

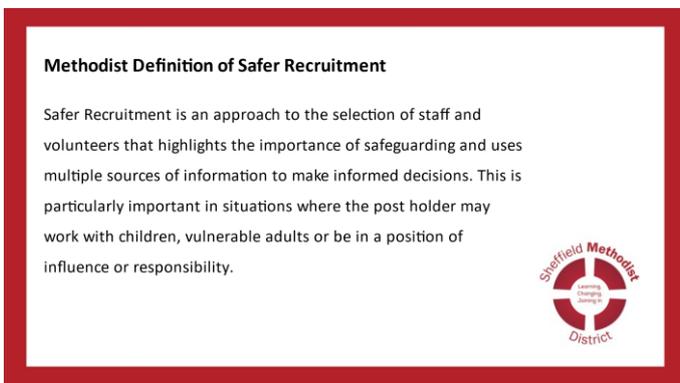
**Slide 1**



Welcome to the first of two sessions looking at Safer Recruitment.

The aim of this session is to first consider what we mean when we use the phrase Safer Recruitment. Then I want to explain why we need to adhere to Safer Recruitment procedures, before moving on to consider who has the responsibility to safely recruit people, first in a church setting and then in a circuit setting.

**Slide 2**



So, what do we mean when we use the term Safer Recruitment?

The understanding from a Methodist Church point of view is that:

Safer recruitment is an approach to the selection of staff and volunteers that highlights the importance of safeguarding and uses multiple sources of information to make informed

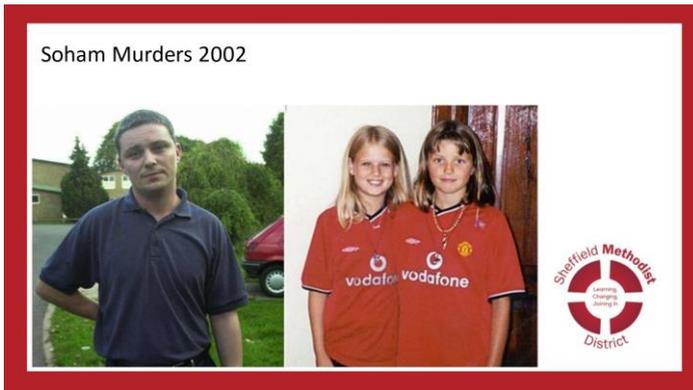
decisions. This is particularly important in situations where the post holder may work with children, vulnerable adults or be in a position of influence or responsibility.

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.

Safer recruitment is an effective first step in keeping dangerous people away from vulnerable children and adults and a crucial part of the safeguarding process. Safer Recruitment covers everything from writing the job description to shortlisting, checks, and references, interviewing and using induction and probation periods to ensure you have hired the right person.

Safer Recruitment, however, extend way beyond the Methodist Church.

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I'm sure there will be many people watching this presentation who remembers the horrendous murder of two young girls by their school caretaker in 2002. Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman were murdered by Ian Huntley on their way home from buying sweets.

Prior to his appointment at the school, nine allegations of sexual misconduct had been made against Ian Huntley. This information was

never shared with the Soham police and the school Huntley worked for were unaware of the many complaints women filed against him none of which he had been prosecuted for. He had been described as domineering, violent and controlling, and there had also been complaints of consensual and non-consensual sexual activities with young girls, many beneath the legal age of consent.

This shocking case forced a focus on safer recruitment. After Huntley's trial, an inquiry began and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (now known as the Disclosure and Barring Service or DBS) was launched.

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More recently you may remember the trail of former football coach Barry Bennell, who sexually abused large numbers of boys from 1970 until the early 1990s and was described by the judge at his criminal trial in February 2018 as the "devil incarnate". During the time when he committed this abuse, Bennell was involved with several professional clubs including Manchester City, Crewe Alexandra and Stoke City.

During the time Bennell was associated with Manchester City, the Club was not aware of allegations of his abuse. However, senior management of the Club were made aware of rumours and concerns about Bennell's conduct yet his activities were not monitored. Members of staff were also aware that boys were staying overnight at Bennell's house which the club did not investigate.

Bennell used his respectable status gained through his association with professional clubs and organisations to access children and young people, where he would proceed to befriend, groom, and abuse them.

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**Legislative Context and Jurisdiction for Safer Recruitment:**

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The police, Crime, sentencing and Courts Bill of 2021

**Safer Recruitment is a big deal.  
Its not something we can opt  
out of or ignore**



If you are looking for a legislative context and jurisdiction for Safer recruitment, there are plenty to choose from:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The police, Crime, sentencing and Courts Bill of 2021

I could go on.

In regard to an Ecumenical context, there continues to be growth in ecumenical agreements and cooperation on safeguarding, especially between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, as part of the ongoing Covenant. Our continued participation in the Christian Forum for Safeguarding (CFS) is of benefit in building and maintaining relations with all denominations. This includes the Baptist Union of GB and the United Reformed Church amongst many others. Furthermore, the CFS enhances our participation in discussions with government departments and agencies, e.g. the work of the DBS sub-group of the CFS.

**I tell you all this to drive home the fact that Safer Recruitment is a big deal. Its not something we can opt out of or ignore, and for good reason.**

Slide 6

**Church as a Safe Place**



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.

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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. The Methodist Churches position on Safer Recruitment makes explicit the Church's commitment to establishing a worshipping and serving community that welcomes and is safe for all.

Hopefully now, with a better understanding of why Safer recruitment is important, lets

move onto who, in a church context holds the responsibility within the Methodist Church.

Let's start at a church level.

Slide 8



The model Church Safeguarding Policy tasks 4 groups of people with the responsibility for safely recruiting staff and volunteers. 4 groups of people are:

- The Church Council
- The Church Stewards
- The Church Safeguarding officer, and
- Group leaders – these are the people who take responsibility for the groups we run which are aimed at or

include vulnerable groups.

On the first page of the model [Church Safeguarding Policy](#), under the heading 'principles' we read the following:

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)

Pay attention to the first word - "we" meaning more than one person.

So, lets look at the 4 groups of people in more details, starting with the Church Council.

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<p><b>Church Council</b></p>	<p>Model Church Safeguarding Policy:</p> <p>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'.</p> <p>... to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable, particular arrangements should be in place:</p> <p>Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church</p>
<p>Model Church Safeguarding Policy:</p> <p>Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council</p>	

Stated very clearly on page 3 of the model safeguarding policy we read that 'Legal responsibility for safeguarding rests with the members of the Church Council'.

On page 4, under the heading 'Good practice' we read that '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'.

Clarity is provided in the next few sentences where we read that 'to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable', 'particular arrangements should be in place:

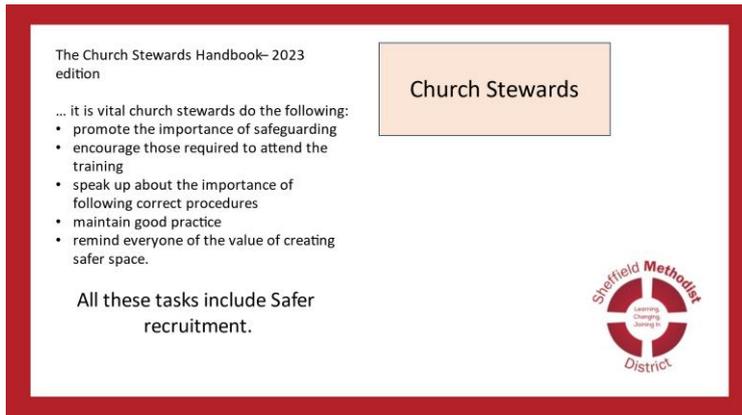
Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory criminal records check and following the safer recruitment procedures of the Methodist Church. Each worker will have an identified supervisor who will meet at regular intervals with the worker. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the 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).

Just to make sure there are no misunderstanding of what we mean by the term 'worker' page 6 of the model policy states that : 'A Worker is anyone working with children or vulnerable adults in the name of your Church, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity

I'm sure that many church council members will be perplexed at the fact that part of the Church Safeguarding review, which I sent round last June and July, asked for the involvement of 3 members of the Church Council. I did this specifically because the responsibility lies with them, therefore they have to be included in the review process. I feel duty bound to make sure that when someone takes on a Church Council role they fully understand what responsibility they have regarding safeguarding.

When I served on my church council in the past nobody told me I would held such responsibilities. As your District Safeguarding Officer, I want to make sure this doesn't happen to church council members in the Sheffield District.

Slide 10



In order to understand the safeguarding responsibilities of Church Stewards we need to look at a different document – the [Church Stewards Handbook](#).

On page 18 of the 2023 edition, we read that it is vital church stewards do the following:

- promote the importance of safeguarding
- encourage those required to attend the

training

- speak up about the importance of following correct procedures
- maintain good practice
- remind everyone of the value of creating safer space.

All of these tasks include Safer recruitment.

Promoting all the tasks previous outlined in the responsibilities of the church council.

Encouraging people to attend safeguarding training – a fundamental aspect of safer recruitment.

Speaking up about the importance of following methodist procedures, including the Safer recruitment policy (more about that later)

Maintain good practice – putting the safer recruitment policy into practise for example.

Reminding everyone of the value of creating safer space.

Church council members and church stewards play an enormous role in safer recruitment. They create the expectation and the environment in which everyone should operate. I like this little cartoon, it make clear the difference proactive leaders make in driving good practise forward.

However, if I was to ask you to reflect on your own church, how many people could honestly say church council members and church stewards are as proactive as they could be? How many people honestly know that they should be doing? How many people know the responsibilities they legal have.

Now, I can imagine many church council members and stewards are shouting at the screen that they are busy enough doing everything the role involves, and that they simply don't have the time or enthusiasm to do more. Well, I have good news. Yes, we need council members to set the tone but the actual work rests with the Church Safeguarding Officer and with group leaders, so let's look at the responsibilities of these people, starting with the safeguarding officer.



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STEP 1	Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process.
STEP 2	Ensure there is a safeguarding policy, which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to safer recruitment. There are template safeguarding policies, which include safer recruitment commitments in the model policies for church, circuit and district, available on the Methodist Church website.
STEP 3	Check and update role description and person specification for the role(s). This will be a role outline for volunteer posts. Consider whether the activities specified require a criminal record check.
STEP 4	Advertisement containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details about the role</li> <li>is suitable for recruitment</li> <li>your commitment to safeguarding</li> <li>whether a criminal record check will be required.</li> </ul> Non-volunteer roles should also contain a notice appropriate to the sector. The notice that states you have no intention to recruit or appoint anyone under the age of 18. This notice will also state the minimum age for recruitment to the position and the minimum age for the position.
STEP 5	Produce an information pack which might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about the organisation</li> <li>information about the role</li> <li>recruitment timetable</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>saeguarding policy/statement</li> <li>application form</li> <li>saeguarding declaration (where appropriate)</li> </ul>
STEP 6	Shortlist each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.
STEP 7	Carry out appropriate checks for your shortlisted candidates, including references. Confirm identity and relevant certificates of qualification/course attendance, as appropriate.
STEP 8	If there are several candidates, ensure all shortlisted candidates receive the same level of invitation to interview, supplying them with all necessary information.
STEP 9	Conduct a final face-to-face interview for ALL shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job description.
STEP 10	Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability are asked, including those needed to undertake any pre-employment checks on the application form.
STEP 11	Make a selection of a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role.
STEP 12	Inform the chosen candidate in writing that they will be offered the role and where applicable, advise them that there is a right to satisfactory checks, including the relevant level of DBS certificate. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified.

The section of the policy which is most practically useful can be spanning pages 9 & 10, this is where we find the 12 steps to Safer Recruitment.

Remember, at the beginning of this presentation I described Safer recruitment as a process? Well, the Methodist Church have created a 12 steps process. Before panic sets in let me reassure you that the steps are not long and complicated. The

first 3 steps only need to be done once a year, for example. Its also worth mentioning that different steps require input from different people, which makes the whole process easier to manage and shares the workload.

Following the 12 steps will ensure that legal requirements for Safer Recruitment have been met.

I'm guessing that 80% of the time, recruitment in churches will be the recruitment of volunteers. Applying the 12 steps to the recruitment of volunteers looks very different to recruiting someone to a paid position. Whilst the 12 steps must still be followed, we need to ensure that a proportional approach is taken.

So, let's look at the first 2 steps in more details.

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Step 1 requires Churches to Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process. Why, because how are people responsible for recruitment and selection to know what they are required to do unless we tell them?

To help you fulfil this step I have created a 7-page [Recruitment and Selection policy](#) which churches can amend and adopt, and that will meet step 1 or 12.

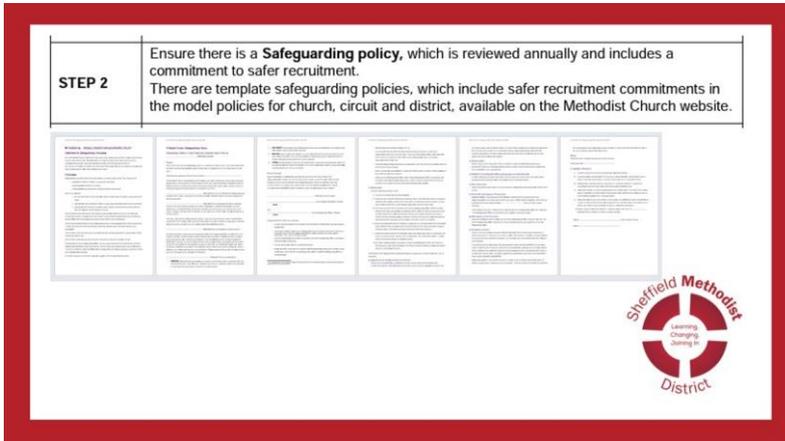
My local policy goes through each of the 12 steps and provides sensible, proportionate guidance for people who are responsible for recruiting volunteers. If you want help recruiting someone to a paid post, I advise you to get in touch with Andrew Crawford, the Distict HR Officer.

My simple guide hopefully demystifies the recruitment process. The guide can be found and downloaded from the District website. If you need a hard copy and having no printing facilities, please let me know and we will send a copy out in the post.

Because safeguarding guidance is reviewed annually by the Connexional team, I ask that my local policy is also reviewed annually. Therefore, if I've had to make changes you will always be working with the most recent version.

So, in regard to step 1 of the 12 Safer recruitment steps, the hard work is done. All that is required if for the church council to read the document and adopt it formally at your church council meeting and then this can be ticked the list.

**Slide 15**



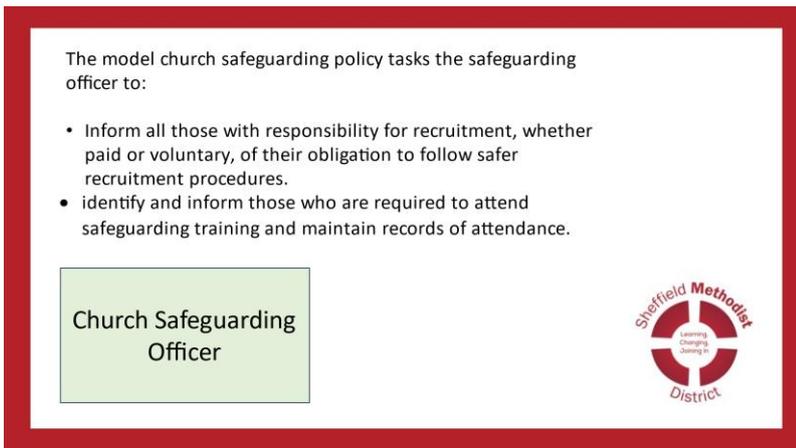
Step 2 is also a quick and easy step to complete.

Step 2 requires churches to “Ensure there is a Safeguarding policy, which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to safer recruitment”. The model Church Safeguarding Policy meets the requirements of this steps. I know that 99% of churches who completed the Safeguarding review last summer have an up-to-date policy in

place, therefore you can also tick this step as being completed.

I will be discussing the other 10 steps in the next training session on the Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October, so we’ll leave this here for now.

**Slide 16**



So, lets recap on the first Safer Recruitment task assigned to Church Safeguarding Officer - inform all those with responsibility for recruitment, whether paid or voluntary, of their obligation to follow safer recruitment procedures. Once your church has adopted my local policy, all your safeguarding officer needs to do is make sure group leaders get a copy, and this will allow them to tick this task of their list.

The second ‘Safer Recruitment’ task for Church Safeguarding Officer is to:

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

This task can be broken down into 3 parts:

The first is about identifying those who are required to attend training. In order to do this group leaders and the Church Safeguarding Officer need to work closely together – we go into greater detail about this in the next session.

Next your church safeguarding officer needs to let people know when their training needs to be completed. This will either be when someone new starts a role or every 4 years for people who have already completed the training once.

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In order to be able to inform people who have a role that requires training, the third part of this task needs to be completed: maintaining records.

Local Churches, Circuits and Districts have a duty of care for their records; not only are they a valuable historic, financial, missional and social resource, but often contain the personal data of individuals who also expect the Church to protect their data

efficiently.

In the next training session I will be taking you through all the paperwork that group leaders need to complete when someone takes up a role. At some point all this paperwork needs to be collated and filed away as we are currently required to keep Safer Recruitment records for [75 years](#).

However, before the forms are filed away, they need to pass through the hands of the safeguarding officer. At this stage a record can be created, that lists all the people who require training. Once people have completed training, a note can be made and then your church safeguarding officer is then in a position to inform people when they need to refresh in the future

### Slide 18

Without proper organisation the sheer volume of paper and electronic information can become



overwhelming. Well managed and organised records ensure that the right information is available to the right people at the right time.

### Slide 19

**Who is responsible for Safer Recruitment?**

Church Council ✓	Church Stewards ✓
Church Safeguarding Officer ✓	Individual Group Leaders

Thursday 26th October



So, lets recap what we've now covered.

We now understand why Church Council Members need to be involved in the Safer Recruitment process.

We also understand how Church and Circuit stewards have a role to play in energising and encourage people when it comes to safer recruitment. And we have now identified the role the Church or circuit safeguarding officer

plays in the process.

Each person or group of people need each other. Without someone in each role, the Safer Recruitment process becomes a nightmare to manage; working together makes the process easier to manage and less of a burden in terms of time, effort and energy.

You'll have noticed I haven't gone into detail about the role Group Leaders play – this will be the main focus of our next session on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October. At this session we will now only look at the role Group Leaders play; we will also go through the remaining 10 steps to Safer Recruitment process and the various paperwork needed.

**Thank you for listening.**

Alison Hill  
District Safeguarding Officer