

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY FOR THE SHEFFIELD METHODIST DISTRICT 2016/17

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 male and female 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 Sheffield 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 are paramount.

The Sheffield 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 Sheffield 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 Sheffield 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. Furthermore, the District recognises other emerging forms of abuse such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking in our communities and greater awareness of domestic abuse in our churches. It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including their 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 Sheffield 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 Sheffield Methodist District commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

The Sheffield 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.

In acknowledgement of the publication of 'Courage, Cost and Hope', the report of the Past Cases Review, in May 2015, the Sheffield District of the Methodist Church further commits itself to the full

implementation of the report's recommendations, as they apply to Districts. Through the District Safeguarding Group it will monitor progress towards this aim.

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. This responsibility can also where appropriate extend to responding to abuse within our wider communities as part of our mission. The policy is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

a) Roles and responsibilities

District Chair

- Manage and support the work of the District Executive Officer for Safeguarding
 - Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies.
 - Through the Executive Officer ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in this area and enable mandatory and skills training opportunities to be made available.
 - Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
 - Through the Executive Officer ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies
 - In 2016/17 ensure each Superintendent arranges for completion of the Church and Circuit audit process and then ensure that local church policies are reviewed annually. Confirmation of this review should be sent to the Executive Officer for Safeguarding for scrutiny by the District Safeguarding Group on completion of the 2016/17 'deep dive' audit process
 - Ensure that where there are District Meetings and events, the district safeguarding policy is implemented
 - Support the Executive 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.
- Action** The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group report to the District Leadership Team (DPC)

District Executive Officer for Safeguarding

- Have oversight of church, circuit and district compliance with the Safeguarding Handbook, Creating Safer Space Training (in 2016/17 to include the Foundation Refresher Module) and current Disclosure and Barring Service policy and practice
- Provide policy advice and guidance to churches and circuits
- Take the lead on working with complex or serious individual cases in the district
- Identify and as necessary develop good quality care and support services available in the District for survivors to access easily
- Liaise with ecumenical and local authority safeguarding partners
- Take responsibility for high quality case recording
- Promote good communication and information sharing
- Undertake safeguarding risk assessments

- Be committed to ongoing professional development and to the provision of safeguarding learning within the district
- Deliver an annual report to the first District Policy Committee/Leadership Team of each Connexional year including monitoring of district events

District Safeguarding Group

- Be independently chaired, its business managed in an effective manner with the support of the Executive Officer
- Provide support, challenge and guidance to the Executive Officer, ensuring a response to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Ensure support in implementing District and Connexional policy.
- In 2016/17, through a comprehensive church and circuit audit process, take steps to ensure compliance with policy, training and safer recruitment requirements as well as monitoring progress towards implementation of all PCR recommendation that apply locally
- Continue to place more emphasis on support for survivors, and sustain active partnerships with ecumenical and local authority partners to address local concerns that impact on church and wider community life.
- The District Safeguarding Group will ensure that the Chair, Superintendents and District Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Initiate programmes of awareness and good practice.
- Work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, Regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) in safeguarding issues.
- Monitor the work of the Executive Officer in respect of his/her scrutiny of compliance issues.
- With the support of the District Chair monitor how incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary. *(N.B. the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in Pastoral Charge.)*

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.

v) Survivors are those victims of abuse, whether perpetrated in a church setting or not, who may be seeking care and support from the church or some form of individually defined restoration. Other survivors, whose abuse was perpetrated in a church setting, may not wish for any involvement from the church on their journey but expect the church to offer swift and easy access to services that offer support to make a disclosure and provide ongoing care.

vi) **Child sexual exploitation** can occur in communities when children and young people are groomed through presents and attention in return for sexual activities and being forced into acts with other people

vii) **Trafficking and modern slavery** can occur when children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are illegally brought into the country or moved around the country without their consent to work in the sex industry or for extremely low wages and in poor conditions to work in other settings

viii) **Domestic abuse** principally comprises physical or sexual violence or coercive control perpetrated within a domestic setting.

District Social Media Policy in respect of safeguarding

Sheffield District notes the significant use of a variety of social media to provide information about events and services, and as an opportunity for church communities and individuals to communicate with each other. The District recognises that the Methodist Church has given active consideration to ensuring the safe use of social media and electronic communication systems with children and young people in particular so as to minimise the risk of inappropriate usage that can potentially lead to abusive situations developing.

The District therefore commends the social media guidelines set out on the Connexional Safeguarding website to all churches and circuits for incorporation into their own policies but specifically requires that all District originating communications and planning for District events complies with these guidelines. They can be accessed here

<http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/social-media-guidelines/new-social-media-guidelines/>

Dated07.11.16.....

SignedRevd Gill Newton..... District Chair

Date for reviewNovember 2017.....

