



Serving the Methodist Church
in South Yorkshire,
North Nottinghamshire
and North East Derbyshire

The Church Safeguarding Officer's Handbook

Connexional year 2023

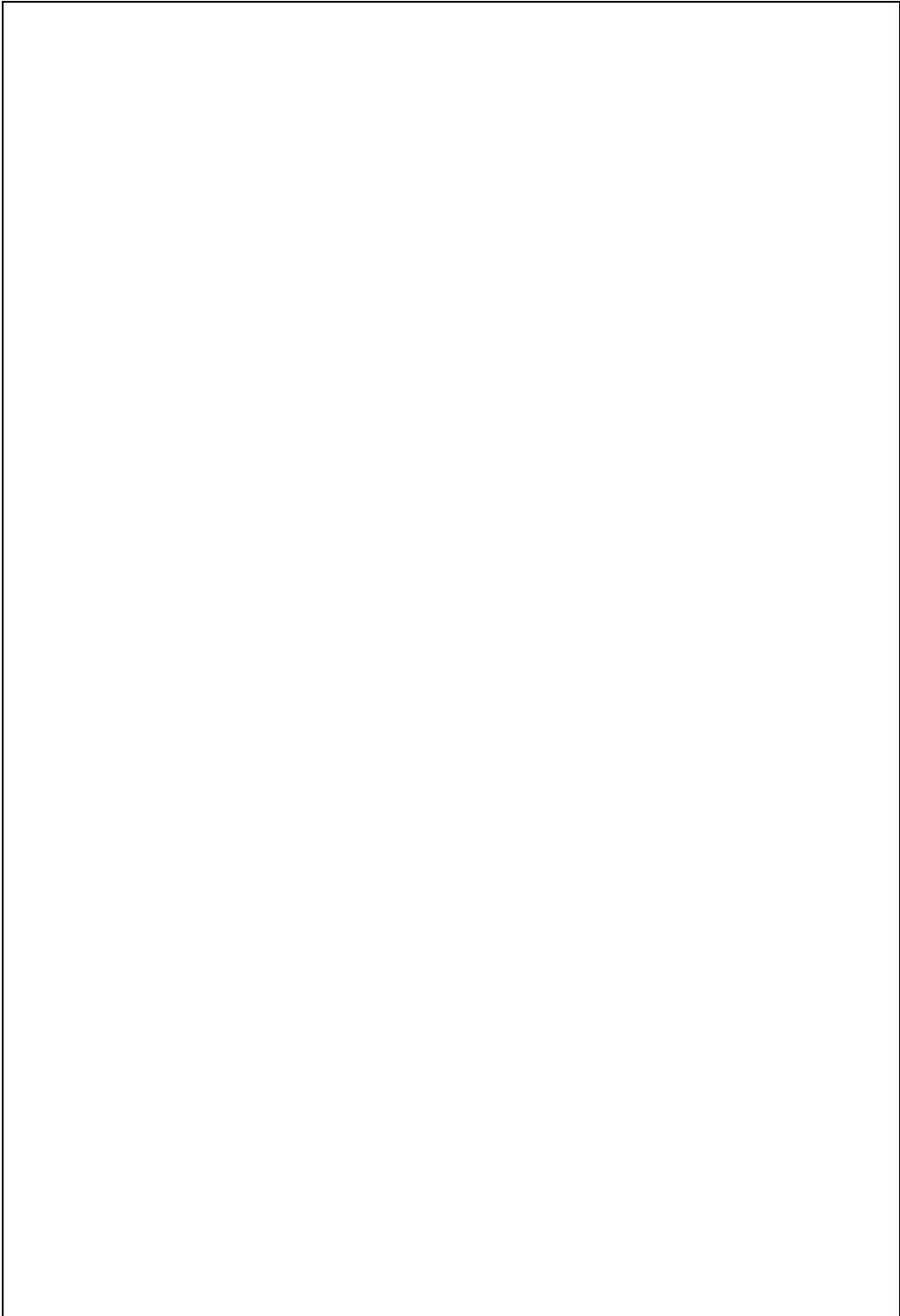


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Introduction

If you are reading this handbook, then chances are you have taken on the role of Church Safeguarding Officer.

It can be daunting taking on a new role and responsibilities, but don't worry you are not expected to know everything from day one! There's a lot of information to take in, so don't expect to remember everything. If you can grasp the overall basic procedures then you can always look up the detail when necessary. Even the most experienced Safeguarding Officer will not know all the answers, but they will know where to go to find them.

This handbook, provided by the Sheffield Methodist District, aims to take you through the required paperwork and highlight the key elements that you need to be aware of, whilst also directing you to documents and websites that can provide more detailed information.

The District will also keep you updated with changes in legislation and provide training when significant changes are implemented. Queries can be raised with me, the District Safeguarding Officer or your Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

Sharing expertise across the District helps all Church Safeguarding Officers grow in knowledge and competency, enabling them to guide and inform their local church members with confidence.

Alison Hill
District Safeguarding Officer
Sheffield Methodist District

September 2023

Email: safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org

Phone: 07483 362 735

Main Methodist Church Safeguarding Documents

There are two main policy documents that are routinely used for Safeguarding:

- The Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church
- The Model Church Safeguarding Policy

Both documents are updated annually so I don't recommend printing them out, rather I would suggest becoming familiar with where to find them on the Connexional website.

The Methodist Church website (www.methodist.org.uk) is the main website for the Methodist Churches in Great Britain and has a section devoted to [Safeguarding](#)

Safeguarding Policies, Procedures & Guidance



This document contains all the information needed to implement safeguarding at every level of the Methodist Church. The document sets out the policy, procedures and guidance relating to safeguarding. 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.

The document is reviewed every 12 months by the Connexional Safeguarding team and changes and amendments are considered by the Safeguarding Committee.

This document is the one stop shop for all the answers to safeguarding questions. If you contact me with a query, this is where I will look for the answer.

Model Church Safeguarding Policy – updated March 2023

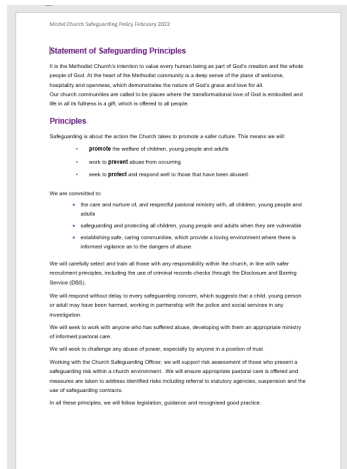
Every Church is required to make clear how they will meet their legal obligations regarding safeguarding. The document set out how each individual church will do this.

This model Church policy template may be used and amended to suit local circumstances.

An editable version can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/

This model policy, on pages 3 & 4, sets out the ten main tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer. The ten tasks lack clarity in regard to what action needs to be taken to fulfil them – for that we need to look at the Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance document. However, looking there can still lead to uncertainty.

This handbook is designed to walk you through the ten tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer, and clearly explain, step by step, what action you need to take to meet each task requirements.



The following eight chapters will provide the clarity lacking in the Church Safeguarding Policy. You can read the Model Safeguarding Policy in Appendix 1. I have also highlighted which part of the policy relates to which section in this handbook, to save you time locating the information you require.

It is important to pace yourself as you work through each task. There's a lot to get through. Better to tackle each task slowly and thoroughly.

Ten Tasks of a Church Safeguarding officer

The ten tasks can be found on pages 3 & 4 of the model Church Safeguarding Policy.

When you read them, they all look straight forward, but ...

What they don't do is explain what the Methodist Church expects Safeguarding Officers to do to meet each task. To understand that we need to look more closely at the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance document. The next 8 chapters go into the fine details of each task, meaning you don't need to do worry about what each task requires.

If your church has no safeguarding measures in place, the amount of work that needs completing can seem overwhelming. If this is the case for your church, I suggest you make a 3-year plan. The role of Church Safeguarding Officer should not consume every minute of your time; after all, it is a voluntary role. It is better to pace yourself and create a plan that is manageable and effective. I have suggested the following schedule, based on the risk not having things in place can have on individuals.

Connexional Year 1	Connexional Year 2	Connexional Year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics Chapter 4: Providing Support (Safer recruitment) Chapter 5: Safeguarding Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2: Recording & reporting of Concerns Chapter 7: Promoting Safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3: Providing Support (Health & Safety) Chapter 6: Safeguarding practise on Church premises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8: Issues with Compliance 		

The plan above allows you to form a solid foundation in year 1 which you can then build on in years 2 & 3.

Safer Recruitment is time consuming but vital. Creating a spreadsheet and keeping it up to date is just as vital in years 2 & 3, but it can take time to get your head around all the forms and people. Taking a year to create a spreadsheet, and to familiarise yourself with the procedures will mean it will be easier to do in years 2 & 3. You won't be able to ignore it in subsequent years. It is a living document that needs continual attention, but you will have learnt what takes time and how to deal with that.

You will notice that Chapter 8: Issues with Compliance is spread across all 3 years of the plan. If someone does not co-operate with a safeguarding measure, then you will need to act. Someone refusing to complete a DBS when they have a role that needs one, needs to be tackled. It is not something that can simply be ignored. Therefore, knowing what to do when issues arise, i.e. Chapter 8, is not something you may ever need but it's good to know what to do should an issue arise.

I have included a Checklist of all the annual tasks a Church Safeguarding Officer needs to complete in Appendix 3 – if you are following the 3-year plan, please just focus on the tasks assigned to your specific year.

Writing Reports for the Church Council

'Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council' (Model Church Safeguarding Policy, page 3).

Good practice means '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' (Model Church Safeguarding Policy, page 4).

Annual Report

The two paragraphs above remind us why it is important the Church Council are kept informed about everything you do to fulfil Methodist expectations with regard to Safeguarding. The legal responsibility lies with members of the Church Council so they need to be very clear what is in place and, more importantly, what isn't.

The only means of explaining what you are doing to support safeguarding is through the information you share with them.

The Model Safeguarding Policy asks that you present an Annual Report. This should summarise all the work that you have completed so far, and all that you intend to do, in the current Connexional year. I send the Annual Safeguarding Audit out in early June and ask that it be returned by the end of July. If you provide Church Councils with your Annual Report, as near as possible to the beginning of June, then the Church Council can use the information you provide to complete the audit.

In Appendix 2 I have provided an example of what an Annual Report could look like, and the kind of information you could provide.

Interim Reports

Given that Safeguarding is an agenda item on all Church Council meetings you could provide an interim report. If your church is a busy church, with lots of church activities and people needing Safely Recruiting then it would be appropriate to provide reports more frequently.

An interim report should include an update on your work since your last report.

It should also highlight when you have prompted people to do something and if they have complied. For example, if you asked all your groups leaders to complete an Activity Risk Assessment (Chapter 3) then you should list the groups that were informed. Next, I would list the groups that have completed the Activity Risk Assessment and then list the groups that haven't completed. Remember, it is not your responsibility to chase people who haven't complied to your request – that responsibility lies with the Church Council, but they can only act if you provide them with the evidence they need.

If you have attended 'Additional training' then an interim report would be a good time to cascade any learning from your training. Your increased understanding, above and beyond the Foundation Module, may provide valuable learning, that other council members may appreciate knowing.

Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Attend training and meetings relating to the role
- Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.

Introduction

The very first thing you need to understand is how the role of Church Safeguarding Officer sits in regard to the Church Council.

If you look on page 3 of the Model Church Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 3), under the heading Church Council we read that:

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. The Safeguarding Officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually.

If we look at the sentence in italics, we see why each church needs a Safeguarding Officer, because:

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the Church Safeguarding Officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities.

If you would prefer not to be a member of the Church Council, that's perfectly fine. As a minimum we require a Church Safeguarding Officer to attend one meeting per year to give their annual report. For the other meetings throughout the year, it is perfectly acceptable for a written report to be submitted to keep the council fully informed.

We know that some churches struggle to find anyone suitable to take up the role. In such circumstances one way round this is to share a Safeguarding Officer with another church. This is perfectly acceptable; however the policy makes clear that:

Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.

Training

Church Safeguarding officers are required to complete both Creating Safer Spaces courses: Foundation module and the Advanced module. After completing both courses they will need to refresh the Advanced module once every 4 years.

Attend training and meetings relating to the role

Yes, absolutely, you will need to complete both levels of Safer Spaces training but there is also a requirement for people to train further.

Think about the people associated with your church. If you have children attending junior church, Messy Church or youth club, for example, it would be appropriate for the Safeguarding Officer to access specific Child Protection training. If your church caters more to older people then training relating to mental health, self-neglect or understanding dementia may be more appropriate.

People shouldn't attend training just for training sakes, but rather to enhance their understanding of the issues vulnerable groups attending your church may face.

If your church doesn't have children or vulnerable adults, then perhaps training on Domestic Violence would be more appropriate? With one in three women aged 16-59 experiencing domestic abuse in her lifetime then, in my opinion, Domestic Violence training should be a mandatory requirement.

Safeguarding training is readily available nowadays. The Learning Network and the Connexional Safeguarding team frequently produce safeguarding training. Working with my North East DSO colleagues we produced a week-long online safeguarding conference each Connexional year.

It may be that you have to attend safeguarding training as part of your job or as required by other voluntary roles, for example, as a school governor. If the training you attend at work is relevant to the church setting then you should feel free to count that.

Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.

The Safeguarding officer has to check that safeguarding is on the agenda but that doesn't mean they have to present a report at every meeting.

The only reporting requirement is to provide an annual report. That being said, if your church is an active church then you will need to present the Church Council with specific information to facilitate them in making an informed decision as to whether they are succeeding in their responsibilities regarding safeguarding.

If you have a church with a small congregation, the Safeguarding Officer may not have any updates between some meetings – but that doesn't mean safeguarding should not be on the agenda.

Most weeks I write a safeguarding article for the District newsletter, sent out electronically by the District Administrator. The articles focus on different aspects of safeguarding and may be aimed at the person in pastoral charge or the lettings steward or the pastoral visitors, for example. Any of the people just mentioned may wish to bring a safeguarding issue to the council's attention, and they should be strongly encouraged to do so. Safeguarding is everyone's business, not just the Safeguarding Officer's.

If you haven't already, I would strongly encourage you to sign up to the District newsletter. This is the one place I post safeguarding updates. You can sign up by clicking on this link:

<https://www.sheffieldmethodist.org/news/newsletters.html>

Chapter 2: Recording and Reporting of Concerns

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.
- Promote appropriate routes for reporting concerns.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

Record all issues that are reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.

The Methodist Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (PP&G) provides all the information we need regarding how to record safeguarding issues – however the information is spread throughout the whole document. Therefore, it's important that we take time to bring this information together into a practical and user-friendly policy and procedure for our individual churches.

I suggest that every church create their own **Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance**. I have created a model policy that you could use, bringing together all the relevant information. This can be found on the [District website](#)

This policy will need to be presented to and approved by the Church Council annually, in the same way the Model Church Safeguarding Policy is. There are sections in the reporting policy that will need to be personalised to your church. Ask the Church Council's opinion as to what they suggest needs to be edited in.

You might question why such a policy is needed, so I would like to quickly take you through each section and hopefully you will understand why.

The Policy has 5 sections and there are 2 associated procedures.

Section 1: Respond promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation.

Section 2: Recording – with the text taken from page 31 of the PP&G.

In this section I mention using a **Church Safeguarding Concern Form**, which Connexion produced a little while back. I am recommending the Church Safeguarding Officers are the only ones to use this form.

I get very nervous about asking people to report their concerns on such a form (as opposed to having a verbal conversation). In one church (not in the Sheffield District) I was told that a children's worker did not report an incident because they didn't have the right form to hand. They didn't understand that they could report a concern verbally - they assumed they had to use the form.

I do recommend Church Safeguarding Officers use the form though. If a case had to be reported to a statutory agency, then they would need to give a certain level of detail and the form would prompt that.

The last bullet point in Section 2 refers to a **Case Notes Form**. Using this form to record all other actions you take with a case will make you compliant with the record keeping requirement in the next section, Section 3.

If someone has to keep safeguarding records on a particular person, it is common practice to use the Case Note format – please find the master copy attached. Keeping your notes in one document is the most secure way of retaining information. Rather than having to collate numerous bits of paper the Case Notes document allows all information to be presented in a clear chronological order.

In the next section we are told that '*A record should be retained of the nature of the allegation or concern, actions taken and the outcome*'. Using the **Church Safeguarding Concern Form** and the **Case Notes Form** together, you will be able to provide an excellent account of all actions taken.

Section 3: Retention of Safeguarding Information ([Retention schedules](#))

Retaining document for 75 years is a requirement in law and cannot be altered or changed.

Section 4: Storing Safeguarding Information (pg84 in the PP&G)

The first bullet point will require the church to name those who will have access to safeguarding records. This policy will be reviewed every 12 months so the names of people can be updated as new people take on new roles.

Your Church Council will need to decide who should have access to documents. For reasons of confidentiality, I recommend only a couple of people are named – perhaps the person in Pastoral Charge (Minister, Lay Pastor) and the Church Safeguarding Officer.

It is good to have a backup plan and therefore, I encourage you to list someone who could access the paperwork in an emergency situation. An emergency situation would be where records are needed by statutory agencies to protect someone when there is an immediate danger to life. If the Minister and the Church Safeguarding Officer are both away on holiday, someone else will need to locate the information as soon as possible.

In this section you will also need to make some decisions regarding how your church intends to store safeguarding paperwork. It is important that the route you chose will need to conform with the need to keep paperwork for 75 years. You may wish to keep records electronically or you may prefer to keep paper records.

Whichever you choose is fine; you will just need to delete the bullet points that don't apply at this time. If you choose to keep paper copies this year you could always switch to electronic files at a later date.

Section 5: Sharing Information. (Pg65 in the PP&G)

Serious Case Reviews, which are completed after every child dies in suspicious circumstances, constantly highlight a lack of information sharing as a contributing factor. Data Protection and now GDPR have made people very cautious about sharing information but when it comes to Safeguarding we need to reassess our approach. The opening statements of Section 5 demonstrate how important information sharing can be, but we do need to be mindful that we are following basic information sharing rules.

The Policies, Procedure and Guidance document goes into much greater detail about information sharing and I would direct you to read through all the information if needed. The information I have included in Section 5 is really to highlight its importance in relation to recording safeguarding concerns and to reassure church members that information sharing, done correctly, will save lives and is allowed.

The last thing I need to do is to draw your attention to the back page of the Church Safeguarding Concern Form on page 7. You will see I have highlighted in yellow 3 sections that will need personalising to reflect your church. The whole paragraph regards providing people with a Privacy Notice – this is a requirement under GDPR. Connexion have produced one for you to use. Please be sensitive regarding the right time to give someone a Privacy Notice. You don't have to give someone the notice immediately if that would be pastorally insensitive, but they will need a copy over the coming days or weeks.

Every year when the Policies, Procedure and Guidance (PP&G) document is updated I will update the model copy of the Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance. I will share with you as Church Safeguarding Officer, and therefore hopefully take the stress out of element of your role.

Promote appropriate routes for reporting concerns

This task sits nicely alongside *Recording of Safeguarding Concerns* and so it makes sense to tackle both aspects together.

The first thing I would like to point out is that you are only required to 'promote' appropriate routes.

If someone comes to you with a safeguarding concern, the very first thing you need to do is assess what level of intervention is needed. My predecessor, Howard Smedley, created a very good A4 guide called the [Responding Well Flow Chart](#), which I have updated and it can be found on the District website. I also recommend using the flowcharts found in the PP&G on pages 27 & 28. These are also available on the District website.

Both flow charts give clear guidance on how to deal with a situation, but you can always contact me for any help and advice if needed. If you're not sure if the concern needs immediate action or not, please consult with someone else. If in doubt, refer to statutory services. If you haven't met their thresholds they will tell you and give you advice on what appropriate steps you need to take. Don't forget to record any decisions and conversations you have.

The Responding Well Flow Chart will always state the date of publication so please ensure that the copy you use and display is the latest version. On the back of the page I have listed all the telephone numbers for the statutory services which operate in the District.

People attending your church, especially Church Council members, need to know the procedure if they have a Safeguarding Concern.

Chapter 3: Providing Support (Health and Safety)

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regards to safeguarding.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

On the surface this appears very simple. However, if we read further into the Church Safeguarding Policy, we get a better understanding of what *'providing help and support'* looks like.

Let's start by considering why the stewards need support and advice regarding safeguarding.

In the [Church Stewards Handbook](#) we read that they are asked to do five things in regards to safeguarding:

1. promote the importance of safeguarding
2. encourage those required to attend the training
3. speak up about the importance of following correct procedures
4. maintain good practice
5. remind everyone of the value of creating safer space.

When we realise that stewards are required to meet the above standards, we understand why the following (found on page 2 of the model safeguarding policy, first paragraph) is included:

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (2023).

There are numerous things we can do to 'provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding'. The Church Safeguarding Policy, however, makes several specific requests, and we are now going to look at these in more detail.

This can, again, be found on page 4 of the model Church Safeguarding Policy, all under b) Good Practice.

- 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 record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.

If we look at the general duties of a Church Steward, the Church Stewards Handbook (2021), states that:

With other church stewards, you will hold the 'general responsibilities of a steward' (SO 633). These can be broken down into four key areas, including to: exercise pastoral care and leadership with the minister.

The Connexional safeguarding team have produced two booklets regarding Safeguarding and Pastoral Visiting. These can be found on the District website.

The booklet called [Pastoral Care Guidance](#) should be given to the Pastoral Secretary who in turn should give a copy to all their Pastoral Visitors. I also suggest that this be shared with the Senior Steward and ask that they provide a copy to all the other stewards. Given one of their main safeguarding tasks concerns pastoral care, this seems very appropriate. You can explain why they are being given the booklet and how it could support them in their role.

Similarly, in regard to the minister or lay pastor, you could give them a copy of the [Safeguarding and Pastoral Care booklet](#). This booklet should also be given to the Pastoral Visitors' Secretary or whoever oversees Pastoral Visiting in your church.

- 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 a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. 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.

Page 4 – Model Church Safeguarding Policy

It is not the responsibility of the Church Safeguarding Officer to complete the Health and Safety Risk Assessment. A Property Steward or their representative should do it. Even if no-one is doing them, it is still not a safeguarding matter.

It is a safeguarding matter to check that specific things are in place or have been done which would have an unsafe impact on vulnerable groups using the premises.

Therefore, in order to meet the safeguarding requirements in the box above, three things are needed:

1. The Church Safeguarding Officer needs to explain what safeguarding elements need to be included in a Health and Safety assessment.
2. The Safeguarding Officer needs to work in partnership with the Property Steward to establish if the correct requirements are in place.
3. The Church Safeguarding Officer needs to establish if the safeguarding aspects will form part of the Property Stewards' report (and therefore it will be the Property Stewards who report to the church council) or whether the Safeguarding Officer needs to report their findings in their report.

In order to help you achieve all three, I have created a form for you to use: [Safeguarding Health and Safety Assessment](#). This can be found on the District website.

Completing this form should take a maximum of 1 hour, once a year.

The Church Council can then use the results of your inspection to *consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable*. Page 4 – Model Church Safeguarding Policy

- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate. A record to be kept in the church file for each driver/car.

Page 4 – Model Church Safeguarding Policy

In order to meet the requirements for the next cause above I have simply created an additional form which forms part of the Recruitment Process. This can be found on the District website.

When I provide the Confidential Declaration (more about this in Chapter 5) I also provide the [Providing Church-Organised Transport](#) form whenever necessary– the two are then stapled together and kept with the other recruitment paperwork.

It needs to be clearly explained that the safety of people being transported to and from church activities is the responsibility of whoever makes the transport arrangements. For example, if parents make arrangements themselves, then they are responsible for ensuring the safety of those being transported. Another example could be if one neighbour brings another neighbour to Sunday worship. This is a private arrangement and one not initiated by the church. If the church does make the arrangements, safety becomes the responsibility of the church.

- v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.

Page 4 – Model Church Safeguarding Policy

Page 61 of the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church states that:

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, approved 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).

It's the responsibility of the Church Safeguarding Officer therefore to promote the concept of Activity Risk Assessments.

In order to do this, you will need to share booklets, available on the District website.

The Code of Conduct booklet has 2 versions and contains Connexional guidance:

1. [Working with Children and Young People](#); and
2. [Working with Adults](#)

The second is a simple guide to [Risk Assessments for Church-led Activities](#).

Please will you therefore provide the *Safer working practises when managing children's activities* to leaders of groups aimed at children and young people and the *Code of safer working practises with adults* to leaders of groups aimed at adults.

In my personal experience, people can be uncooperative in regard to completing activity assessments. It is not my role as a Church Safeguarding Officer to argue with people about this. I simply need to make sure the Church Council are aware of any issues and remind them about the final standard in the box below:

- vi) 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.

Page 4 – Model Church Safeguarding Policy

As you can now see there are a number of actions that need to be addressed in order to fulfil the task of supporting the minister and stewards.

All the above can seem a little overwhelming, so please see the Checklist of all the above points, which can be found in Appendix 3.

The actions identified in this chapter do not need to be carried out all at once. Tackle one task at a time then they won't feel so overwhelming.

Chapter 4: Providing Support (Safer Recruitment)

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

What are Safer Recruitment Procedures?

The Methodist Church has a specific policy covering Safer Recruitment called **Safer Recruitment Procedures and Guidance July 2021**. Available on the Connexional website. This policy is item number 2 in the final list of documents.

The document has all the information needed to guide people through the recruitment process, both for formal paid roles and also for volunteer roles.

On page 10 you will find the **12 Steps to Recruitment**. These 12 steps outline all the measures needed to be taken, with the rest of the document providing clarity and guidance.

Step 1 requires churches to: ***Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process***, and that very much ties in with the task assigned to CSO in the box above. If each church has their own policy, then once you have passed the policy onto group leaders, you can clearly demonstrate you have *informed people with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures*.

Therefore, I have written a policy for churches and Circuits to use and adopt: **Church Safer Recruitment Policy**. This can be found on the District

I would encourage you to share this with your Church Council and ask your church to adopt it. This is exactly the same idea I suggested in regard to **Recording and Storing Safeguarding Documents** in Chapter 2. The policy will need to be updated annually, something I will do on your behalf, and adopted annually by your Church Council – I suggest this is done at the same time as you adopt the Safeguarding Policy.

You will see there are parts of the document highlighted in yellow – this is to alert you to the fact that specific names need adding.

You and/or your Church Council may wish to change some of the wording and that is absolutely fine. As long as at the end of the process you have a bespoke policy for your church which reflects the requirements of the Methodist Church.

On the District website you will also find attached two further documents which you might find useful.

First, a template for a **Volunteer Role outline** – more about this in the Church Safer Recruitment Policy and also in your guidance notes.

Second, a **Lone Worker Policy for Volunteers**. I created this for my own church volunteers to use when a more formal assessment seemed to over the top. Please don't feel you need to use my version if you would prefer to use your own.

Once the policy has been adopted by your church, a copy needs to be given to all group leaders. This then clearly explains that they have a responsibility to Safely Recruit people supporting their group.

Now, I could stop here. We have come up with a simple solution to the task assigned to CSO and you will have done everything required.

However, the reality is that people will have questions and naturally they will come to you for answers. Therefore, I have done a second version of the Church Safer Recruitment policy, but this time I have included notes that you may find helpful. I have entitled it '**Church Safeguarding Officers Guide to the local Recruitment and Selection Policy Feb 2022**'. Please see Appendix 4

At several steps along the process I am recommending group leaders ask for your input. This is to make sure they are clear on specific safeguarding issues but also to give you opportunity to know and understand what is happening and who is doing what. As the Church Safeguarding Officer you will need to prompt people who need Foundation Module training (more in the next chapter), so being included in the Recruitment process will give you a heads up as to who is in which role. Making sure churches are Recruiting Safely is incredibly important, so please feel free to get in touch if you ever need clarification on any aspect at any time. I often receive emails asking if a specific person in a specific role needs a DBS check and I am very happy to advice and help whenever possible.

Safer Recruitment Recording

Of all the tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer, this is the one that will take most of your time.

As the Church Safeguarding Officer it is your responsibility to maintain a record of everyone Safely Recruited in your church. This record will need to be kept for 75 years.

In order to do this, I suggest you keep a **Safer Recruitment Spreadsheet** of all the information you have on each person. To help you do this I have created two versions for you to choose from and use. The first version is in a Word format, please see Appendix 5, and the second in an Excel format, both can be downloaded from the District website.

The paperwork needed when Safely Recruiting someone to a role is fairly straightforward.

The very first step though, is deciding if someone is working with a vulnerable group (i.e. children, young people or vulnerable adults). If they are, then you will need one set of forms; and they're not working with a vulnerable group you will need another set of forms.

The table below contains the Safeguarding Forms you will need to provide and retain for 75 years. I provide much more details in the Safeguarding Officer guidance to the Safer Recruitment Policy (Appendix 4)

Forms	People working with Vulnerable groups	People not working with vulnerable groups
Role Outline	This is part of Form A – part 2	A simple role outline can be used
Confidential Declaration	CSD/1 This doubles as permission to complete a DBS	CSD/2 This allows people to disclose if they have any issue that the church needs to be aware off.

Application Form	Form A – part 1	Church groups to devise their own
DBS	Needed for this role	Not needed for this role
Key Holder Declaration	Do they need a key for this role? If so they will need to complete Form D and be given a copy of the Lone Worker Policy.	

Chapter 5: Safeguarding Training

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit and District Safeguarding officers to arrange training.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

Identify those who are required to attend safeguarding training:

If you keep and arrange the storage of all the Safer Recruitment documents, then you will be able to identify who is required to attend safeguarding training.

In **Chapter 4: Safer Recruitment**, I introduced the idea of having a local Safer Recruitment policy for your church. I provided you with a model policy you could amend with local details, and then could be given to group leaders. This would assist them in making sure they follow Safer recruitment procedures.

Also, in Chapter 4, I introduced you to the Church Safeguarding Officer's Guide to the Model Safer Recruitment Policy – which gave you specific information you may need.

Step 3 of the 12 Steps to Safer Recruitment talked about creating a role outline for each role. As part of that I encouraged Church Safeguarding Officers to include which level of safeguarding training each role needs to complete.

The hard work in Chapter 4 now means that you can easily identify who needs what level of safeguarding training. You simply look at your Safer Recruitment Spreadsheet and, being mindful that Safeguarding Training needs to be completed once every 4 years, you could now see who needs training in the current Connexional year.

Inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training:

At the beginning of each Connexional year (starting in September) you need to let the people identified as requiring training know that they will need to attend training and ask them to book onto a convenient course.

How will people know when a course is taking place?

Each June/July I ask churches to complete an audit of their safeguarding practice over the current Connexional year. I ask you to send me a basic Safer Recruitment spreadsheet. From there I make a list, for each church in the district, of how many people need to complete the Foundation module and how many need to complete the Advanced module.

I pass on the numbers of people needing to complete the Foundation module to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, who is tasked with organising the Foundation module sessions. In September you will need to contact your Circuit Safeguarding Officer and check when they intend to deliver the Foundation module training sessions. If you have a significant number of people in your church requiring training, then hopefully a course could be delivered in your church.

I make a record of who needs to complete the Advanced module as it's the District Safeguarding Officer's role to provide enough Advanced sessions. When I write back to Church Council I provide a list of all the Advanced module training, planned for the year, and ask that this is shared amongst the people needing to train.

The only remaining task for the Church Safeguarding Officer is simply to record the date people attended the training on the Safer Recruitment spreadsheet.

Chapter 6: Safeguarding practice of church premises

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- work in partnership with others including stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This may include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

Often lettings are handled by the Church Safeguarding Officer, however this is not part of their role and there is no expectation that they should do both roles. The task above makes it clear that the Church Safeguarding Officer should work in partnership with the person who deals with the bookings, and for good reason. Both roles are incredibly time consuming and would be too much for most people.

The Safeguarding Officer's role in the above partnership is purely to double check that safeguarding has been fully considered and usually consists of making sure that any letting receives a copy of the Church Safeguarding Policy or, if a group has their own policy, that it meets Methodist standards.

When a person or group approaches a church in order to hire a room, the first thing the Lettings Secretary does is decide what kind of paperwork is most appropriate. Usually people want to book a room for a one-off event or for regular part-time use.

The paperwork, recommended to be used by ALL churches can be found on the TMPC (Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) website: www.tmcp.org.uk/ Click on the 'Property' heading at the top of the page and then on the heading 'Letting Property and Third-Party Use'.

One-off Booking/Letting

If a one-off booking is made, for example, for a child's birthday party, a standard Booking Form is used. The standard, Connexional form includes a paragraph regarding safeguarding, which states:

The Hirer confirms that the Hirer has received a copy of the Safeguarding Policy, has an understanding of it, and undertakes to follow it or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy) for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Building.

Safeguarding for a one-off booking is therefore very straightforward – the hirer is given a copy of the Church Safeguarding Policy at the same time as the Booking Form, and they sign to say they agree to the above paragraph.

Your only task therefore is to check that the form used for one-off bookings contains the safeguarding paragraph and that the safeguarding policy is given to all lettings.

Regular but part-time, non-exclusive booking/letting

If a person or group wish to use the church on a regular basis then a 'licence' is required. In my church we have a number of groups operating under a licence agreement, for example, a weekly art group, children's choir, Brownies and Guides, and Slimming World to name a few.

The standard licence also contains a paragraph relating to safeguarding:

The Licensee confirms that the Licensee has received a copy of the Safeguarding Policy, has an understanding of it, and undertakes to follow it or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy) for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Building.

So again, safeguarding for a regular but part-time, non-exclusive booking/letting is therefore straightforward – the licensee is given a copy of the Church Safeguarding Policy at the same time as the Booking license, and they sign to say they agree to the above paragraph.

Again, I suggest your only task is to check that the form used for regular but part-time, non-exclusive booking/letting contains the safeguarding paragraph and that the safeguarding policy is given to all.

Groups who have their own safeguarding policy

Things become slightly more time consuming and complicated if a group wishes to use their own safeguarding policy rather than adhere to your church's policy. This usually only applies to large organisations such as Girl Guiding or Scouts etc, which have their own safeguarding standards to comply with.

If a group does wish to use their own policy, then two things need to happen:

1. They need to produce a copy of their policy – the lettings secretary then needs to pass this onto the Church Safeguarding Officer.
2. The Church Safeguarding Officer needs to read through the policy and make sure that specific reference is made to specific points – in other words to make sure the group's safeguarding policy is as good as the Methodist policy.

In order to help you make this assessment, a checklist has been devised for churches to use. Whilst this is no longer required, you can still access this from the District website.

[External Users of Premises Checklist – July 2020](#)

It is usually pretty simple to know if a group's safeguarding policy will be of a high standard by simply looking at the length of it. If you consider the Methodist Model Church Safeguarding Policy is 6 pages long, I would expect to see other policies of a similar length. If someone presents you with a policy that fits onto half a piece of A4 paper, then it's highly unlikely it will be of a high standard.

That being said, you will need to read through each policy and mark on the checklist the areas covered. The completed checklist should then be filed with the other letting's paperwork. If you are not happy with the standard of a group's policy I recommend writing a short email or letter saying you have reviewed their policy and it falls short of the high standard set by the Methodist Church. Provide them with a copy of your checklist so they can see which areas have not been covered and ask them to please agree to adhere to the Church Safeguarding Policy.

If the policy provided by the hirer is of a high standard, then all you need to do is keep a copy with the letting's paperwork and let the group know you are happy for them to continue to use their own.

What to do if you are not sure an external organisation's policy reaches high standards?

There will be times when you just can't decide if an organisation's policy is good enough.

The Model Church Policy, on page 5, under the heading **h) Other groups on church premises**, states that the Church Safeguarding Officer should take advice as appropriate from the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, as and when needed.

Don't forget the '*Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council*' so it would be appropriate to ask them for their opinion also.

At the end of the day if you're not happy with an external organisation's Safeguarding Policy simply ask them to comply with your Church Safeguarding Policy.

Should I ask to see a Lettings Organiser's DBS check?

If you are approached by a group who work with children or vulnerable adults, I strongly encourage you to ask to see the DBS check for the leaders. You don't need to see all the team's DBS certificates, but it would be good practice to see the group leaders' DBS. The name and the date of issue should be recorded - I suggest on the back of the policy Checklist.

If the group is working with children or young people, then look at the box on the DBS certificate entitled: DBS Children's Barred list information – you need to see the sentence 'NONE RECORDED'. This demonstrates that a higher level of check has been completed and the person concerned has no issues.

If the group is working with vulnerable adults, then look at the box entitled: DBS Adult's Barred List information – again you want to see 'NONE RECORDED'.

If the phrase NOT REQUESTED is in either box this means the check was only a basic check. This might concern you if you were already worried about a group. If this happens get in touch with me and I will have a look.

Chapter 7: Promoting Safeguarding by using your building

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is available at all times in the church, along with names of current Safeguarding Officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.

To access the documents referenced in this chapter, either click on the underlined text (if you are reading this Handbook electronically) or go online to the Safeguarding section on the **Connexional** or **District** website.

If you have been a Church Safeguarding Officer for a while you will remember we used to have a set list of things that should go on the Safeguarding Noticeboard. However, as we consider more and more the complexities of Safeguarding, we have moved beyond the simple lists of the past.

So, I am going to run through what should go on the Safeguarding Noticeboard but also how we can use the whole church building to promote safeguarding.

Church Notice Board – Mandatory items

It's interesting that task 2 doesn't mention having a specific notice board just for safeguarding anymore. However, I still think there is merit in having one specific place where people could find all the mandatory documents.

The following should be available to view in every church building:

1. The current, signed & adopted Church Safeguarding Policy.
You can find this on the Connexional website.
I will also send out a copy directly to Safeguarding Officer in September (also available on the District website) and I will always let you know if it is updated throughout the Connexional year.
2. The Methodist Church has also produced a series of posters that you can download, which will allow you to edit with 'names of current Safeguarding Officers, national helplines and other suitable information'. These can be found on the District website. There are different posters for different churches, but they are always in sets of two. There is a guidance document to accompany the posters which I have attached to this month's email, but the first paragraph explains why using these posters is a good idea

The Safeguarding Posters have been designed to provide an easy and consistent means of identifying safeguarding information in every church and circuit across the Connexion. The use of the posters is highly recommended, but not obligatory and provides the easiest way to comply with the requirement on churches and circuits to display the local safeguarding policy and contact details for those who can provide support.

I like the idea that, regardless of which Methodist Church you attend, anywhere in the UK, you will see the same set of posters. It sends a very strong message about how united we are in our aim to safeguard people who use our buildings.

So, displaying documents 1 and 2 will mean you have done what is asked of you in the model safeguarding policy.

Church Notice Board – District suggestions

In previous chapters I have been encouraging you to adopt different policies and procedures. These are requirement from within the Safeguarding Polices, Procedure and Guidance document. I suggest that some of these should also go on your Safeguarding Notice Board.

We have created and adopted these documents because we understand the need to be clear about where we, as church, stand – so let's make sure everyone knows about them.

3. In Chapter 2, I encourage you to support your church by adopting a policy on 'Safeguarding Recording Policy & Procedures'. I recommend that this goes on your Safeguarding notice board.
4. Also in chapter 2, I provided you with a Responding Well Flow Chart – details what action people should take if they had a safeguarding concern. This should definitely go on your Safeguarding board.
5. In chapter 4, I encouraged you to adopt a 'Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidance'. It is also important that people have access to this, so again, I would put that on the Safeguarding noticeboard.

The above five ideas will cover everything people need to know about Safeguarding. How amazing would it be if every church in the Sheffield District had these documents visible in or near to the main doors into the church.

Additional Suggestions

When you complete the Advanced Safeguarding training module you will watch a video on Creating Safer Organisations.

Marcus Erooga, an independent Safeguarding Consultant, Researcher and Trainer, illustrates how embedding sound safeguarding practice can influence the behaviour of potential abusers.

Although Marcus' example refers to secular organisations, the same principles apply to all categories of abuse, settings and circumstances.

In the training we are asked to watch the video and spend a few minutes considering:

- ❖ Which aspects of this video particularly stood out for you?
- ❖ How we understand risk – as individuals and in the Church context.
- ❖ How the culture in our churches can have an impact upon an individual's ability to abuse.

I encourage you to do the same now. You can view the video by clicking [here](#)

When I did the Advanced course, this clip was the lightbulb moment for me. The Methodist Church provides all the tools we need to create a church with a strong safeguarding structure; therefore, each individual church has the capability to deter offenders when they do a '*risk benefit analysis*'.

I suggest that the five safeguarding noticeboard ideas above should be the beginning of the visible culture of safeguarding in your church.

In Chapter 5, I talked about safeguarding in terms of lettings, and we explored the fact that we need to give all our lettings a copy of the Church Safeguarding Policy. If we really want to promote safeguarding to the people using our buildings, then we should have safeguarding

information in every room available for hire. The posters I talk about in suggestion 2, (in the Church Notice Board – Mandatory items), would be ideal.

I know that a number of Church Safeguarding Officers have Domestic Violence awareness posters on the back of all the toilet stall doors – both male and female. Again, this is a brilliant idea. People have the opportunity, when they are alone, to access information that could potentially save lives, and all because someone had recognised the importance of providing these posters in the right place.

When I talk with people, who have suffered church-based abuse, I am often struck by the fact they didn't think anyone would be interested or would take their experience seriously and so they never reached out for help. I wonder if that is true today in our churches?

One thing I have started to do in my own church is to put the message out there that there are people in the church who are trained to help and support people who are experiencing a safeguarding issue. (Everyone is up to date with their CSS Foundation module training, so they have been talked through what to do.) I have put little signs up in strategic places (near the tea and coffee hatches; by the coat hooks etc) to remind people that there are people available to help. My next plan is to get the box below as a standard item in the weekly notice sheet.

If you have a safeguarding worry or concern, either for yourself or for someone else, we have people here to help.

Please speak to our minister, Rev Keith Sandow, or to the Church Safeguarding Officer, Alison Hill.

Both have safeguarding experience and will take your concerns seriously.



Let's now recap how we can further promote safeguarding in our church buildings. The biggest issues regarding safeguarding at the moment are: Domestic Abuse; Mental Health; Child Abuse and Debt Management. Therefore, I am suggesting you might like to consider the following ideas:

1. Domestic Abuse – placing awareness posters on the back of toilet stall doors. There are a large number of DA charities and therefore a large number of posters you can choose from. I have done the research and identified some you might consider using. The link is on the District website, under the heading Safeguarding Publicity Links
2. Placing 'You're Not Alone' posters in obvious places, such as where refreshments are served or where the coat hooks are. Could you also have a statement in your weekly notice sheet? Let's make sure people experiencing abuse know that there are people available to help and support them – people who will listen without judgement and take their concerns seriously.
3. In every room that is available for rent or hire, let us place the Methodist Church produced posters:



The Methodist Church values every human being as part of God's creation. Everyone has the right to fair treatment and protection from harm.

The Methodist Church

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Methodist Church commits to:

- The creation of a safe environment and culture where all our workers and everyone feels able to speak out about safeguarding concerns
- Provision of care for victims and survivors of abuse, and other people who have been affected by safeguarding issues
- A prompt and appropriate response to every safeguarding concern or allegation regardless of status or circumstance
- Carrying out risk assessments and put safeguarding measures in place where individuals may present a risk
- Provision of care for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations
- Safe recruitment of all those who have responsibility for children and adults who may be vulnerable
- The promotion of good safeguarding practice through effective leadership, guidance, policy and procedures.

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility



The Methodist Church

Safeguarding Contacts

Emergency contacts	Helplines
Police 999	Police non-emergency 101
Local Authority	NHCC 0800 800 5000
	Childline 0800 1111
	Action on Elder Abuse 0800 800 8161
	Family Line 0800 800 2232
	National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 3000 247
	Samaritans 116 123
	Local helplines
Reporting safeguarding concerns, help and guidance	Information about safeguarding in the Methodist Church
Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer	Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding
	Location of church/circuit safeguarding policy
Member in Pastoral Charge	
District Safeguarding Officer	

If space is tight just put the second poster up as this is the poster with all the contact phone numbers.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/posters/>

- Carrying on with the theme of strategically using the toilets (because these are the areas where people will have more opportunity for privacy) can I suggest adding a Mental Health support poster. Again, I have done some research and have identified some posters you might like to choose from. The link is on the District website, under the heading Safeguarding Publicity Links
- Next, I encourage you to think about the rooms in your church, routinely used by children and young people. In my church this would be the large upstairs hall. We have Rainbow, Brownies, Guides all using this hall. So, in this room I have added a Childline poster. The link is on the District website, under the heading Safeguarding Publicity Links
- Lastly, I have displayed a Credit Union poster on the two main notice boards; one is for external groups to publicise their groups and the other is the general church board where we publicise our events and share newsletters, cards etc. The current economic situation is affecting everyone and so I feel we need to deter people from borrowing money from unsuitable sources, i.e. loan sharks, and instead, promote responsible organisations who can help, such as Credit Unions or Community Banks.
- I am aware that a number of churches already host debt management services such as Christians Against Poverty, so they will already be doing this. Please don't assume there is no need for this kind of information in your church. We never fully know what people are going through; this is especially true when it comes to financial matters. The link is on the District website, under the heading Safeguarding Publicity Links.

Hopefully, you will have noticed that I have not suggested putting posters all in the same place. Rather, I suggest utilising all available space: the Safeguarding Notice board plus other notice boards in different parts of the building; the toilets, both in the wash basin area but also in each individual stall; near the refreshment hatches; by the coat hooks; in all the rooms that are hired out to lettings etc.

Now imagine what kind of signal all the above ideas would give a possible perpetrator coming into your church for the first time. Everywhere they look they would see signs that this church takes safeguarding seriously. Hopefully we could put perpetrators off as discussed by Marcus Erooga, in the Advanced Safeguarding course.

Chapter 8: Issue with compliance

10 Tasks assigned to the Church Safeguarding Officer:

- Advise the Circuit Safeguarding officer and / or the District Safeguarding Officer of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any requests from them about audit of safeguarding activity.

In the last 7 chapters, I have outlined all the proactive steps you, as Church Safeguarding Officers, can take in response to the Ten Tasks assigned to you in the model church safeguarding policy.

Many of the tasks require co-operation from other people. Therefore, it is possible that others may prevent you from succeeding at your role. If this happens you need to feel empowered to bring compliance issues to your Church Council and ask for their assistance. It may not be appropriate to speak out at a large meeting. Perhaps you would be better speaking to the chair of the council in the first instance.

I have found that, from time to time, safeguarding issues have arisen at church, and even though I have told the Church Council about it, the issues were not addressed. When this has happened, I have followed procedure and taken the compliance issue to my District Safeguarding Officer. On occasions this has led to them contacting the minister to better understand the issue. At other times they have provided me with advice and I have approached an issue differently.

Having clear lines of accountability and creating a structure where people can report concerns were identified as essential following a serious case review into horrendous sexual abuse at a nursery in Plymouth. Whistleblowing procedures are now required in all organisations and the Methodist Church is no exception.

Proactively identifying issues with compliance is one reason why the Methodist Church requires an annual audit of safeguarding activity. As you will be aware I send out the District Safeguarding Audit in June and ask for it to be sent back by the end of July. The audit is a chance for you to reflect on how well you have implemented Connexional Safeguarding requirements in the current Connexional Year.

The audit is in two parts.

Part A is where I ask the Church Safeguarding Officer to share their Safer Recruitment spreadsheet.

Part B is a series of questions for Church Council members to answer. Remember, Safeguarding is the responsibility of the Church Council NOT the Church Safeguarding officer.

I have tried to encourage people to answer questions as honestly and comprehensively as possible. The audit needs to be an honest review of Safeguarding in the last 12 months. We all need to know where problems are so they can be rectified in the coming Connexional year. I have tried hard to reassure people that support will be put in place where needed, without judgement or condemnation.

The audit demonstrates how well you and your Church Council are able to respond to your legal obligation to safeguard those who use your building. If you are struggling, I will help, but I can only help if I know where the issues are.

Appendix 1 - A Model Church Safeguarding Policy

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.

Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift, which is offered to all people.

Principles

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 are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- establishing 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 checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will respond without delay to every safeguarding concern, which suggests that a child, young person, or adult may have been harmed, working in partnership with the police and social services 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.

Working with the Church Safeguarding Officer, we will support risk assessment of those who present a safeguarding risk within a church environment. We will ensure appropriate pastoral care is offered and measures are taken to address identified risks including referral to statutory agencies, suspension, and the use of safeguarding contracts.

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

A Model Church Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy forMethodist 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.

..... Methodist 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.

..... Methodist Church recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether as a result of disabilities or 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 our wish 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 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.

..... Methodist 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, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media, child sexual exploitation or human trafficking (slavery). 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 promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

..... Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. **RESPOND** without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or may suffer harm, 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. **IMPLEMENT** the Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.
3. **PROVIDE** support, advice and training for lay and ordained people to ensure that 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. **AFFIRM** and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

Church Council

Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council. The safeguarding officer should be a member of the Church Council or have the right to attend at least annually to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. Where an individual covers the role in more than one location, they must be able to cover the activities identified in the relevant role outline and be facilitated to attend meetings to report on safeguarding in each location.

It is not appropriate for the minister in pastoral charge to hold the Church Safeguarding Officer role because of the potential conflict with their own responsibilities.

..... Methodist Church appoints

..... Church Safeguarding Officer (Adults)

(name)

and

..... Church Safeguarding Officer (Children)

(name)

and supports them in their role, which is to:

- provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding¹
- ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is available at all times in the church, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually²
- record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist safeguarding policy³
- promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns⁴
- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and Church Safeguarding Officer to arrange training⁵
- attend training and meetings relating to the role⁶
- work in partnership with others including stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This may include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own⁷

¹ See Chapter 3: Providing Support (Health & Safety)

² See Chapter 7: Promoting Safeguarding

³ See Chapter 2: Recording & Reporting Concerns

⁴ See Chapter 2: Recording & Reporting Concerns

⁵ See Chapter 5: Safeguarding Training

⁶ See Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics

⁷ See Chapter 6: Safeguarding Practise on Church Premises

- check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually⁸
- inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.⁹
- advise the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and/or Church Safeguarding Officer of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.¹⁰

a) Purpose

The purpose of the church safeguarding policy is to check that procedures are in place and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those trusted with promoting the church as a safe space for all its users.

b) Good practice

We believe that good practice means:

- i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.¹¹
- 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 record will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.¹²
- 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 a written risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council. 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.¹³
- iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure that the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort (where required) are appropriate. A record should be kept in the church file for each driver/car.¹⁴
- v) Activity risk assessments will be undertaken before any activity takes place to minimise the risk of harm to those involved. Approval will be obtained from the event leader/minister. A written record of the assessment will be retained securely.¹⁵
- vi) 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.¹⁶

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

⁸ See Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics

⁹ See Chapter 4: Providing Support: Safer Recruitment

¹⁰ See Chapter 5: Safeguarding Training

¹¹ See Chapter 3: Providing Support: Health & Safety

¹² See Chapter 3: Providing Support: Health & Safety

¹³ See Chapter 3: Providing Support: Health & Safety

¹⁴ See Chapter 3: Providing Support: Health & Safety

¹⁵ See Chapter 3: Providing Support: Health & Safety

¹⁶ See Every Chapter

c) Appointment and training of workers in the church

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check and following the 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 safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (such as food hygiene, first aid and lifting and handling).¹⁷

d) Pastoral visitors

Pastoral visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of safeguarding training upon appointment. If they are undertaking tasks for which a criminal records check would be required, this will be undertaken prior to appointment.¹⁸

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

A leaflet outlining good practice and systems should be given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet should be reviewed annually.¹⁹

f) Ecumenical events

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

g) Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing, a risk assessment and notification of the event will 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 the church council secretary: (name of church council secretary)

If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the Church Safeguarding Officer will contact the Circuit Safeguarding Officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the Church Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The Church Safeguarding Officer will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.²⁰

i) Complaints procedure

There is a formal complaints procedure within the Methodist Church, which allows concerns to be raised about actions or behaviour by a member or officer of the Church. In addition, employed staff will be subject to relevant contractual procedures. All complaints will be responded to with care, diligence and impartiality.

A complaint should be addressed to the superintendent minister, the Revd. [NAME]. If a complaint is made to another person it should be referred to them. Meetings will be arranged with the person making the complaint and, usually, the person against whom the complaint has been made, in an attempt to resolve it. If the complaint is against the superintendent, it should be sent to the District Chair, the Revd. [NAME] at [ADDRESS].

Safeguarding officers must be informed of any complaint or issue relating to the potential abuse of children or adults who may be vulnerable. They will support prompt action to respond to the

¹⁷ See Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics

¹⁸ See Chapter 4: Providing Support: Safer Recruitment

¹⁹ See Chapter 1: Safeguarding Officer Basics

²⁰ See Chapter 6: Safeguarding Practise on Church Premises

circumstances of any safeguarding concern, whether or not any party involved wishes to make a formal complaint through the Methodist Church.

j) Key concepts and definitions

- i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.
- ii) Vulnerable adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii) Safeguarding: protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv) 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.
- v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, a community or 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council.

Next review date:

Signed

Chair of Church Council

Dated

Appendix 2 – Annual report to the Church Council

Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

Information for the Annual Report at the end of the 2021 / 2022 Connexional year.

Role of the CSO	Action Taken by the CSO
<p>Provide support and advice to the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles with regard to safeguarding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: Pastoral Visitors Guidance booklet shared with church stewards to assist them in their duty to '<i>exercise pastoral care and leadership with the minister</i>' as stated in the Church Stewards Handbook 2021. • Date: Safeguarding and Pastoral Care booklet shared with the minister/lay pastor etc to support them in their duties to 'oversee pastoral visiting in the church'. • Date: Assessed the church premises alongside in order to promote the safety of children and vulnerable adults. This included fire safety procedures. A report was then written and shared with the church council in order to support council members when they consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made suitable. • As part of the Safer Recruitment process (insert number towards the end of the Connexional year) checks were carried out to ensure drivers, providing church-organised transport, and their vehicles were suitable and insured. • (insert number towards the end of the Connexional year) church led activity group leaders were given a copy of the Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults booklet & a leaflet outlining how to complete a risk assessment, and reminded that they are required to carry out an Activity Risk Assessment. Event leaders or the minister were also reminded that they are required to approve the risk assessment prior to the event. • The church council were reminded that it is their responsibility to actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding to promote safeguarding in all the tasks which enable God's people to reach their full potential.
<p>Ensure that a suitable, signed church safeguarding policy is displayed at all times in the church on a safeguarding noticeboard, along with names of current safeguarding officers, national helplines and other suitable information. This must be renewed annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided the Church Safeguarding Policy, using the Model Church Safeguarding Policy, produced by the Methodist Church. Policy adopted at the Church Council on ???.???.?? (insert date when it happens) • The Safeguarding Noticeboard was updated in ???.???.?? (insert date when it happens) and now displays the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our current Church Safeguarding Policy - Two posters created and provided by the Methodist Church. The first poster states our commitment to safeguarding and the second contains important contact information, including national helplines and other suitable information. • I have also placed support information regarding Domestic Abuse on the back of all the toilet stall doors. • I have placed Mental Health support posters in each toilet block.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2 posters created and provided by the Methodist Church have been added to every room which is available to hire. • 'You're not alone' cards have been placed by the refreshment hatch and near the coat hook – the information also now appears in the weekly notice sheet. • Childline posters have been placed in every room used by children and young people. • A debt support poster has been placed on the general notice board in the ????? (insert location)
<p>Record all safeguarding issues that are reported to the church safeguarding officer, according to Methodist policy and procedure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer, we have devised a bespoke document (Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance) which reflects the nature of our church for the coming year. The documents state how we will respond promptly to every safeguarding concern, record all safeguarding concerns in line with Methodist policy. The document also states our commitment to the retention and storage of safeguarding information and when and how to share information with others. The policy was adopted by the Church Council on ??/??/?? and will be treated as an appendix to the Church Safeguarding Policy. As such it will be updated annually.
<p>Promote appropriate routes for reporting of concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the guidance contained in the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance, we have developed to stream regarding the promotion of appropriate routes. We have District and Connexional flow charts to help assess safeguarding concerns / risks and therefore we can determine when it is appropriate to refer to statutory service and when a concern can be handled within the church. We are clear when to involve the District Safeguarding Officer. Using information produced by the District, and external agencies in the area, we have a good understanding of where to signpost people needing Early Help. • Every time you promote an appropriate route for reporting a concern make an entry in this box. Give the date and the organisation / person you signposted people too.
<p>Identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance. Work with the circuit safeguarding officer and DSO to arrange training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert Date: The number of people requiring Foundation and/or Advanced training shared with the Circuit Safeguarding Officer to inform a Circuit Delivery Plan. • Working with Group Leaders we are currently devising Volunteer Role Outlines for all the roles people have in our church. Included in these documents is a statement clearly explaining which Methodist Safeguarding Training course people will need to complete to comply with Methodist Policy. • It is my intention to contact people, who need to attend safeguarding training, at the beginning of each Connexional year. As Church Safeguarding Officer I maintain a spreadsheet concerning all aspects of Safer Recruitment, which includes safeguarding training requirements. Therefore, I am able to alert people when training is needed. • Insert Date: I have completed the Church Safeguarding Officers

	<p>section of the annual Safeguarding Audit, requested by the District Safeguarding Officer. Included in this information, is the number of people who, in the coming Connexional year, will require training at the Foundation and Advanced Module level. The DSO will then pass on numbers regarding the Foundation module to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, who is responsible for making sure enough training sessions are provided. The DSO is responsible for providing enough Advanced Safeguarding training session to meet the Districts needs.</p>
<p>Attend training and meetings relating to the role</p>	<p>Foundation module training: insert date Advanced module training: insert date Additional safeguarding training: insert title and date</p>
<p>Work in partnership with the lettings officer, stewards and user groups to promote good safeguarding practice on church premises. This will include gaining written confirmation that hirers of church premises are aware of the church safeguarding policy or are using an appropriate policy of their own.</p>	<p>I have established a working partnership with the Lettings / Bookings Secretary. They have agreed to contact me each time a one-off booking is taken and they confirm that the hirer has signed to agree that they will follow our Church Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>The Lettings / Booking Secretary also contacts me each time a Regular but part-time, non-exclusive booking is made. Again, the booking secretary confirms if the hirer agrees to use our church safeguarding policy. If the hirer has their own safeguarding policy I check to make sure it meets the high standard set by the Methodist Church. In order to do this, I use the Connexional Checklist provided in the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance.</p> <p>If I have concerns that the hirers policy does not meet the required standard I will contact the circuit or district safeguarding officer for advice.</p> <p>In this Connexional year ??? (insert number) one off bookings have been made and ??? (insert number) of these have signed to say they will follow our Church Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>In this Connexional year ???(insert number) Regular but part-time, non-exclusive booking have been made. ??? (insert number) have agreed to use the church Safeguarding Policy and ??? (insert number) have used their own policy.</p>
<p>Check that safeguarding is included as an agenda item at all Church Council meetings and report to the Church Council annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert the dates of the Church Council Meetings that have taken place this Connexional year and confirm that safeguarding has been an agenda item. • My Annual report was shared with the Church Council on ???.???.?? (insert date when it happens)
<p>Inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert Date: Leaflets (Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults; Pastoral Visitor Guidance; Safeguarding and Pastoral Care) outlining good practise and systems to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults, provided to group leaders to distribute to their team. • Following the advice of the District Safeguarding Officer, we have adopted a bespoke Recruitment and Selection Policy,

	<p>which reflects the nature of our church for the coming year. This policy explains how our church will abide by the Connexional 12 Steps to Safer Recruitment and who is responsible for the different actions within. The policy was adopted by the Church Council on ??/??/?? and will be treated as an appendix to the Church Safeguarding Policy. As such it will be updated annually.</p>
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<p>Advise the circuit safeguarding officer and/or DSO of any issues with compliance with safeguarding training, policy or safer recruitment requirements and respond promptly to any request from them about audit of safeguarding activities.</p>	<p>In this Connexional year I have reported ??? (<i>inset number</i>) of issue with compliance to the Circuit safeguarding officer and ??? (<i>inset number</i>) to the District Safeguarding Officer.</p>
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Signed:

Date:

Appendix 3 – Checklist of Annual Actions

Checklist of actions needed to be taken in every Connexional year.

Chapter	Task	Tick when completed
1	Complete the Foundation Module, if not already done so.	
1	Complete the Advanced module training, if not already done so, and refresh your training once every 4 years.	
1	Attend an additional safeguarding training session which is relevant to the people using your church.	
1	Check safeguarding is an agenda item at every Church Council Meeting.	
1	Register to receive the District Newsletter	
2	Year 1: Help your church to amend and adopt the District created Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance document.	
	All subsequent years: Using the updated version of the District created Safeguarding Recording Policy, Procedures & Guidance document, amend, if required and adopt.	
2	Print off and display the latest version of the Responding Well Flow Chart.	
3	Give the current version of the Pastoral Visitors Guidance to the Pastoral Visitors Secretary, and ask that they give each Pastoral Visitor a copy.	
3	Give the current version of the Pastoral Visitors Guidance to the Senior Steward, and ask that they give each Steward a copy.	
3	Give the current version of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Care booklet to the Pastoral Visitors Secretary	
3	Give the current version of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Care booklet to the Minister or Lay Pastor	
3	Working with the property Steward or their representative, complete the Safeguarding Health & Safety Assessment form	
3	Give a copy of the code of Conduct to all leaders of groups aimed at Children and young people.	
3	First time: Give group leaders, working with Children, Young people or Vulnerable Adults the Risk Assessment leaflet and that they complete an Activity Risk Assessment for their activity.	
	All subsequent years: Give group leaders, working with Children, Young people or Vulnerable Adults the Risk Assessment leaflet and that they update last year's Risk Assessment if needed.	
4	First year: Work with your Church Council to amend and adopt the District created 10 Steps to Safer Recruitment policy.	

	Subsequent Years: Amend, if needed the local church policy and adopt at a Church Council meeting	
4	First Year: Create a spreadsheet of all the safeguarding information relating to Safer Recruitment.	
	Subsequent years: Update the Safer recruitment Spreadsheet, as and when required.	
5	Inform people who, either need to complete the Foundation Module Training or need to refresh after 4 years, that they need to do this sometime in the Connexional year.	
6	Provide the Lettings Steward with the updated Church Safeguarding Policy, after it has been adopted by the Church Council.	
6	Check that the Lettings steward is using the Booking Form and the License provided on the TMPC website.	
6	Complete a checklist for any letting who wished to use their own Safeguarding Policy.	
7	Place an up to date copy of your Church Safeguarding Policy on the Safeguarding Noticeboard.	
7	Place the two Connexional safeguarding posters on the Church Noticeboard.	
8	Inform the Circuit or District Safeguarding officers if you have any issues with compliance.	

Appendix 4 – CSO Guide to Local Recruitment and Selection Policy

This District created model policy and guidance does not replace the Connexional Policy but rather adds a local level of understanding. The two should always be considered together

Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidance for ??????? Methodist Church

To be read alongside:

Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance July 2021 Edition – produced by the Methodist Church

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/24635/safer_recruitment_policy_final-july_2021.pdf

Adopted by the Church Council on
???.???.??

The bits highlighted in yellow will need editing with your church's specific details.



To be reviewed annually.

I've simply cut and pasted from the Connexional safer Recruitment policy.

Introduction

For most people, the Methodist Church is a safe place free of any form of physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual or psychological danger. It is a place where children, young people and vulnerable adults are free from harm, discrimination and other harmful influences.

Sadly, for some members of the Church family, their experience has been of not being safe and this broken trust has left them physically and/or psychologically harmed. This Safer Recruitment Policy makes explicit our Church's commitment to establishing a worshipping and serving community that welcomes and is safe for all.

This policy sets out the necessary actions that the Church needs to implement in its recruitment and selection procedures in order to identify and deter people who are a potential risk to children or vulnerable adults.

Safer Recruitment is more than the undertaking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It is about promoting and exercising a safe culture including the supervision and oversight of those who work with children and vulnerable adults.

However, even the most robust selection and recruitment policy and procedures cannot eliminate every risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. That is why safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We must make it as difficult as possible for abusers to obtain access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is for this reason that once an individual is appointed, whether paid or unpaid, effective oversight arrangements are in place to monitor and respond to any concerns that emerge. I commend these procedures to you.

Responsibilities for Safer Recruitment in the Methodist Church

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church sets out how Church Councils hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding including safer recruitment of all volunteers and employees in their environments. All churches are required to have their own safeguarding policy, which includes a commitment to implementing safer recruitment practices. It is part of the role of safeguarding officers, acting on behalf of each of those bodies, to promote and support safe recruitment.

If ???? Methodist Church intends to employ someone in a specific role then then we agree to follow the guidance in the Connexional Recruitment Policy.

??? Methodist Church commit to following the '12 Steps to Safer Recruitment', as outlined below when recruiting volunteers or lay employees, as a means of ensuring that recruitment decisions are made with care and particular reference to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The Twelve Steps to Safer Recruitment

	Volunteer Roles
Step 1	Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process. This document fulfils this requirement.
Step 2	Ensure there is a Safeguarding policy, which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to safer recruitment. ***** Methodist Church has already has a Safeguarding Policy in place, last reviewed on ???.???.??

Step 3	Create a Role outline for a volunteer post or a role description and person specification for a paid post. Advice should be sort from the Church Safeguarding Officer in regards to whether a role will require a Criminal records Check. Your Safeguarding Officer also has the template that should be used to ensure best practise.
Step 4	Advertise the role in a manner appropriate to the vacancy
Step 5	Produce an information pack. Please consult with your Church Safeguarding Officer. This should include
Step 6	Consider each application fairly and carefully.
Step 7	Carry out appropriate checks is required.
Step 8	If you need to short list candidates then make sure they are treated fairly.
Step 9	Conduct face to face interviews or discussions based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification, job description or role outline
Step 10	Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability are asked.
Step 11	Select a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role.
Step 12	Contact both the successful and the unsuccessful candidates.

The 12 steps to Safer Recruitment (pg 3)

There are 2 types of recruitment processes that normally take place in a church:

1. Employing a Lay Worker
2. Recruiting a volunteer

If you are employing someone, the 12 steps still apply but the District officer, Andrew Crawford, will provide formal help and assistance to fulfil legal requirements. The Connexional policy will also provide more help and information.

Most churches will be more concerned with recruiting volunteers which is much less formal but just as important. This local, model policy is designed to help group leaders recruit volunteers.

Additional Guidance

Step 3 – Role Outline

On page 8 you will find a form template for a Volunteer Role Outline. This becomes the document groups can use when advertising their role. It contains all the information a person needs to make an informed choice as to whether a role is right for them.

The Group Leaders should start adding in their information before passing onto the Church Safeguarding Officer, who will add more information. Lastly the form should be shared with the Church Council or Trustees who will add in the final information and formally approving the role.

The Role Outline can then be used repeatedly. Group leaders should review the form annually.

Section	To be completed by
Role Title	The Group Leader
Role Outline	
Report to / supported by	
Times of Work	
Safeguarding Training	Church Safeguarding Officer
DBS	Church Council or Trustees
Duration of appointment	
Expenses	
Accountability	

If you would like an electronic copy of the template please look on the Sheffield Methodist District website – Safeguarding – Safer Recruitment.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias occurs when occurring people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example, a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them.

When writing a job description / person specification/ role outline for an established role, which has become vacant, take a step back from the existing staff member or volunteer and depersonalise the process. It is all too easy to characterise the position in terms of a particular individual's age, education and qualifications.'

The focus should be on being 'as factual as possible about requirements, steering away from the subjective'. The job description / role outline should be based on: the tasks and activities that the role is required to undertake daily, weekly, monthly and annually. It sets the expectations for the candidate to select and deselect themselves solely based on those facts.

Step 4 – Advertising

Even volunteer roles should be advertised in a manner appropriate to the vacancy. This will ensure that suitable parties have a fair opportunity to come forward and will know who to speak to if they

Additional Guidance (Pg 4)

DBS Checks

If you use the template I have provided then, as Church Safeguarding Officers, you will need to add in the level of Safeguarding Training the role will require and whether the role requires a DBS check. If the role does require a DBS check I suggest you add in the most appropriate Job Role.

The person completing the DBS check will be given a list of options. If you can tell them which job title is most appropriate it will save them time and reduce the risk of the wrong check being carried out.

These are the job roles available for volunteers, some are easy to identify:

Charity Trustee
Church Administrator
Church Bus Driver Volunteer
Church Bus Driver volunteer (Regulated Activity)
Church or Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Volunteer Reg Activity)
Church or Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Volunteer)
Local Preacher or Worship Leader
Local Preacher or Worship Leader (Regulated Activity)
Premises Worker or Caretaker specified place (vol)

Some are not so easy to work out:

Child and YP (non-regulated) and Adult (Regulated) volunteer
Child and YP (Regulated) and Adult (Non-regulated) volunteer
Children Young People Church Volunteer
Children Young People Church Volunteer (Regulated Activity)
Children Young People Vulnerable Adults Vol (Reg Activity)
Children Young People Vulnerable Adults Volunteer
Vulnerable Adults Volunteer
Vulnerable Adults volunteer (Regulated Activity)

The following information will help you work out which job is the right one.

Regulated Activity

What is Regulated Activity?

In a nutshell, Regulated Activity is work that a barred person must not do. It is the term used to describe certain functions that are carried out by an individual as part of their role that would require them to have an Enhanced DBS Check with a check against the relevant barred lists.

The barred list(s) check they would need would differ depending on whether the individual is working with children, vulnerable adults or both.

How do I know if somebody is carrying out Regulated Activity with Children?

To establish whether or not an individual is engaging in Regulated Activity with Children, you have to take into consideration two factors;

1. The role – Unsupervised teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision of children.
2. The setting – If they are not performing one of the roles above, they may be carrying out an ancillary role within a specified setting. This includes positions such as a Cleaner in a School or Admin staff in a Nursery. Other specified settings include Children's Detention Centres, Children's Homes and Childcare Premises.

If they meet the criteria above, they will be eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check with a Child's Barred List check if they:

- Are performing this role more than 3 times in a 30-day period
- Could have contact with children within the establishment
- Work there for the purpose of the establishment
- Are not employed on a temporary basis
- Are not in a supervised volunteer role

How do I know if somebody is carrying out Regulated Activity with Adults?

Unlike Regulated Activity with Children, Regulated Activity with Adults focuses on the specific activities that are provided to an adult that requires them, rather than the setting in which a specific activity is taking place.

For example, any individual that provides personal care to an adult will be engaging in Regulated Activity irrespective of whether that occurs in a hospital, a care home, a prison or in sheltered housing.

There are SIX categories that define Regulated Activity with Adults:

1. Providing Health Care to an adult including palliative care, psychotherapy, and counselling
2. Providing Personal Care to an adult in the form of feeding, washing or toileting etc.
3. Providing Social Work to an adult in connection with health services or social services
4. Conveying an adult to or from Health Care, Personal Care, or Social Work appointments
5. Assisting an adult in the conduct of their own affairs under a formal appointment
6. Assisting an adult with general household matters such as managing cash, paying bills or shopping on their behalf.

For both RA with Adults and RA with Children, any activity that is carried out in the course of family relationships and personal, non-commercial relationships is not classed as Regulated Activity.

Pages 18 & 19 in the Connexional Safer recruitment policy provides examples of church roles that may or may not require an enhanced DBS.

The table on the following page also suggests a list of roles which are described as Regulated.

If you are in any doubt always air on the side of caution and go for a higher-level check.

Ministers

All Methodist ministers including:

- ordained presbyters and deacons,
- those candidating for the ministry,
- probationer presbyters and deacons,
- all supernumerary presbyters and deacons **still capable** of a preaching or pastoral ministry.

Work with children

- Youth workers;
- Children's workers;
- Managers of youth and children's workers in GROUP 1 (Regulated Activity) roles,
- Music leader where the choir/music group is mainly with children or young people;
- Steward when the role includes supervision of children or young people under the age of 18;
- Drivers of young people or children where the driving is organised by the church.

Work with Adults who are vulnerable

This includes:

- pastoral visitors where the role includes direct feeding, physical care, or assistance with financial matters;
- driving (organised by the church) to medical or social care appointments

Managers (Regulated Activity)

Those who manage workers who undertake Regulated Activity with children or adults who are vulnerable, for example:

- Sunday School Superintendent
- the manager of a luncheon provision for adults with serious physical disabilities where help with feeding is required

Safeguarding Training

When it comes to deciding who needs to complete which module of safeguarding training things become simpler.

Please see the [Safeguarding Polices, Procedures and Guidance 2021](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/24067/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_oct_2021docx.pdf) pages 143 to 146 for full details: https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/24067/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_oct_2021docx.pdf

Safeguarding Training Attendance List: Foundation 2020 Edition

Core List (church level) – Required Attendance

- lay employees and volunteer workers with pastoral responsibility
- pastoral visitors

- anyone working with children in the name of the church
- anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable (e.g. luncheon club for the housebound)
- church stewards
- church safeguarding representatives
- choir/music group/drama leaders – where there are children or vulnerable adults in the group.
- young Leaders (ages 16-18)

Warmly invited but not mandatory

- evangelism/mission enablers
- [...] leaders of other groups or organisations that regularly hire or use Methodist premises for work with children and vulnerable adults but do not have access to safeguarding training elsewhere and do not have their own safeguarding policy.
- remaining Choir/music group/drama leaders
- any other group leaders within the church, who may have adults who are vulnerable within their group.
- property stewards and other keyholders
- caretakers
- church/circuit meeting secretaries
- church/circuit/district administrators

Advanced Module 2019 Edition (Formerly Leadership Module)

Core List (church level) – Required Attendance

- safeguarding officer - Church
- those who are in paid employment or a voluntary role which includes leadership within the Methodist Church, involving direct work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- those in recognised roles involving pioneering, fresh expressions or evangelism
- mentors for the Youth Participation Scheme

are interested. This could be on the church noticeboard, via a bulletin, online or highlighted during verbal notices at a service.

Step 5 – Information Pack

As a minimum the Information Pack should contain:

- Church Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Declaration
- Role Outline (created in step 3)

Your Church Safeguarding Officer will be able to advise if additional forms are required, such as:

- Application Forms
- Key Holder Declaration
- Lone Worker Policy

Step 6 – Shortlisting

Scrutinise each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.

The Importance of Selection and Screening

Every year thousands of people volunteer. Almost without exception these volunteers are keen to give up their time and efforts simply because it helps others. However, just because most volunteers act altruistically doesn't mean that volunteers don't need to be screened.

Lack of care in accepting volunteers can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment for both the volunteer and your organisation. In a very small number of cases, lack of care in selection could lead to serious danger for service users.

Good selection procedures recognise that the vast majority of volunteers deserve our best efforts to find suitable opportunities for them while also protecting vulnerable people.

Successful First Contact with Volunteers

Once you've started advertising your opportunities, you'll start receiving responses from volunteers. How you respond to those enquiries is essential.

From the volunteer's point of view, they're offering you a gift – their time for nothing – so if you're slow to respond, unenthusiastic or unwelcoming you risk seeming ungrateful.

Top tips for responding to volunteer queries

- You need to respond quickly to any expression of interest from a volunteer. If there is a delay in response, apologise and explain why you didn't reply immediately.
- Initial contact needs to be friendly, welcoming and enthusiastic.

Step 5: Information Pack

It is the Church Safeguarding Officers responsibility to make copies and keep any and all Safeguarding Form relating to Safer Recruitment.

Therefore, by asking Group Leaders to speak to you for advice on which forms are required you will better understand which groups are running in your church and who should be passing over the paperwork for safe storage and retention.

These are the forms used in safeguarding. The first 3 apply to any role and then you have some forms that will only be needed for specific roles:

Mandatory	
Church Safeguarding Policy	Specific to your church
Role Outline (step 3)	Specific to your church and role
Safeguarding Declaration	<p>There are 4 Declarations Forms to choose from.</p> <p>The Connexional Policy provides clear information about the 4 options on pages 11 & 12</p> <p>You can also access the information and forms straight from the Methodist Church website or by going to:</p> <p>https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-including-dbspvg-ddc-forms-policy-and-guidance-documents/forms/confidential-safeguarding-declarations/</p> <p>Please note SD/3 Safeguarding self-declaration for Methodist Council members is only used at Connexional Level.</p>

Optional depending on the role	
<p>Volunteer with Vulnerable Groups – Form A</p>	<p>Form A Part 1 & 2 should be completed by all parties volunteering to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>The forms can be found on the Methodist Church website or by going to:</p> <p>https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-including-dbspvg-ddc-forms-policy-and-guidance-documents/forms/volunteer-with-vulnerable-groups-form-a/</p> <p>Form A Part 1 is the Registration Form with the Privacy Notice</p> <p>Form A Part 2 is the Volunteer agreement which includes the role outline.</p>
<p>Key Holder Declaration – Form D</p>	<p>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. Before the keys can be issued the key holder is asked to sign the declaration and acknowledge the conditions of issue.</p> <p>The form can be found here or by going to:</p> <p>https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-including-dbspvg-ddc-forms-policy-and-guidance-documents/forms/key-holder-declaration-form-d/</p> <p>If you someone has a key then they may access the building on their own so there should be a discussion around Lone Working.</p> <p>The Methodist Church recognise that a number of lay employees may work alone and so the Lay Employees Stakeholders Group has produced some guidance to assist employers and lay employees in how best to assess the risks; manage lone working arrangements and fulfil their responsibilities to work safely.</p> <p>These guidelines should be discussed locally so that appropriate arrangements are put in place and then reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>The guidance can be accessed by clicking here or by going to:</p> <p>https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/employees-and-volunteers/lay-employment-resource/8-key-policies-and-guidance-documents/lone-working/downloadable-templates-lone-working-risk-assessment-and-guidelines/</p> <p>On page 12 of this guide you will find a simplified version of a Lone Worker Policy if that would be more appropriate. Please edit it to reflect the individual nature of your church.</p>

- The person responding to volunteers needs to be well informed, approachable, able to answer questions and prepared to tell volunteers what will happen next.
- Answer all volunteer questions fully and give volunteers all the information they need to make an informed decision. Your goal is to give the volunteers the opportunity to get involved or move on if the role is not right for them. It may be best to do this in person or over the telephone rather than sending written information so that volunteers will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Explain any screening and selection procedures (e.g. references or DBS checks) what is involved, what information will be needed and why you need to screen volunteers.

Step 7 – Appropriate Checks

If the role requires Safeguarding training it would be good appropriate to liaise with the Church Safeguarding Officer to check if the candidate has done training in the past 4 years. If they haven't this is something volunteers should be made aware of BEFORE taking up the role.

Step 8 – Treating People Fairly

If several people come are shortlisted for a post its important that all are treated fairly and with respect. If you have a candidate who is visually impaired for example, you will need to consider how you will supply them with the same letters or other necessary information.

The Methodist Church is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons when developing, co-ordinating and supporting volunteering. Although there is no statutory obligation under equality legislation we recognise a clear moral obligation to promote fairness and equality in volunteering and value all individuals and their diverse & unique identity and backgrounds.

Step 9 & 10– Face to face interviews or discussions

There is a temptation to simply accept a volunteer because they have come forwards and a role desperately needs filling. Its important however, that an honest conversation takes place so that expectations and be shared and any protentional issues identified. Having a conversation before starting a role can prevent much frustration and bad feelings in the future.

For example, imagine your church is looking for new Service Stewards. Someone perfect comes forwards and they are quickly nominated and approved. As the Senior Steward you notice after several months that the new person never offers to cover funerals, and other stewards start to complain that they are doing more than their fair share. You speak to the new Steward about this and at this point they tell you they care for their grandchild 5 days a week and are never available apart from weekends.

If this issue had been identified and explored prior to them being appointed their availability would never have been an issue.

Step 12 – Next steps

Once the successful candidate has been chosen they need to complete any outstanding paperwork in their Information pack. For the majority of people this means obtaining a DBS check if the role requires one.

Step 7 – Appropriate Checks

In step 7, I suggest group leaders should liaise with the Church Safeguarding Officer regarding training.

We have already covered training on pages 6 & 7 of this document.

Part of the role of the Church Safeguarding Officer is to:

- identify and inform those who are required to attend safeguarding training and maintain records of attendance.

When a group leader comes to you to check about training it would be advisable to make a note of the following so you know who to contact in the future:

- Role
- Group
- Group Leader

Step 12 – Next Steps

This is the time when a DBS check needs completing if a volunteer role requires one. The local church policy, on page 7, needs editing with the names of people who could do the checks for your church.

Some churches will have the ability to carry out checks themselves and some will need to rely on people who have access to the circuit account.

Please contact the District Office if you need to know who this is in your circuit.

The following people are able to complete DBS check for this church and others in the circuit:

-
-
-
-

Appointing someone safely is a crucial part of protecting children, young people and adults who are vulnerable within our churches. Even more important is creating a culture of safety and the embedding of that culture in all our practices. Safer working protects everyone in our churches. Once the APPLICANT has been safely appointed, the group leader should provide / facilitate:

- support
- induction
- training in the role and in safeguarding including the requirement to report any concern
- reviews, building in periodic feedback from children, young people or adults with whom the APPLICANT now works
- clear boundaries for the role and guidance about unanticipated contact outside the work role.
- oversight, supervision
- information about who s/he is accountable to and whom s/he is accountable for.

Saying no

You don't have to involve every volunteer who expresses an interest in getting involved. You may not have space for a prospective volunteer or there may be a good reason why you think they would not be suitable for the role.

If you don't want to welcome an interested volunteer, it may be tempting just to avoid the issue and hope that the volunteer will lose interest. Tempting as it may be, this gives a bad image of your organisation and of volunteering in general.

The best way forward when it comes to saying no is to let the volunteer know about your decision promptly and explain why.

Let them know that you appreciate their offer and be as honest as you can about why they aren't suitable for the role. It's important to handle this sensitively. Think of how upsetting it is to be rejected after a job interview and how much upsetting it would be if you were offering to work for no pay.

If possible, suggest another organisation that might be more suitable. You can also refer them to us for support in finding a more suitable role.

If you require more information about Recruiting Safely or if you have any concerns please contact Alison Hill, District Safeguarding Officer:

Call 07483 362 735 or email safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org

You can leave the group leader to liaise with someone about the DBS check but once the volunteer has received their certificate you will need to record the Date of Issue so you will be able to prompt group leaders in 5 years' time when the check will need reviewing.

The circuit will receive a confirmation email with the date of issue on. If you are able to get a copy of this email then you won't need to ask the volunteer to show you their certificate.

If you have a large number of volunteers and DBS checks are done through a circuit account I advise you to speak to your Superintendent who can advise and guide you further.

Lone Working Policy for Volunteers

..... Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment for volunteers. This policy lays out the responsibilities with regard to working alone in the building or grounds. The risk assessment is to be reviewed annually or more frequently if there is any incident involving someone working alone.

Introduction

At times, many church volunteers will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the Church does not have the structure associated with a large business, its aims to be a good employer, concerned about the safety of employees including volunteers.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the employer has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees and volunteers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase volunteer's awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to volunteers related to lone working.

Church council's responsibilities

- Identify staff and volunteers who are lone workers.
- Inform staff and volunteers of their responsibilities under the Lone Working Policy.
- Ensure all new staff and volunteers are aware of Lone Working protocols.
- Ensure that a risk assessment has been completed and documented and is regularly reviewed. A formal Risk Assessment is needed for lay workers and Presbyters.
- Put procedures in place which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with Lone Working
- Define limits of what cannot be done while working alone
- Ensure that staff and volunteers identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of all volunteers to take care of themselves.
- They should never knowingly put themselves at risk.
- Ensure they read, understand and comply with the Lone Working policy.
- Participate in the risk assessment process to reduce the risk associated with lone working. Any incidents should be recorded in the accident book kept in the office.

Good Practice for Lone Workers

- All employees and volunteers leaving the workplace (or home) to undertake work-related tasks alone should consider leaving details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at base.
- When arranging one-to-one meetings, employees and volunteers should consider whether contact could take place in an environment where confidentiality could be maintained but others would be in the vicinity.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.

Risk Assessments

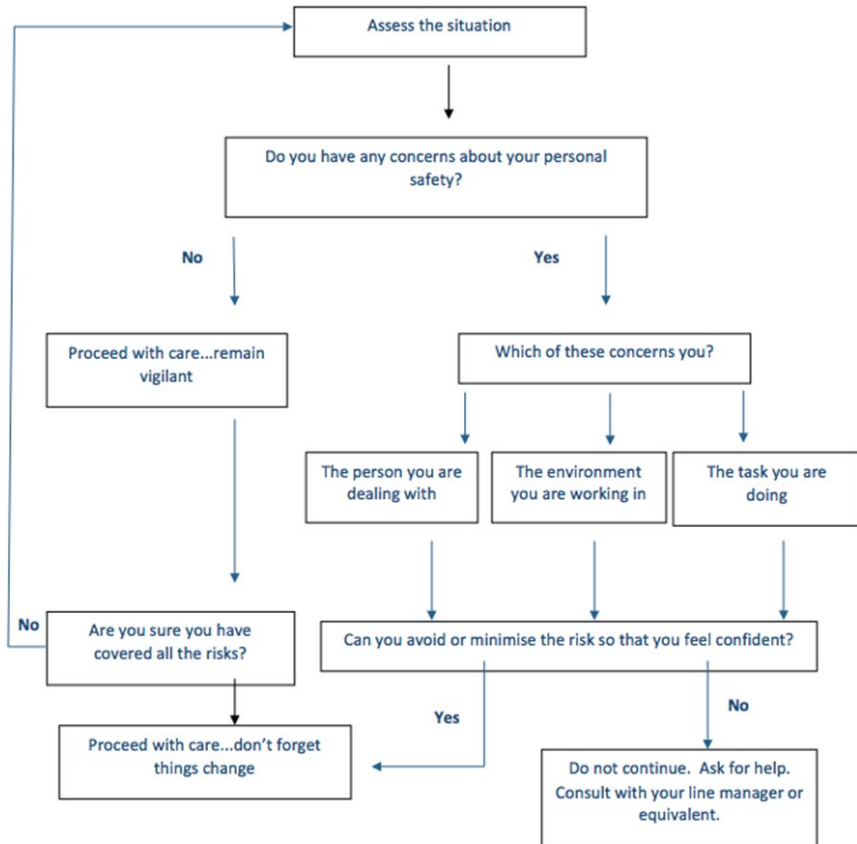
The current risk assessment follows, and forms part of this policy.

For reviewing the lone working risk assessment, the following questions will be considered:

- Is it necessary for the individual to work alone?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe means of entry and exit?
- Is there any cash or valuables on the premises?
- Do lone workers have knowledge of the hazards and risks to which they are possibly being exposed?
- Do lone workers know what to do if something goes wrong?
- Does someone else know the whereabouts of the lone workers and what they are doing?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a home visit?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?

Lone Working Risk Assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



From *Personal Safety at Work*, Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2006, revised 2008

Appendix 5 – Safer Recruitment Spreadsheet

Example of the Safer Recruitment Spreadsheet

Name	Role	Do they have a Role Outline? (Yes/No)	DBS		Safeguarding Training			Forms			Working with Vulnerable Groups			Tracking Date person stopped performing this role
			Is a DBS required? (Yes/No)	If yes, Date of Issue	Date attended module/ Refresher	Should they attend Advanced Module? (Yes/No)	Does Attendee/ Advanced Module	Has a Confidential declaration form been signed? (Y)	Are they a Key Holder? (Yes/No)	Confirmation Key Holder Declaration Form has been signed (Y)	Is this person in a position to work with vulnerable adults? (Yes/No)	Have they signed Form A – Part 1 (Y)	Have they signed Form A – Part 2 (Y)	

