

Safeguarding: Children and Adults Policy

London District of the
Methodist Church

Section 1

1.0 Policy Review

Last Review Date	Type of Review	Approved by	Next Review Date
Nov 2019 (created)	Full Policy	District Chairs	Nov 2020
Sep 2020 (edited)	Full Policy	District Chairs	Sep 2021

1.0.1 Context of Changes

In this edition, text in bold and italic differs from that of the previous edition and [...] indicates a deletion. Note; this area has also been highlighted in grey to aid viewing.

1. Full layout review to bring in line with other District policies and guidance.
2. Further minor edits.
3. Addition of contact details.

1.0.2 Table of Amendments

Page No.	Section	Update
All	All	Full layout review to bring in line with other District policies, guidance and documents
3	2.0	Addition of further policies to be read alongside
6	4.0.4	Amendments to District Safeguarding Officer risk assessment responsibilities
7	5.0	Amendment of the terminology from Adults at Risk to Vulnerable Adults in line with Connexional policy
8	6.0	Addition of key contacts

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Section 2

2.0 Introduction

The **London District of the Methodist Church** is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect and firmly believes that the needs of children or of people when they are at risk is paramount.

The **London District of the Methodist Church** fully agrees with the Connexional Team statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space*: As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

The **London District of the Methodist Church** recognises that none of us are invulnerable but that there is a particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

The **London District of the Methodist Church** recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and 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 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 issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The policy should be read alongside:

- ***Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church in Britain:***
By clicking [here](#).
- ***Practice Guidelines to Support the Report Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church Taking Action:***
By clicking [here](#).
- ***Practice Guidance on Carrying Out DBS Checks as part of Safer Recruitment:***
By clicking [here](#).
- ***Code of Safer Working Practice with Children and Young People***
By clicking [here](#).

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults in our care or using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church 2019 (or subsequent editions).

Section 3

3.0 Commitments

The **London District of the Methodist Church** commits itself to:

1. RESPOND without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or other related context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power by anyone who is considered to be in a position of trust.
2. Ensure the IMPLEMENTATION of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.
3. The PROVISION of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk. It affirms the role of the district safeguarding group.

Section 4

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

As with working face to face, there are ways to create and enable safer spaces online. You should maintain consistency between policies and approaches in the physical world and the online environment.

4.0.1 District Chair

A Linked District Chair attends the District Safeguarding Group and should:

- Manage and support the work of the District Safeguarding Officer.

- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Officer, District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.
- Support the District Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Group in their work by ensuring an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.
- Ensure each Superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each Superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the District Safeguarding Officer for scrutiny by the District Safeguarding Group. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group's report to the District Council.

4.0.2 Independent Chair of the District Safeguarding Group

As part of the implementation of the recommendations from the President's Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011, the Methodist Conference affirmed in 2012 that every district must have a group to focus on safeguarding work with children and adults and should have an independent Chair, as set out in the Safeguarding Framework (2010), who:

- should be strongly committed to supporting the District Safeguarding Officer
- should be well-respected
- should be able robustly to challenge the district where necessary
- should not be the District Safeguarding Officer, a District Chair, or a close relative of those fulfilling those roles.

4.0.3 District Safeguarding Group

The District Safeguarding Group will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and adults across the district. This responsibility includes ensuring that:

- The group is independently chaired; its business managed in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.

- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of a District Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- The contact details for the Chair and District Safeguarding Officer are publicly available.
- District and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.
- The Chair, Superintendents and District Council are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to Superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- A report is delivered annually to the District Council meeting of each Connexional year by the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

4.0.4 District Safeguarding Officer

The District Safeguarding Officer has a key role within the **London District of the Methodist Church** and is required to:

- oversee church, circuit and district compliance with the Methodist Church's safeguarding procedures
- be contacted by churches about safeguarding issues, be involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all safeguarding contracts
- liaise regularly with designated officers of the local authority and the police as necessary
- ***undertake District safeguarding risk assessments for the implementation of safeguarding contracts and relating to specific cases***
- ***if registered as an Accredited Risk Assessor*** undertake safeguarding risk assessments for the **Connexional Safeguarding Advisory Panel**
- take a lead on working with individual cases in the district, including representing the Church in meetings with external organisations
- have a clear understanding of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to make their places of worship a safe place for children, young people and adults
- be committed to personal continuing development and to the provision of safeguarding training opportunities within the district

Section 5

5.0 Key Concepts and Definitions

- i. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
- ii. **Vulnerable Adults [...]**: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii. Safeguarding and protecting children, young people and 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, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child, young person or adult, or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.
- vi. The Methodist Church recognises Spiritual abuse as defined by *Dr Lisa Oakley and Kathryn Kimmond, 2014, Journal of Adult Protection: Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context. Spiritual abuse may be perpetrated by an office holder in the Church however we recognise that sometimes people may undertake roles without actually holding office and it is possible that in such situations people in the Church and/or wider community may assume the individual is acting or speaking on behalf of the Church. No matter how well intentioned or naive someone's actions may be, if there is concern that anyone may be exploited or otherwise harmed, we would expect safeguarding processes to be implemented by those with responsibility to do so.*
- vii. Abuse using social media Online: abuse and any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones, children, young people and

adults may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. *NSPCC Website. Online abuse definition accessed June 2016*

- viii. Child trafficking: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in human beings”. *Council of Europe, ratified by the UK Government in 2008 (See also Human Trafficking)*

Section 6

6.0 Key Contact Details:

	Website	Telephone
Local Agencies		
Police	https://www.met.police.uk	101 (non-emergency) 999 (emergency)
Contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team	https://www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/local-policing-team-contact/contact-your-local-policing-team	
Find your Local Authority	https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council	
Support and Advice Organisations		
Childline	https://www.childline.org.uk	0800 111 111
NSPCC	https://www.nspcc.org.uk	0808 800 5000
Family Lives (helpline for parents)	https://www.familylives.org.uk	0808 800 222
YoungMinds (young people’s mental health)	https://youngminds.org.uk	0808 802 5544
Hopeline (young suicide)	https://www.papyrus-uk.org	0800 068 4141
FRANK (drug and alcohol support)	https://www.talktofrank.com	0300 123 6600

CEOP (child online exploitation)	https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre	
IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse)	https://www.iicsa.org.uk	0800 917 1000
Action Fraud (fraud and cyber crime)	https://www.actionfraud.police.uk	0300 123 2040
AgeUK	https://www.ageuk.org.uk	0800 678 1602
District Contacts		
District Safeguarding Officer Becky Skinner	https://www.methodistlondon.org.uk	07960 877 740
District Chair(s) Michaela Youngson Jongi Zihle Nigel Cowgill	https://www.methodistlondon.org.uk	020 7654 3850