatives to Conference comply with the terms of S.O10.

Action: Synod Secretary to send Form C to all new people elected to Conference.

Monitor and evaluate annually.

Action: This policy will be monitored throughout the year and at the first District Policy Committee in a connexional year will be evaluated by the District Group who will present a report.

b. Synod Secretary

Provide copies of Safeguarding for District Policy Committee

Action: At the first District Policy Committee of a connexional year will circulate copies.

Circulate the district policy to Circuit Meeting Secretaries

Action: To circulate new policy after September 2006 Synod.

c. District Safeguarding Group

Purpose and function:

- to respond to requests for help, advice and information
- to implement the connexional and district policies
- to initiate programmes of awareness and good practice
- to work with other agencies on child protection.

District Safeguarding Officer and Convenor of District Group: Caroline Riley, District Office, Victoria Hall, Norfolk St. SHEFFIELD, S1 2JB, 0114 249 5059, carolinerileytdoyorkshire@sheffieldmethodist.org

Procedures for District Events involving children and young people

Introduction

It is essential that District events that involve children and young people do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church or circuit.

Registration

All District events that involve children and/or young people must be registered with the District Safeguarding Officer who will advise them on the planning and delivery of the event.

Responsibility for those planning and leading the event

The organisers of a District event are responsible for those leading and running the event and for the suitability of its location. They need to ensure that:

- a) All those involved in leading and running the event have:
 - been made aware of these Procedures
 - signed Safeguarding Form A and have received the appropriate disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau
 - are clear about their role and responsibilities, including what action they should take if they are concerned about the welfare a child or an allegation is made.
- b) The event has been planned effectively and the following considered:
 - the appropriateness of the facilities for the event
 - the availability of First Aid facilities
 - the availability of enough adults to adequately supervise the event.
- c) One of the organisers is clearly identified as responsible for ensuring that safeguarding procedures in place and implemented.

Responsibility for those attending the event

The responsibility for those attending the event lies with those who bring them and their 'home' church. It is for that church council to ensure that the youth workers in charge have the appropriate disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau, travel arrangements have been made and youth workers have consent forms and emergency contact numbers.

Acknowledgement: thanks to the former Oxford and Leicester District

