

## District Safeguarding Officers Annual report

Presented to the District leadership Team on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021

### Safeguarding: District level

#### **DSO Case Work – data from Sept 2020 to Sept 2021**

Number safeguarding contracts	1. Ongoing contract now in its 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 2. Closed contract due to incarceration. 3. Case being managed by a multi-agency team concerning a student studying at Cliff college via remote learning.
Number of contracts that have not been reviewed in the last 12 months	1. One contract was 8 months late in being reviewed – this has now been completed.
Number of referrals and requests for advice received	22 cases – currently being overseen by individual churches with support and advice from the DSO  DSO has 3 open cases
Number of referrals made to statutory agencies	13 cases involved contacting the police 2 cases involved contacting adult social care
Number of referrals received from statutory agencies	1
Number of risk assessments undertaken by the DSO	2 completed 1 ongoing

#### **DBS checks**

Val Higgins, the District Safeguarding Administrator, in partnership with the DSO, maintains a database of all Ministers, Supernumerary's and Associated Presbyters DBS status.

As of 30.09.2020 the District has:

- 1 person with no DBS – the DSO is working to rectify the situation.
- 9 people will need a new DBS in the next 12 months – these people will be contacted by Val 3 months before their DBS expires and asked to start the process with their superintendent minister.

- 11 people have been granted exemption from needing a DBS check
- 91 people currently have a valid DBS.

### **District Safeguarding Group (DSG)**

The group is currently made up of:

- Chair – Hilary Murden
- Rev Gill Newton
- Glenys Clinton
- Margaret Rowley
- Rachel McCallam
- Rachel Amos
- Sue Walker
- Jonathan Cooper
- DSO

Everyone on the group has professional experience in safeguarding.

The group met on 29.9.20; 2.3.21; 29.6.21.

A Frame of Reference has been developed for DSGs providing a much-needed structure and purpose for groups. Although this has yet to be adopted by Connexion we, as a DSG, have started to use the Framework as it fills an identified gap. 13 standards have been identified which set out how DSGs will provide effective governance and fulfil all its statutory responsibilities.

### **District Policy**

The model District Safeguarding Policy has yet to be updated so I recommend the District Leadership Group adopt the same version as in 2020. This has been discussed by the DSG who concur with my suggestion.

### **Safeguarding: Churches and Circuits**

#### **Annual Safeguarding Audit**

The Annual Safeguarding Audits were sent to all circuits and churches at the beginning of June with the request for them to be returned by the end of July.

The following date was calculated on 28.9.2021

Church audits completed and returned:

- **Sheffield District = 13**  
*(10 churches not required to complete the audit for various reasons)*
- **The Peaks = 8**  
*(4 churches not required to complete for various reasons)*
- **Trinity = 7**  
*(2 churches following CoE structure)*
- **Barnsley = 3**
- **Doncaster = 6**
- **Rotherham = 10**  
*(1 LEP following CoE structure)*
- **Derbyshire North East = 9**  
*(1 church has ceased to meet)*

Circuit audits completed:

Rotherham

Trinity

Sheffield

The majority of audits demonstrate that safeguarding is not embedded. Safer Recruitment steps are being partially followed – most churches have implemented appropriate DBS checks.

Only 36 audits involved Church Council Members, the rest being completed by the minister and/or the Church Safeguarding Officer. Given that ultimate responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Church Council this is concerning. I hope a lack of engagement from council members is down to a lack of time / opportunity and not indicative of their lack of knowledge. To help people better understand safeguarding I have devised 7 bespoke information sessions for Church Council members and new in post Church Safeguarding Officers. Entitled 'Supporting your Church Safeguarding Officer' the sessions, all on Zoom, will last for 1 hour and look at individual aspects of the Church Safeguarding Policy.

I have written to all the churches who have not returned an audit (52 in total) asking them to contact me to arrange a zoom meeting. This will give us the opportunity to identify issues and work together to find solutions. Many churches have since made contact and I am now working with them on an individual basis to complete their audits. This is extremely time consuming and is having a major impact on other areas of my work. I have an Action Plan to support churches with intervention based on their needs however I am struggling to find time to put these in place.

I am also writing to Church Safeguarding Officers on a monthly basis to explain in more detail Methodist expectations regarding the individual elements of their role. The model safeguarding policy relies on people using the *Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance of the Methodist Church* to provide clarity, however I can see this is not happening in most churches, and people are therefore misinterpreting what action they need to take. Over this Connexional year I will be explaining in details what should be happening in order to embed safeguarding fully, and I will be providing all the resources people need.

## **DSO specifics**

### **Training**

In the last 12 months I have attended the following training:

- Introduction to safeguarding risk assessment in the Methodist Church
- Partnership training with Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board
- Domestic Abuse Webinar – Connexional Safeguarding Team (CST)
- Train the Trainers – Foundation online
- Lay Employees Community of Practice
- Self-Harm and Suicide – (CST)
- The Impact of COVID19 on our Young People – The Children's Society
- Tackling Bullying, Changing Culture, Embedding Positive Relationships (3 sessions in total)
- Contextual Safeguarding – (CST)
- Online Safety with Karl Hopwood (CST)
- Advanced Safeguarding training
- MSG training

### **Line management and Case Work Supervision**

I have attended monthly session with Rev Gill Newton and Karen Allen from the Connexional Safeguarding Team. During Gill's sabbatical I received line management from Hilary Murden

Alison Hill  
28.10.2021