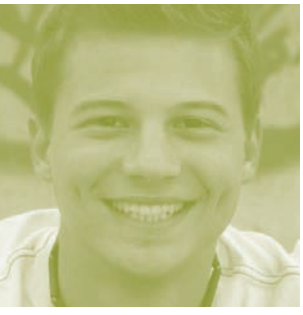
Policy for the
Methodist Church

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



The **Methodist** Church

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Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy for the Methodist Church

Revised edition 2010

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Joint Statement of Safeguarding Principles for the Church of England and the Methodist Church

Preamble

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 disclosures and registration with[1] the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

1 Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

Introduction

1.1 Our theological approach

Every human being has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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. Christ saw children as demonstrating a full relationship with God. He gave them status, time and respect.

Every person is equally precious to God. Each one needs the assurance that respect for this brings. Individuals who suffer abuse often experience a loss to their identity and worth; there is often shame and a false guilt. The Church is intended to be a place where men and women, children and young people, those who are hurt and damaged, may find healing and wholeness. It is our calling to be agents of healing and recovery in such a way that enables all who have suffered from abuse to lead lives with dignity in a context that is as safe as possible. It is about speaking words of peace. It is communication of shalom; that is, of justice, healing and peace for the whole of the individual, as well as for the community.

God is present and at work in the world in many ways. A Church empowered by the Holy Spirit is a place where the wonderful character of God is manifested. The Church is called to witness to that truth. As individual Christians and as part of the Church, our vocation is to reflect the character of God. We are called to welcome and care for the oppressed, the marginalised, and the victims of injustice. Safeguarding good practice concerns the development of safer expressions of care to all and underpins the love and welcome of God for all people.

Justice is part of the outworking of love. The Church must hold in tension concerns for both justice and compassion. Those who have suffered child abuse have sometimes found an unsympathetic hearing. They may be disbelieved, discouraged and damaged further. Other people tend to side with the alleged perpetrator. This occurs in all parts of society, but it is particularly hurtful when it occurs within the Church. Such actions compound the sense of injustice that many feel. In answer to the question "What does God require of us?" the need to act justly is set alongside the need to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

Many who have endured child abuse consider that mercy towards those who have sinned is set above the need for the victims to be enabled to find justice. Both are essential. In creating humankind God made us to be together, to live in community. When one suffers we all suffer. We are all made poorer by every incidence of child or adult abuse, as by all sin. In finding the grace to act righteously towards those who suffer, we also experience transformation through grace. We become better people and our churches become safer places for all.

In similar ways offenders may also be assured that they are precious to God and find healing and wholeness.

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Because redemption and the possibility of forgiveness are so central to the Gospel, the Church is not only well equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders but is also challenged by the issues their presence raises for us. The Church is also part of a society where collusion with violence in families, emotional abuse or certain taboos on sexual abuse often holds sway. Church people have sometimes required those who have suffered abuse to forgive but it is our calling to hold on to both justice and grace and to build safer church communities, often in challenging circumstances. We need also to understand forgiving and receiving forgiveness as lifelong processes.

Our congregations can be a refuge for those who have perpetrated abuse but are seeking help in maintaining a non-abusive way of life. We have also to be aware that some who abuse may see church membership as an opportunity to be close to children or vulnerable parents in order to continue their abusive patterns of behaviour. Experience shows that whether penitent or not, those who abuse always need support in taking responsibility for their own actions and in stopping their abusive behaviour, and, of course, the vulnerable need protecting from them. The genuine penitent will accept the need for careful arrangements, including some restrictions, for their return to church fellowship. This is in line with the Church's realistic understanding of sin and its effects and the Church's responsibility to love all God's people.

The gospel accounts remind us of Jesus' humanity and vulnerability throughout his life. He gave up all but the power of love. He gave up wealth, security and status. He listened to, and ministered to, those who were powerless and vulnerable; he appointed fallible and weak disciples who needed to discover their limitations and find strength by living in God's grace with each other. Those who are humble and vulnerable themselves are often gifted with a ministry with those who are most in need, including with children and with adults who have suffered. There is therefore a challenge for the Church to encourage ministry, service and leadership in ways that promote discernment of one's boundaries and limitations, reliance on God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, thus developing compassionate, collaborative and enabling ministries which value careful listening to all.

Child abuse is a scourge on individuals, on our Church and in our society and we must name it as such, doing everything we can to prevent it. We are to nurture children as fully as we can in Christ's name.

A Christian approach to safeguarding children will therefore expect both individuals and communities to:

- create a safe environment for children and their carers
- act promptly on any complaints made
- care for those who have been abused in the past
- minister appropriately to those who have abused
- provide opportunities for healing and flourishing.

God's mission is a message of good news, of love and welcome for the poor and marginalised. The Church must take seriously both human propensities to evil but also the God-given resources of goodness, peace, healing and justice; in short, his love, his life.

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1.2 Societal context

The abuse of children is often dominated by a press and media coverage which is sensational and misleading. Safeguarding is about the welfare and the protection of children and young people. The whole Church is engaged in this through developing and supporting good practice and responding appropriately when harm occurs. The government, local authorities, schools and the wider statutory sector have in recent years sought to engage in safeguarding, as concerned for the whole child since Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, which addresses interagency and multi-agency working on the welfare and protection of children, has been revised twice since 2003 (our last edition of Safeguarding Children in the Methodist Church).

The Bichard Inquiry report and work on the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 has applied safer recruitment principles across both the voluntary and statutory sectors. Guidance on 'Safer Recruitment' in schools (2007) and the Children's Workforce Development Council 'Recruiting Safely' (2009) for the voluntary sector have both followed. In Scotland this has been followed by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act.

In addition, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (in England and Wales) and Local Authority Designated Officers (in England) have been appointed who have duties to ensure faith groups are both trained in safeguarding and are represented. Children's Commissioners have also been appointed across the UK.

Recent years have therefore been full of changes, with a roll-out of statutory requirements and a tightening of procedures across the children's workforce in all sectors.

There can be an unhelpful emphasis on sexual abuse in society, when physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect, sometimes alongside domestic violence, are more common. All abuse is also more likely to occur in families or from extra-familial relations and friends. This presents a challenge to the Church and to society to engage with safeguarding children and young people as a whole.

1.3 Ecumenical Context

In the churches there is a continuing growth in ecumenical agreement and cooperation on Safeguarding, especially between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, as part of the outworking of the Covenant. Our continued participation in Churches' Agency for Safeguarding and the Christian Forum for Safeguarding is of great benefit in building and maintaining relations with all churches, especially the Baptist Union of GB and the United Reformed Church, the Society of Friends, the Catholic Church of England and Wales (CSAS[2]), the Salvation Army, the Church of Scotland, the Assemblies of God and the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service. Furthermore, these bodies enable and enhance our participation in discussions with government departments and agencies.

We have learned from each other and especially from those who have had thorough scrutiny of practice and procedures. The following key approaches[3] are regarded as important underpinning for our safeguarding practice:

- the child's welfare is paramount
- prevention is vital
- transparency
- accountability

2 The Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service.

3 Adapted from the Nolan principles – The Nolan Commission 2001 http://www.cumberlegecommission.org.uk/, as presented by Eileen Shearer at the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) Conference 2006.

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- partnership with statutory authorities
- use of independent specialist advice
- the active management of risk
- a 'One Church' approach
- a culture of informed vigilance

In a Local Ecumenical Partnership, the governing body of each constituent church should decide which safeguarding policy is to be followed by the joint LEP.

1.4 Description and definitions

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout this document.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 states:

> The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from abuse and neglect
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

Children in need

Children who are defined as being 'in need', under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services (section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989), plus those who are disabled. The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are:

- what will happen to a child's health or development without services being provided
- the likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development.

Harm and significant harm

Harm means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of **significant harm** as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a

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child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It is the threshold used by the courts in deciding whether compulsory intervention into family life might be in the best interests of the child.

Significant harm has no precise definition. It can be caused by a single traumatic event or a cluster of smaller incidents over time. Any concern about significant harm requires careful investigation and assessment.

There are a range of orders that a local authority may apply for and some of these grant them a share in the parental responsibility for the child. The most far-reaching of these is a Care Order, which commits the child to the care of the local authority. The court may also make private law orders if there are disputes between parents about the care of a child, or where the child needs to live with extended family or friends under the protection of the family court, but does not require the additional protection of a care order.

Each Local Authority has a responsibility to deliver services for children. The local terminology varies. This document uses the term '**Children's Services'** to refer to this department of the local authority.

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2 Safeguarding policy of the Methodist Church

The purpose of this document is to set out policy, procedures and guidance. All the procedures set out in this document are either requirements in law or as a result of Methodist policy and therefore must be followed. Should specific circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation, then the District Safeguarding Coordinator must be consulted and any variation must be recorded.

Discussion of the principles

The statement of principles at the front of this document is a common statement for our set of documents on the safeguarding both of children and of vulnerable adults. The rest of this document considers the implications primarily for children and young people. A separate document, *Safeguarding Adults*,[4] will deal with this issue. Safer recruitment policy and good practice are dealt with in a companion volume *Recruiting Safely.*[5] The appendices in all three contain some generic material and are also available online.

We are committed to:

- **The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and all adults.**
- **The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.**
- **The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.**

The safeguarding and protection of children is everyone's responsibility, not just that of parents or those who have this as part of their formal responsibilities. The term 'safeguarding' covers safer recruitment, safer practice, responding to concerns, working with partner agencies, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children and other matters that may be relevant. The term 'child protection' is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child may have been harmed.

Procedures and formal processes, though essential, will not alone protect children. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

The child's welfare is the paramount consideration in matters of private or public law affecting children which come before the family courts. The Church extends this to all matters relating to the care and welfare of children, bearing in mind that conflicts of interest can arise from time to time between the welfare of children and that of adults. Where this occurs, the welfare of children will be given priority.

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 disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes[6].

Safer recruitment principles for the Methodist Church are set out in detail in the companion volume 'Recruiting

4 Methodist Conference 2010.

5 Methodist Conference 2010.

6 When implemented.

Safely'. The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children is not only dependent upon vetting checks and criminal record disclosures. Someone who is 'cleared' may still be unsuitable and other safer recruitment principles will be applied.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

The church accepts that, through its workers, it is responsible for children who are entrusted to them by their parents in the church building, on church property and other premises being used, and during church activities, including travel between places when organised by the church. It is not responsible for private arrangements made by parents.

The term 'church officer' is used for anyone appointed by the church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

The term 'complaint' can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement; something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received needs to be recorded and acted upon. This will include referral to the police or Local Authority Children's Services wherever necessary.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry.

The church does not investigate allegations of abuse or neglect of children itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory agencies. The church may need to make preliminary enquiries to establish the accuracy of information being passed to the statutory body.

If a child comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church workers will notify the appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record.

Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the police if they have not done so before. Work has been done for guidance in the care of, and work with and alongside, survivors.[7]

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

We are aware that some people in positions of trust and responsibility, in the church as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO, in England) or the equivalent role (in Wales and Scotland[8]) and investigated in accordance with their advice.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to proper authorities to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

7 *Tracing Rainbows through the Rain*, Methodist Conference 2006.

8 There is no equivalent role, however, duty Social Workers or the Child Protection Manager in Scotland should be consulted.

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If a member of the church community comes to notice as having a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning for offences against children, or for being barred from working with children, or is considered to present a risk to children we will seek to draw up a written contract or 'Covenant of Care', where it is safe to do so, with safeguards, as explained in detail later on (See Section 9.2). Breach of this agreement or other concerns may lead to a referral to the proper authorities.

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

The Church seeks to minister to those who have been abused and also to those who have perpetrated abuse in the past. Inevitably, there will be tensions between the two commitments, highlighting the need for clear and comprehensive policy, procedure and good practice. The Church seeks to go beyond the minimal requirements of statute in safeguarding and to foster and promote best practice as part of its working witness to God's kingdom.

This will involve, in particular, openness among those with a legitimate need to know, confidentiality for those not directly involved, and sharing of information with the statutory authorities.

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3 Definitions of forms of harm

Child abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse as described in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2010: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Responding to abuse is contained in Section 6 below. It is important not to investigate but to seek advice.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The categories listed here 3.1–3.4 are those recognised in statutory guidance as is domestic violence/abuse 3.5.

Church officers, employees, members and volunteers should also be aware that other forms of abuse can occur, for example:

- stranger abuse
- internet-related abuse sometimes called 'e-abuse'[9]
- bullying (abuse by other children)
- fabricated or induced illness
- abuse of disabled children (who are far more frequently abused than non-disabled children)
- deliberate self-harm (overdoses, cutting)
- domestic violence/abuse – *see below*
- allegations of possession by evil spirits
- child trafficking
- sexual exploitation
- forced marriage
- peer abuse – can be confused with bullying.

The government issues guidance documents or advice for several of these specialist topics.

3.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

3.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

9 There should be no difference in the way someone is assessed as being of risk when the offences are not of a nature involving first-hand contact. Illegal images or internet bullying and grooming are damaging to those involved and those who view them may damage or offend against others.

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3.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3.5 Domestic Violence or Abuse

The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are used interchangeably throughout this document. The Home Office defines domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic abuse, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover.[10]

Domestic violence affects both adults and children within the family.[11] Domestic violence has an impact on children in a number of ways:

a) Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene.
b) Children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.
c) Exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress which may express itself in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
d) Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

Although separating from a violent partner should result in women and children being safe from harm, the danger does not automatically end. It should be recognised, that the point of leaving an abusive relationship is the time of highest risk for a victim.

10 See Methodist Conference Report 2005, Domestic Abuse.

11 Some 200,000 children (1.8%) in England live in households where there is a known risk of domestic abuse or violence. Prolonged and/or regular exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious impact on children's safety and welfare, despite the best efforts of parents to protect them.

Domestic abuse also affects children because it impacts on parenting capacity.

a) A parent (in most families, the mother) may have difficulty in looking after the children when domestic violence results in injuries or, in extreme cases, death.
b) Exposure to psychological and emotional abuse has profound negative effects on women's mental health resulting in a loss of confidence, depression, feelings of degradation, problems with sleep, isolation, and increased use of medication and alcohol. These are all factors that can restrict the mother's capacity to meet the developmental needs of her child.
c) Belittling and insulting a mother in front of her children undermines not only her respect for herself, but also the authority she needs to parent confidently.
d) A mother's relationship with her children may also be affected because, in attempts to avoid further outbursts of violence, she prioritises her partner's needs over those of her children.

The impact of domestic violence on children increases when directly abused, when witnessing the abuse of a parent, or colluding (willingly or otherwise) in the concealment of assaults. This constitutes abuse of children and must be reported to the authorities.

No age group is particularly protected from or damaged by the impact of domestic violence. Key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence is an alternative, safe and supportive residence.

3.6 Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside faith communities including the church. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional abuse or physical abuse (e.g. forced healing rituals).

Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries[12] or rituals, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.[13] If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in cooperation with appropriate statutory agencies. Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of harm include the denial of the right of faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

See also the government guidance *Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007, and the Welsh Assembly Government, 2007.

12 It will also include abuse linked to a belief in Spirit Possession. [There is statutory guidance on this issue available from the Department of Children, Schools and Families including the 'Every Child Matters' website.]

13 This has been adapted with permission from material issued by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

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4 Implementing the policy

A list of who takes responsibility at each level of church life as a result of the above commitments is provided in Appendix C. The list of responsibilities and commitments indicates clearly that all members, employees, office holders and volunteer workers at all levels of church life play a significant role in implementing safeguarding procedures.

The Charity Commission and Methodist Insurance both require all local bodies to have a safeguarding policy in place. Each district, circuit and church will produce a safeguarding policy, relating to work with both children and adults. Model policies are provided separately in the Safeguarding Handbook. These models represent the minimum that is required: they can be supplemented for local situations as appropriate.

It is important to recognise that it is people who protect and not only procedures. The aim is to create **a culture of informed vigilance** at all levels in the Church by:

- raising awareness of the issues involved in protecting children in the church
- addressing the needs of our children in all their cultural, spiritual, intellectual, racial and physical diversity
- responding to the needs of children and adults who have been abused
- supporting and training those who work with children, encouraging them to work together to follow good practice
- caring appropriately for those in the church community who have abused children.

All those working with, or in direct and regular contact with, children in a paid or unpaid capacity will be carefully recruited and checked for registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (or membership of the PVG scheme in Scotland[14]) and their backgrounds checked at the appropriate level through a criminal records check. These checks will also be carried out on those supervising people working with children and on those whose representational ministry, office or status gives them the opportunity or the expectation for regular or unsupervised contact with children.

4.1 Connexional commitment

The Methodist Church as a Connexion has an obligation to support churches and those working with children and young people in exercising their primary responsibility for those entrusted to them.

4.2 Implementation in the district

The Chair and the District Policy Committee should provide support and oversight for circuits, superintendent ministers and all ministers in implementing safeguarding in churches and circuits.

In particular each district should :

- provide a structure to manage safeguarding issues and practice in the district with a suitably qualified and experienced multi-disciplinary District Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG), including an independent chair. The Chair of District or their nominee shall be a member of the group and attend regularly. The

14 Protection of Vulnerable Groups vetting scheme.

members of the group do not have to be members of the Methodist Church but the majority of the team should be either Methodist or members of a church in partnership or covenant with the Methodist Church.

- provide access to a process of local risk assessment reports on individuals so that the Chair, the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals and their work or activities within the church.
- provide access to training and support on safeguarding matters to churches, circuits, district organisations and those who work at district level in collaboration with the Training Officers.

4.3 Implementation in the circuit

The circuit and the Superintendent should provide support and oversight for Church Councils and ministers in implementing safeguarding as stated above and ensure that activities with children, both within the circuit and in local churches, are provided according to good practice and safeguarding procedures.

4.4 Implementation in the local church

Churches and circuits may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures, but it is important to remember that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual churches. It should be noted that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable and care should be taken to implement the policy in full.

4.5 Responsibilities of trustees

The responsibility for implementation lies with the relevant trustee body; that is, the Church Council and Circuit Meeting as delegated to the person with pastoral charge.

It is the relevant church body and the minister with pastoral charge who is also responsible for ensuring:

a) Allegations concerning church workers and office holders are responded to immediately and according to good practice procedures (as outlined in this policy and Recruiting Safely) including referral to the statutory authorities.
b) Reports of abuse (including allegations) are referred to the statutory authorities according to good practice procedures (as outlined in this policy).
c) Standing Orders are implemented in obtaining vetting information.
d) Standing Orders are implemented on appointments to office (who may not hold an office, role or responsibility) 010 and training upon appointment.
e) Standing Orders are implemented in relation to sex offenders in the church (SO690f).
f) Safeguarding good practice is followed and complementary pastoral care in all instances of child or adult abuse and trauma, including pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse (see *Tracing Rainbows through the Rain*, Methodist Conference, 2006) and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children.

In respect of these responsibilities it is also the responsibility of the Trustee body, with the minister in pastoral charge carrying out the responsibility with support and guidance from appropriate advisers:

a) to refer cases to the Independent Safeguarding Authority or Disclosure Scotland where allegations lead to disciplinary action or someone resigns pending this

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b) to make a report to both the Charity Commission (in England and Wales) and the relevant Insurance company in respect of serious safeguarding matters. This should always occur in those cases involving possible reputational or financial risks. (See appendix F for further guidance.)

4.6 Church schools

Methodist schools, both controlled and aided, are part of the statutory sector and are not covered by these provisions.

- The safeguarding responsibilities of controlled and aided church schools come under the relevant local authority and Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of academies and independent schools with a church foundation come under the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Even when there is a strong link between a church school and a church, and particular individuals may hold roles in both, care should be taken to distinguish and fulfil the different legal responsibilities of schools and churches and to share relevant information where appropriate, especially information which would promote safeguarding and prevent abuse.

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5 Promoting safer practice

5.1 Safeguarding appointments

The following appointments within the Methodist church aim to ensure that good safeguarding practice is embedded throughout the Church:

- **At church/circuit level: Safeguarding Representatives**
  This person should be a member of the Church Council/Circuit Meeting, ***or*** have the right to attend at least annually, to report on implementation of the safeguarding policy. They should also have the right to attend the circuit staff meeting to discuss urgent confidential concerns and report to the Circuit Superintendent.

- **At district level: Safeguarding Advisory Group and Coordinators**
  The group will provide expert advice at a local level for the Chair, Superintendents, ministers or other church leaders as required.

- **At connexional level: Safeguarding Adviser**
  The adviser offers support to the District Safeguarding Advisory Groups, individual advisers or Coordinators through regular communications and information, a regular conference for professional development and networking, maintaining website pages, overseeing Connexional training strategies and the quality of safeguarding training and regular liaison with relevant agencies including government departments and other churches at national and Britain-wide levels.

There is no requirement for those coordinating or advising in Safeguarding at any level of the Church that they be members of the Methodist Church. This gives scope for the most appropriate people with relevant professional backgrounds to be appointed, especially when considering the appointment of chair of the District Safeguarding Group, members of the District Safeguarding Group and the Coordinator.

This is possible and appropriate because the responsibility for Safeguarding remains with the person with Pastoral Charge and with the relevant trustee body, such as the Church Council. The Safeguarding group, advisers and coordinators, who should be appropriately experienced and qualified, give advice on implementation of policy and good practice. This advice should normally be followed, but they are not responsible for the decisions.

5.2 Safer recruitment[15]

Safer recruitment is key for safeguarding. A companion policy (Recruiting Safely, Methodist Conference 2010) has been produced which sets out the framework for safe recruitment of employees and volunteers.

5.3 Code of Safer Working Practices

Every circuit should prepare (using the model in Appendix D as a guide), and every church working with children should adopt a Code of Practice including conduct for church workers with children and young people which covers the issues mostly likely to arise.

15 At the time of printing, the Government has suspended full implementation of the new system for Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registration, pending further review. The present arrangements for CRB initial and renewal checks continue unchanged. See the Methodist safeguarding website page for up to date information.

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This should have regard to the UK government guidance document *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People* (DCSF for Allegations Management Advisers, 2007)[16] and *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (DCSF 2006). A link to this document should be provided on the district website. This guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts.

5.4 Transport

Transport arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents if they make arrangements among themselves but are the responsibility of the church if the church or church activity organises them. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the church. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parent to church worker and at which point it is returned. More detail is available in the model Code of Safer Working Practice (Appendix D)

5.5 Registration and consent forms

Contact details and special requirements should be noted for all children who regularly attend church activities and registers kept, including mixed-age activities. Written parental consents should also be obtained for special activities e.g. off premises or the taking/using of photographs.

5.6 Health and safety

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that proper health and safety processes are in place.

Health and safety should be managed as part of all activities. A First Aid Box should be obtained and maintained on site. An accident book should be maintained at all places where children's activities take place. Buildings should be checked for health and safety regularly and at least once a year and the results noted and reported to the Church Council.

If specialised activities are to be undertaken, risk assessments should be made, appropriate instructors engaged and their credentials confirmed. However, even when specialised instructors have been engaged, the church or other church body retains the duty to supervise the children.

5.7 Risk assessments

Risk assessments of new and existing activities should be made, in order to identify hazards and take action to minimise risk. The same approach should be taken if buildings are hired for church activities involving children.

Risk assessments should be made covering outside activities including travel arrangements. If specialised activities are to be undertaken, appropriate instructors should be engaged and their credentials confirmed. However, even when specialised instructors are involved, the circuit or other church body retains the duty to supervise the children.

Risk assessments for individual workers are covered by the document *Recruiting Safely*.

5.8 Registration with OFSTED (in England or the equivalent in Wales and Scotland)

Some churches provide groups for children under the age of 6 who attend regularly for more than two hours at a

16 http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00311/

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time or for more than 14 days in any period of 12 months. These will need registration with OFSTED unless an exemption applies. Many children's groups provided by churches will be exempt from OFSTED registration, but will still be required to inform OFSTED of the activity. For further details consult OFSTED (through their website or information line at 08456 40404) or the children's information service of the relevant local authority.[17]

5.9 Youth work

There are now statutory duties and codes of practice in place for youth workers in the statutory sector. These do not technically apply to the voluntary sector. However, the church is committed, in its own guidance and codes of practice, to reflecting the good practice required in the statutory sector.

All work with those under 16 must be adequately supervised. 16 and 17 year olds do not require the same level of supervision but should still have an adult in charge. Those of 18 and older are legally adults and can be considered for work with younger children. However, it is usually appropriate to require a minimum three-year difference between the age of the youth worker and that of the children they supervise.

Youth workers should be trained.[18]

Guidance for camping, residential trips and youth groups meeting in someone's home are available on the Methodist website.[19]

5.10 Positions of trust

All those who work with children or who have significant contact with them and their families on behalf of the church are in positions of trust. Staff handbooks, codes of practice and contracts should make clear the importance of accepting the expectations of such work (and the possible grounds for disciplinary action if they are not met):

- they will be seen as role models by the children with whom they are in contact at all times, including when they are off duty;
- all church workers should, therefore, conduct themselves in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the church;
- they should take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they should ensure that all communications they may have with or about children are appropriate in their tone;
- they should seek advice immediately if they come across a child who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate;
- they should not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European, or international law.

It is contrary to the policy of the Methodist Church for those in a position of trust, including ministers, local preachers and youth workers among others, to have sexual relationships with those aged 16 or 17 for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a disciplinary matter. It will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and in some cases it may also constitute a criminal offence. Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind is

17 The legal basis is now *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007.

18 CORE skills training for children and youth work.

19 Under Church Life/Safeguarding/Resources and documents.

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likely to be dismissed and referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring.

5.11 Mixed-age activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, music and drama groups are appropriately supervised. Criminal record disclosure checks or ISA registration are not required for adults in those groups who do not have specific responsibility for children.

Separate changing facilities should be provided where necessary for adults and children, and the different sexes and children should be supervised only by those authorised to do so.

5.12 Insurance

The groups concerned with this document will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of churches, church groups, etc. will be insured with the Methodist Insurance who have made the following statement in respect of those policies they have issued for:

(a) churches, in use for worship
(b) youth groups.

Methodist Insurance statement:

Public Liability (Third Party) insurance, where in force, will operate to protect the interests of the insured where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party or accidental loss of or damage to third party property, subject to the policy terms, conditions and exceptions.

The policy will provide an indemnity to the insured if they are held legally liable for an incident leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse.

It is not Methodist Insurance's intention to provide an indemnity to the perpetrator of an incident of abuse.

This statement clearly only applies to policies issued by Methodist Insurance. Where churches are insured with another company the position of that company should be clarified including confirmation of the scope of cover.

Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines.

It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer *immediately*. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy.

Public Liability insurance indemnity limits should be kept under regular review. Guidance is available from Methodist Insurance.

5.13 Hire or use of church premises by others

Many churches possess buildings which they hire out to community groups and others. Some of these may undertake work with children. Note that the observance of 'reasonable care' by both parties is a standard insurance condition.

The hiring body (i.e. the organisation hiring the premises) is required to ensure that children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring, and carries full liability insurance for this.

The hiring body should abide by their own child protection or safeguarding policy if they have one, otherwise by that of the church.

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For both one-off and regular hirings it is recommended that a written hiring agreement be used. A full model lettings/licence agreement, including the declaration, is available from Methodist Legal Office.

If the hiring body is required to register with OFSTED then the owner should ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.

Where uniformed organisations meet that are not authorised by the church e.g. Guiding and Scouting organisations (even when they are sponsored), these organisations should be regarded in the same way as other users and hirers. They have a responsibility to abide by their own safeguarding policy.

5.14 Record keeping and data protection

Recent *Guidance of Best Practice in Retaining Records in the Methodist Church* has been developed and is available on the Methodist Church website.

The Data Protection Act 1998 contains principles governing the use of personal data. These are reproduced below for convenience. Personal data should be:

- processed fairly and lawfully
- obtained and used for specific purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept for longer than is necessary
- processed in line with a person's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

Circuits and districts should maintain a record of church workers employed sufficient to be able to respond to *bona fide* enquiries. This should include start and finish dates, dates of CRB checks and ISA registration, all posts held and next post when known, training completed. There should be a flag on any database if a safeguarding concern occurred, linked with a paper record providing details of the concern and a record of what action was taken. Records should be kept secure and retained even after the people concerned have left the post or area.

The record of safeguarding concerns should be kept indefinitely, even if the matter turned out to be malicious, un-substantiated or unfounded. *See also 7.9.*

Records of known offenders against children should be retained indefinitely together with a copy of the agreement and reviews.

Nothing in the Data Protection legislation seeks to limit the appropriate disclosure of information in order to protect an individual who either is or may be at risk. What matters is that the process of information sharing is done properly.

Further advice is available from the Connexional Data Controller or the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser.

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6 Responding to concerns

6.1 Reporting concerns to statutory services

If somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, harm, then they should always refer their concerns to Local Authority Children's Services. In addition, the police and the NSPCC have powers to intervene in these circumstances. While those making referrals should seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to make referrals to Local Authority Children's Services, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.

A referral should be made for any concern of harm, not just harm arising on church premises or from a church worker.

A referral should also be considered if domestic violence comes to notice and it is known that there are children in the household. Care should be taken not to intervene directly with someone who is alleged to have committed domestic violence as this may trigger further abuse. Seek advice from the District Safeguarding Coordinator or telephone the specialist police unit.[20]

Children's Services have been advised that personal information from referrers who are members of the public should only be disclosed to third parties (including subject families and other agencies) with the consent of the referrer. Some church workers with children will count as members of the public for this purpose and so their details will not be shared routinely.

The District Safeguarding Coordinator should always be advised when a referral is made to Children's Services.

In each Local Authority there are published procedures for use by anyone in their area who may find themselves dealing with possible abuse of a child. These procedures are usually available online and on open access. No one should be deterred from making a referral because they are unsure about the formal procedure. Any telephone call or letter should be treated by Children's Services as a referral, with guidance about how to proceed from then on.

The matter may proceed to a strategy meeting, a case conference, and services may be offered or legal proceedings begun. Ministers and other church members may on occasion be asked to attend meetings, provide statements or give evidence in care proceedings or associated criminal proceedings. They should seek advice from the District Safeguarding Coordinator and inform the Superintendent or Chair of District before doing so. They also need to be clear whether they are attending meetings simply to support someone or to contribute to assessment and planning. They should confine their contribution to what they know or reasonably believe at first hand. They should ensure, as far as they can, that their actions cannot be interpreted as support for one side or another in a legal dispute. They should not provide character references except

20 The child or family protection unit.

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in exceptional circumstances which should be discussed with the registrar or District Safeguarding Coordinator.

6.2 Reporting concerns to the District Safeguarding Coordinator and minister

The District Safeguarding Coordinator and minister should be informed if any one or more of the following things occur:-

a) There has been an incident where an adult member or child has been or is being abused or mistreated by someone connected with the church, such as a member of staff, volunteer or trustee (church council member).
b) There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the church.
c) Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened, regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place.
d) There are grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred.
e) Where there is a current allegation of abuse against a child or children (under 18).
f) Where someone in the church has been suspended or dismissed from work, or investigated or arrested for allegations of abuse against children.
g) Where a child is, or children are, considered to be at risk of harm or at significant risk of harm.
h) Where a person who is a member or regular attendee is know to have been convicted of sexual offences against children, *or* is currently or has been recently (in the past year) subject to investigation for *any* offence against a child, *or* where there have been investigations or convictions for domestic violence.

Ministers and Superintendents are responsible for good practice and management of Safeguarding issues in the local church and circuit. In each case cooperation on these matters should include a decision as to who should liaise from the district safeguarding group and who should take a lead in liaising with the statutory authorities. That is – be clear as to who does what, including who attends meetings and who feeds back to whom. The minister and/or superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this communication happens.

6.3 Confidentiality/Consent

Guidance on sharing information about the possible abuse of a child is as follows:

- *You should explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be, shared and why, and seek their agreement.* ***The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime . . . including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation****. (our emphasis)*

- *You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information if, in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need in the public interest to override that lack of consent.*

- *You should seek advice where you are in doubt. If you have any concerns at all, you should not tell the child or family before seeking advice.*

- *You should ensure that the information*

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you share is accurate and up to date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely.[21]

There are situations where safeguarding officers will be bound to share information with the authorities or other organisations who 'need to know' according to statutory guidance and their professional standards. For guidance on difficult decisions in individual cases the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser may be consulted.

See also download document 'Information Sharing in the Methodist Church' – www.methodist.org.uk/churchlife/safeguarding/

6.4 Pastoral conversations and confidentiality

It is possible that relevant information may be disclosed in the particular context of a pastoral conversation. The Methodist Church does not have authorised liturgies for the sacraments of individual confession and absolution. A minister is not prevented from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of a pastoral conversation or a confession within that context. The requirements about information sharing apply, as set out above.

Wherever possible ministers and others engaged in pastoral conversations on behalf of the church[22] should explain the limits of confidentiality in pastoral relationships to those they are offering pastoral care. This should ideally occur at the beginning of a pastoral relationship or meeting. A similar approach should be adopted for Spiritual Direction and formal supervision or mentoring arrangements conducted on behalf of or by officers of the church.

Where a person's own behaviour is at issue, the minister should urge the person to report it to the police or children's social care. In addition, they may offer to accompany the person to the authorities. It is important that, if a person wants to discuss matters concerned with confession in a pastoral conversation in order to be assured of absolution, evidence of repentance and a willingness to behave differently both need to be demonstrated.

Ministers should also be aware that convicted offenders can sometimes come forward with new information. There is no bar in law to prevent ministers passing on such information to the authorities.

Any relevant information should be passed to the authorities to prevent abuse or to solve a crime.

6.5 Past or historical abuse

In the course of their work, especially in worship and pastoral care, many ministers, other church officers and those offering pastoral support in the church, will find themselves hearing disclosures from adults of abuse that happened to them when they were children.

There is no single, correct procedure for dealing with a disclosure of historical abuse by an adult. The wishes of the person disclosing abuse will be very important. For some adults, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be a powerful healing event. The pastoral care of the person who has been abused should be a priority. A referral to the police will

21 *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*, 2006, Appendix 3, section 2.

22 Including pastoral visitors.

not always be necessary unless the individual wishes to report the offence; however, they should be encouraged and supported to do so. In all cases the District Safeguarding Coordinator should be consulted.

The survivor does also need to be made aware, that if the alleged abuser is known to be still working with children either in an employed or a voluntary capacity, then a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be made. This can be either by the person hearing the complaint/ disclosure or by the safeguarding children coordinator – who must in any case be informed. If the alleged abuser is not working with children but caring for them, then either the person hearing the complaint/disclosure or the safeguarding children coordinator should make a referral to children's social care. The timing of any such communication needs to be carefully judged in order to support the survivor on their journey of disclosure whilst if at all possible not creating a sense that all initiative has been removed from him or her completely. Support and consultation should always be obtained. No one should try to cope with this alone.

In some cases the subject of the allegation will prove untraceable or may have died. The church will still need to examine its actions at the time and consider whether they were appropriate in the light of what was known and good practice. A record should be made and filed in an appropriate place. For advice, the District Safeguarding Coordinator should be consulted.

6.6 Serious Case Reviews

Local Safeguarding Children Boards by law undertake a Serious Case Review whenever a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor. The purpose of Serious Case Reviews is to:

- establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result
- as a consequence, improve inter-agency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Serious Case Reviews are not inquiries into how a child died or who is culpable. That is a matter for coroners and criminal courts, respectively, to determine as appropriate.

Ministers and other church officers could find themselves invited to contribute to a Serious Case Review if they had sufficient individual knowledge of the child. They should cooperate. They should consult the District Safeguarding Coordinator or the Connexional Adviser who can advise on the process.

6.7 Whistle-blowing

To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all organisations that work with children should have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed. There should be particular awareness of the increased vulnerability of children in residential care, hospital settings or custodial establishments, but whistle-blowing applies in all contexts.

In addition to situations where there may be a perceived risk, whistle-blowing be necessary to highlight more general

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problems with unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. Whilst the Act does not provide the same protection for volunteers, churches should adopt the same approach to their protection.

Volunteers and members of a congregation should be encouraged to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the minister, the Superintendent, Church Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Church Council. Alternatively the Chair of District or the District Safeguarding Coordinator should be contacted.

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7 Managing safeguarding concerns about church workers or members

7.1 Introduction

This section considers the situation when it is alleged that a church officer, employee, member or volunteer who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations that fall short of these may nevertheless amount to inappropriate conduct, in which case the employer/supervisor/line manager will need to consider whether to handle this by way of advice, supervision and training, to use disciplinary processes, or a combination of these.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by local authority children's services about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

All allegations of this kind must be reported to the Local Authority Children's Services (to the LADO in England, or their equivalent in Wales or Scotland) and the District Safeguarding Coordinator must be also be consulted. The Local Authority Children's Services (LADO in England) may arrange for an investigation by the statutory authorities which may be in conjunction with a disciplinary investigation by the employer.

For the purposes of this procedure it makes no difference whether the person is paid or a volunteer. If the person is a minister then the Chair of District, the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser and the Connexional Team member with responsibility for the Complaints and Discipline process must be involved.

7.2 Suspension

7.2.1 Lay employees

It may be necessary to suspend an employee as a precautionary measure, at the appropriate rate of pay for paid staff (usually full pay), pending further investigation and a hearing, if:

- their presence might impede a proper investigation
- their presence might cause an unacceptable risk until the matter has been resolved. This could be related to, for example, a *prima facie* case of loss of cash or property, violence against a child or colleague, etc.

In cases where there is a *prima facie* case of serious misconduct both the Lay Employment Adviser[23] and the Connexional Development and Personnel Office should always be consulted immediately if the church officer is employed, and the District Safeguarding Coordinator if the allegation concerns a child or risk to children. In such cases it is essential that the line manager suspending the church employee has the appropriate authority to suspend on behalf of the Church Council or other

23 All lay employment procedures, including discipline procedures are available on the Methodist website.

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employing body and that the procedure for serious misconduct or alleged serious misconduct for the particular staff group/office holders are followed.

If the alleged misconduct involves sexual abuse or other allegations of child abuse where there is a risk that the alleged perpetrator may destroy evidence, it is essential that the police are consulted before the alleged perpetrator is informed. The police must be given the opportunity to investigate.

At the time of suspension the worker should be asked if they undertake any other paid or voluntary work with children. They should be informed that their other employer will need to be informed and this should be carried out. The investigation will follow, but where matters are referred to the police their investigation must take precedence and any internal investigation will follow after the police have concluded the matter and it has been to court.

The Complaints and Discipline procedures as set out in Section 11 of Standing Orders should be followed in all cases involving church members unless they are also employees, in which case employment law usually takes precedence.

7.2.2 Ministers and members of the church

In the case of ministers and members of the Methodist church the provisions of the Complaints and Discipline procedure contained with the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church will need to be followed. Each Circuit has a Local Complaints Officer and for the district this function is usually undertaken by the Chair of District. If it is these people who are being complained about the Connexional Team members responsible for the Complaints and Discipline process must be consulted.

N.B. Issues of abuse or harm, inappropriate behaviour, bullying, persistent neglect of safeguarding or health and safety procedures with children or young people must also be referred to the relevant statutory agency as soon as possible. The police may suggest the most appropriate timing of suspension. Their advice must be followed.

7.2.3 Other volunteers who are not members

Best practice such as that set out in Children's Workforce Development Council *Recruiting Safely*[24] guidance should be followed.

7.3 Breach of Trust

There is an offence of 'Breach of Trust' which applies to those working in the statutory sector (e.g. education) where they have been found to have a sexual relationship with someone aged 16 or 17. This offence does not apply in the voluntary sector.

Such behaviour is highly inappropriate, even when a youth worker is only slightly older. They are a worker/leader and this could be an abuse of power. Those in any position of responsibility who commit a breach of trust in this way should be considered for disciplinary measures for misconduct or gross misconduct. If coercion in such a relationship was involved with *any* age group this should be referred to the police as it could be a criminal matter.

7.4 Insurance advice

The Claims Manager of the insurance company should be informed immediately. This task can be undertaken by either the superintendent minister, Chair of District or the District Safeguarding Coordinator, the minister or

24 www.cwdcouncil.or.uk

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other employer. Advice should be sought about the insurance position and any steps needed to be taken to safeguard it. The Claims Manager will also need to be kept in touch with developments. Any person accused of abuse where they have the benefit of insurance should also inform their insurance company.

7.5 Pastoral support

During the investigation the child or young person and their family will need support. A separate person should be found to support the alleged offender. People involved in support should be uninvolved with the investigation or disciplinary proceedings and may be chosen from outside the circuit or district to ensure neutrality. The police advise that it is important that these parties should not communicate with each other about the allegation so that evidence is not contaminated. In the case of allegations against a minister the Superintendent or Chair of District will need to manage the impact of the investigation on the circuit[25] and, at times, neighbouring circuits.

7.6 Communications/media enquiries

These situations always require sensitive pastoral care together with the wider congregation and community. This will include overseeing appropriate communications of the situation to the congregation, advice upon which should be sought from the Connexional Communication Office. (The Connexional Communication Office should also be advised and should handle any media enquiries. No information should be released to the media or prepared for circulation or announcement in the relevant area unless it has been authorised by the Connexional Communications Office.)

In addition, the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser should be informed of any situation which goes to a criminal court or tribunal, or reaches the media.

7.7 Criminal proceedings

An investigation may result in various actions. It may be shown that the person has no case to answer or they may be charged with an offence and the Crown Prosecution Service asked to consider prosecution. The person may admit the truth of the allegation and accept a police caution.

In order for the CPS to sanction a prosecution they have to believe that there is more than a 50% chance of gaining a conviction and also that it is in the public interest to prosecute.[26]

If it appears likely or is known that criminal proceedings will be brought then disciplinary action other than suspension is normally stayed until the conclusion of those proceedings. Consideration must be given to protecting the interests of victims where there is a risk of contact through church activities.

Requests to produce file material in court should be referred to the Legal Officer for the Connexional Team to avoid inappropriate disclosure of personal information which may be protected by the Data Protection Act 1998.

Ministers and others should be aware of the potential risks of providing a character reference in criminal matters. They should avoid commenting on matters under investigation unless invited by the investigating team at a formal meeting or in a confidential discussion with the District Safeguarding

25 See Deirdre Offord: *Betrayals of Trust: Addressing the Impact on Congregations When Leaders Abuse Their Positions*, Grove Books, 2009.

26 This provision may be amended by the new Government – May 2010

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Coordinator. They should restrict themselves to known facts and first-hand knowledge.

The statutory agencies undertaking the investigation should be asked to provide a report which can be used in disciplinary proceedings, for other decision-making or for future reference. The report, which should be agreed with their legal advisers, should include any statements which parties have agreed can be used for this purpose, a factual account of the investigation and an assessment of any continuing risk. It is helpful if the District Safeguarding Coordinator can agree the terms of the report at the beginning of the investigation.

There are many reasons why a particular case may not come to court, or why there may be a finding of 'not guilty' in a criminal court case. This does not mean there is no remaining concern. There may remain evidence of inappropriate or misguided behaviour which needs to be addressed. The advice of the statutory agencies should be sought about any continuing risk to children. It may still be appropriate in some circumstances and in accordance with legal advice to continue disciplinary action. If there remain unresolved matters of concern, a professional risk assessment should be carried out to try to ascertain whether it is safe for the person to continue work which brings them into contact with children. Depending on the outcome of the assessment it may be necessary to introduce a regime of conditions; training and supervision; to refer the person to the Independent Safeguarding Authority; to re-deploy the person in another post; or to terminate employment. The District Safeguarding Coordinator should always be involved in these difficult decisions.

7.8 Resignations and compromise agreements

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible, the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if that cannot be done or the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

By the same token, so-called 'compromise agreements' – by which a person agrees to resign, the relevant church body agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference – must not be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where appropriate, nor can it override an employer's statutory duty to make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority or Disclosure Scotland where circumstances require it.

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7.9 Record keeping about concerns

It is important that church bodies keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken and decisions reached. These should be kept in a person's confidential personnel file and a copy should be given to the individual, apart from third-party information for which permission for disclosure has not been given. Such information should be retained on file indefinitely. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any *bona fide* enquiries or any future request for a reference. It will provide clarification in cases where a future criminal record disclosure reveals information from the police that an allegation was made but did not result in a prosecution or a conviction. It will also prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, allegations resurface after a period of time.

For an allegation to be described as **false**, it is necessary to have evidence that disproves the allegation. This means that the allegation is unfounded.

For an allegation to be described as **malicious**, it is necessary to have evidence that not only disproves the allegation, but also proves a deliberate intent to deceive.

An **unsubstantiated** allegation is not the same as a false allegation. It simply means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

It is important to retain records where an allegation has proved to be unsubstantiated, false or malicious, so that it is on record that the allegation was known and responded to.

At the conclusion of an investigation or proceedings, a summary should be prepared noting the allegation, the enquiries made, and the outcome. Carefully considered information should be given to the person concerned in writing, and, as appropriate and possible within the limits of confidentiality and the need not to compromise possible statutory processes, to the person making the allegation and the victim or survivor.

If files are weeded when the person leaves the church, care should be taken to retain the material noted here.

7.10 Referral to vetting and barring schemes (ISA/PVG)

As stated above, one outcome of the investigation into a concern may be that a referral to the ISA (or the PVG in Scotland) is required. This process is outlined in the companion policy 'Recruiting Safely'.

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8 Care of survivors of child abuse

8.1 Introduction

An adult (or indeed a child) disclosing abuse is in a vulnerable state. **Above all they need someone to listen to them – and also to believe them. They may need to be 'heard' in different contexts and over several years.**

The pastoral situation can become very complex when an adult discloses abuse (e.g. a young person in their twenties accusing a church worker of sexually abusing them when they were much younger). In these circumstances, it would be appropriate to identify support for the different parties involved, such as another survivor to support the person making the allegations. Where a young person discloses abuse both their family and the young person may need separate or different kinds of support.

It is essential that when a survivor discloses abuse by someone who still has access to children as part of their role or, for example, as a parent or grandparent, that the survivor is encouraged gently to disclose to the authorities as soon as possible. The person who is 'walking with them' through this time will probably need to accompany them when they disclose. In addition, the accompanist, the person in pastoral charge or the safeguarding representative must take action to tell the authorities and the consent of the survivor should be sought in so far as possible. (See also section 6.4)

Please refer to Methodist Conference Report 'Tracing Rainbows through the Rain'[27] (2006) for a fuller exploration of these issues and what the Church can do to help and support survivors appropriately.

8.2 What to do? – A summary

There is no quick fix for healing from abuse and it is crucial that:

- Survivors are not pushed into forgiving too early. Forgiving their abuser/s is a complex process, and considerable damage can be done by treating forgiveness as something that they must do unreservedly and now.
- Survivors are not put in a position of feeling even more guilty than they already do. Survivors tend to feel that the abuse was all their fault, particularly when there was more than one abuser.
- Survivors are accepted as they are, however full of anger they may be. Anger can be seen as one step along the road to healing – at least if they are angry they are starting to accept that the abuse seriously affected them and this can be a good starting point to move towards healing.
- Survivors are given a sense that those within the church community who know about the abuse are 'with them' along the road to recovery. The journey can be very long and supporters are essential.

8.3 Pastoral and other resources

Survivors can benefit from professional counselling if that is available, but also joining a self-help group can provide the kind of long-term support needed. Survivors helping other survivors can be powerful and effective.

27 Available on www.methodistchurch.org.uk as a downloadable report.

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Survivors need time to work on their feelings and be able to accept that:

- it was not their fault
- they haven't committed an unforgivable sin
- they have no need to feel guilt and shame
- God loves them unconditionally.

Churches and ministers are able to provide significant pastoral support within existing resources provided boundaries are maintained. They will need to identify when the needs of survivors go beyond their expertise and the resources available at local church level. Good pastoral practice needs to be followed in relation to all survivors of child abuse. The examination or investigation of cases and professional counselling or therapy are not within the expertise and remit of the Church and must be sought from other appropriate sources.

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9 Ministering to those who pose a risk

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of providing good practice for ministering to, and providing pastoral care for, those who pose a risk is to enable them to worship and be part of a church community more safely.

For those with a criminal conviction or caution for a sexual offence against a child, Standing Order SO 010 provides specific prohibitions from offices, roles or responsibilities within the Church. The process set out below was created to support SO010 but can be used to manage all those who present a risk to children.

9.2 Good Practice – a Covenant of Care

The Church and Sex Offenders Report recommended setting up of 'Support and Monitoring' groups to manage them in churches/circuits. *(This is in SO69f and Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance section of CPD. It is reproduced as Appendix E.)*

These arrangements should be known as 'a Covenant of Care' and should be established in outline as part of each church's safeguarding arrangements. The group is then available for speedy response as and when needed.

Key components of a Covenant of Care:

- Pre-release phase where applicable/ possible.
- Setting up a small group at church and/or circuit level.
- Risk assessment – this may not a formal professional risk assessment but it will be informed by these where possible.
- Writing a contract – ideally together with the person involved.
- Meeting regularly and reviewing membership, training and support for the group.
- Review the contract – at regular intervals – not less than annually, or when circumstances change.
- Training and support for group members.
- Annual report for each case to the District Safeguarding Coordinator.

9.3 The Covenant of Care agreement/ contract

The guidance in Standing Order 69f,[28] also Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance[29] offers a framework for the agreement. This guidance is to be reviewed in 2011, but the following are additional points and do not replace the guidance as they stand.

Additional areas which may need to be dealt with in developing a contract/ agreement that works:

- Residential events, especially 'all-age' events.
- Events in another church or church organisation, circuit or national events. A joint agreement is often desirable in these circumstances.
- Finding another church or circuit when there are victims/survivors in former/ current church.
- Opportunities for development of the subject's discipleship safely and once they have demonstrated cooperation and trust with the agreement.

Sensitive or difficult matters for the Superintendent/minister in pastoral charge and the group to consider:

28 In Standing Orders – CPD.

29 Also in CPD – at the back

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- Insisting a church provides for a sex offender, when the church or minister rejected them outright.
- Developing a contract where there are 'old matters', convictions or cautions on someone's record but where some sort of contract is necessary.
- Deciding what cases can be 'light touch'.
- Keeping interest and energy of the monitoring group.
- Worship/membership, *especially* when victims/survivors are in the same church.
- Sustaining the contract for years and possibly decades.
- The provision of training for the members of the group and the wider church on these things.
- The development of discipleship for the subject over many years.

9.4 MAPPA

Guidance for the ***Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements*** states that religious communities must put in place effective arrangements, which allows them to ensure they are able to protect their community whilst allowing a sex offender to maintain their right to worship in a safe way when possible. An assessment of risk must be carried out, which should be done together with the police, probation services and/or social services and with the District Safeguarding Coordinator. A minister or appropriate church leader will be provided with information from the statutory agencies so that they make informed arrangements. It is important that cooperation between the church and the agencies is assured at all stages. It may be necessary on occasions to negotiate a formal information-sharing protocol between the District and the relevant police area and probation area; however, there are national guidelines which recommend that this should not be necessary.

Prison chaplains should be aware of the guidance and ensure that there is good liaison between them and the District Safeguarding Coordinator when a sex offender leaves prison and wishes to worship in a church. Discussions may need to be held about which church is appropriate in light of an offender's needs or in light of their circumstances or the community. The contract referred to in the guidance below is discussed in the next section.

The relevant section of the MAPPA guidance is as follows:

It is essential that we assist religious communities to put in place effective arrangements, which allows them to ensure they are able to protect their community whilst allowing the offender to maintain their right to worship but in a safe way. The place of worship and religious leader should be provided with sufficient information to protect their congregation.

Where an RSO [Registered Sex Offender], who has committed offences against children, or other offenders who present a risk of harm to children and/or other identified victims wishes to continue to practise their religion, through attending services and/or being part of their faith community the offender/case manager must ensure that they have fully assessed the potential risk of harm this could present.

There should always be a discussion with the offender regarding the need to protect children/identified victims (unless this places the victim at greater risk) who may also be present, at services and/or events from harm. The offender needs to be aware that information will be disclosed to the religious organisation and that they (the offender) will be required to agree to and sign a 'contract'

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of behaviour. Where an offender is unwilling to give this undertaking, the OM [Offender Manager] and police should consider whether to seek a restrictive condition on a licence or in a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) to prevent the offender being in a place of worship. The outcome of this decision must be recorded [i.e. by the Offender Manager] on ViSOR [Violent and Sex Offender Register] and the case management record.

Any breaches of the 'contract' with the offender must be reported to the offender/case manager.[30]

Note that Sexual Offences Prevention Orders can also be sought to control as well as to exclude an offender's involvement in a place of worship. In appropriate cases the District Safeguarding Coordinator should explore with the police whether this should be sought and how it should be drafted. If this arises the Superintendent should be named as the supervising officer for the place of worship.

When the offender comes to notice before release the District Safeguarding Coordinator should explore with the probation service whether specific licence conditions should be included.

Management arrangements are likely to continue to be needed even after statutory intervention has come to an end.

30 *MAPPA guidance*, National Offender Management Service Public Protection Unit 2009, 6.5, 70.

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10 Appendices

Contents

A) The statutory framework and relevant Church reports

B) A local church Safeguarding checklist

C) A list of responsibilities at circuit, church and district levels

D) Model code of Safer Working Practice for church workers with children

E) A Covenant of Care – the Sex Offender policy as set out in CPD

F) Reporting Serious Cases to the Charity Commission

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Appendix A The statutory framework and relevant Church reports

A1.1 Statutory expectations

The government considers that there are some key features of effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.[31] These arrangements will help agencies to create and maintain an organisational culture and ethos that reflects the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. At an organisational or strategic level, these key features are having:

- senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- a clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards children available for all staff
- a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families
- staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or (depending on the agency's primary functions) in contact with children and families
- safe recruitment procedures in place
- effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- effective information sharing.

A1.2 Legislation, government statutes and guidance

England

There are many statutes, guidance documents, regulations and other statutory instruments which have a bearing on safeguarding children. This is a rapidly changing area of work and new documents are constantly being issued. A few key documents are noted here.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2010. This is the most important single guidance document. It is binding on the relevant statutory organisations and is regarded as good practice in voluntary organisations. There is specific guidance for faith organisations, and this is incorporated in this document. The Church in its national, Connexional, district and circuit structures is a group of voluntary organisations. Most church schools, however, count as part of the statutory sector.[32] Guidance documents supplementary to *Working Together* have been issued covering a number of specialist topics. These are not all listed here.

31 *Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004* Department for Education and Skills 2007. This guidance is binding on specified statutory agencies and is considered good practice in voluntary bodies.

32 See section 4.6.

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Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People, Department for Children, Schools and Families for Allegations Management Advisers, 2007. This is non-statutory advice which does not supersede advice or codes of conduct produced by employers or national bodies.

Recruiting Safely: Safer recruitment guidance helping to keep children and young people safe, Children's Workforce Development Council, 2009. This advice document is intended particularly for voluntary organisations and small employers. It is issued in a full and a summary version.

Safe from Harm, Home Office circular, 1993. Although this has been largely superseded it has not been formally withdrawn or replaced.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, Department for Education and Skills, 2006. This is the equivalent document for schools to *Working Together*.

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession, Department for Education and Skills, 2007.

The Children Acts, 1989 and 2004.

Adoption and Children Act, 2002.

Children and Adoption Act, 2006.

Sexual Offences Act, 2003. This consolidates the law on sexual offences, including those against children, and replaces previous legislation in the field.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme Guidance, Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority, *[guidance was issued March 2010, further guidance is expected].*

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, Department for Education and Skills, 2006. Non-statutory advice on action to be taken in individual cases. It is issued in both a full and a summary version.

Data Protection Act, 1998. Detailed guidance is available from the Information Commissioner.

MAPPA guidance, Ministry of Justice, 2009. Guidance on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements for managing sexual and violent offenders in the community.

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, 2000. Schedule 4 is a comprehensive list of offences against children. It has been amended (added to) by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.[33]

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006. This set up the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

33 A reference is available.

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Scotland
Draft national guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) 2008.
Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/children-families/pvglegislation
and
http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/pdf/protecting-vunerable-groups-scheme.pdf

Wales

Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act, 2004, Welsh Assembly Government 2006.

All Wales Child Protection Procedures, produced on behalf of all Local safeguarding Children Boards in Wales.

Safe from Harm: Safeguarding Children in Voluntary and Community Organisations in Wales. Published by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2007.

Safeguarding Children in Education, Welsh Assembly Government, 2008.

Interim Guidance on Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession, Welsh Assembly Government, 2008.

A2 Relevant Church documents

Constitution, Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, updated each Methodist Conference

The Church and Sex Offenders, Methodist Conference, 2000.

Time for Action: Sexual abuse, the Churches and a new dawn for survivors, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 2002.

Domestic Abuse, Methodist Conference report and Guidelines, 2005.

Tracing Rainbows through the Rain, Methodist Conference report, 2006.

Creating Safer Space, Methodist Conference Report, 2007.

Safeguarding children and young people, new edition forthcoming, 2010.

Safeguarding adults when they are vulnerable, new edition forthcoming 2010.

Further resources
Please refer to an updated list on the Safeguarding pages of the Methodist website.

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Appendix B A local church Safeguarding Checklist

Church Council policy	What else is needed?	Who will take action?	Action reviewed – date and notes
1 An overview: a) implementation/action plan b) review timetable c) allocated responsibility for this d) equality and diversity issues discussed			
2 Safer recruitment procedures: a) records of vetting processes – i.e. criminal records and ISA registration/ PVG scheme membership. b) registration forms, references, identity c) the person with responsibility for the activity and volunteers d) reviews of probation, annual reviews, training and development e) the code of conduct – distributed and discussed			
3. **Planning of activities:** a) staff ratios and balance b) written risk assessments c) reviews of risk assessments d) responsibility for occasional events e) equipment f) transport g) parental permissions, including for photography h) e-Safety			
4. **Training and development:** a) induction b) arrangements for team supervision c) individual supervision or support d) review of training needs and planning			
5. Responding to incidents: a) Incident book b) First Aid c) Local police child protection and Children Social Care numbers d) responsibility for referral e) responsibility for reporting to others on a need-to-know basis – including District Safeguarding Group, Charity Commission and Insurance as necessary.			
6. Who else needs to know about the policy a) where is it displayed/made available b) local ecumenical contacts c) lettings and hirers			
Other – please add			

Signed:

Review date:

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Appendix C A list of responsibilities/actions at Circuit, Church and District levels

1. Responsibilities at Church level

Responsibilities/Actions	Person responsible
For general implementation of *Safeguarding* policies	*Minister in pastoral charge, with Superintendent minister*
For following good practice and complementary pastoral care in all instances of child abuse and trauma, including pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children	*Minister in pastoral charge, with the Superintendent minister*
For ensuring that 'Recruiting Safely' procedures are followed (including registration forms and vetting procedures) for all those who work with children, young people and also work with adults when vulnerable and that records are kept	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Ensure that all office holders are aware of the terms of S.O.010 concerning the holding of office, duty or responsibility and systems have been established for sex offenders in keeping with SO690	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Ensure that all officers understand the requirements of the *Safeguarding* policies and attend suitable training	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Appoint one member of the Church Council to take responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Safeguarding policy	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Appointment of a Safeguarding Coordinator *(this person need not be a member of the Church but should have suitable skills and be in sympathy with the Church)*	*Church Council*
Make sure that copies of the Safeguarding handbooks are available for all members of Church Council to refer to. These documents will also be available from the Methodist website	*Church Council Secretary*
Give a copy of this Safeguarding handbook to all workers with children and young people, youth club leader etc.	*Church Council Secretary/Junior Church Superintendent*
Give a copy to all who perform duties affected by it	*Church Council Secretary*
Include Safeguarding on the agenda of the Church Council	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Retain confidentially copies of the any forms, letters and procedures completed during recruitment registration procedures	*Church Council Secretary/ Minister in pastoral charge*
Form a working group, including workers with children and young people who prepare and review each year the Safeguarding policy and implementation plan for the Church	*Church Council*

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Prepare a draft policy and submit to Church Council	*Working group*
Adopt the policy and implementation/action plan	*Church Council*
Identify possible sources of legal advice	*Church Stewards/Safeguarding Coordinator*
Discuss dissemination of the policy and implementation/ action plans	*Church Stewards and others*
Ensure that training is taken up	*Minister in pastoral charge and Church Stewards*
Record who has attended training and when	*Church Council Secretary/ Administrator/Safeguarding Coordinator*
Remind workers with children and young people to re-apply for criminal record disclosures every five years or upon change of role or responsibility, whichever is shorter and when to apply for registration or membership of the relevant vetting scheme	*Church Council Secretary/ Minister in pastoral charge/ Safeguarding Coordinator*
Conduct supervision and review of workers with children and young people regularly	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Monitor the administration and implementation of Safeguarding procedures regularly	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Report incidents to the District Safeguarding Team, the insurance company and the Charity Commission as necessary	*Minister in pastoral charge*
Ensure the guidelines for creating a website are followed – these are published on www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding	*Minister in pastoral charge/ Church Council*

2. Responsibilities for Circuit Meetings

Responsibility	**Person responsible**
Developing a policy on Safeguarding and implementation plan which affirms, encourages and supports all children and young people and the work done with them	*Superintendent minister*
Circulate copies of circuit Safeguarding policy to all Church Council Secretaries	*Circuit Meeting Secretary*
Ensure that all churches in the circuit have policies	*Superintendent minister*
Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of Safeguarding	*Superintendent minister*
Ensure that all circuit office holders (including local preachers), complete Safeguarding Forms and vetting procedures before appointment (or approval for going 'on trial') and that records are kept	*Superintendent minister*

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Ensure that all circuit office holders are aware of the terms of S.O.010 concerning the holding of office, duty or responsibility and systems have been established for sex offenders in keeping with SO690	*Superintendent minister*
Ensure circuit groups or events follow Safeguarding policy and procedures. (In the case of regular groups the guidance for Church Councils should be followed)	*Circuit stewards*
Appointing and resource a Safeguarding Coordinator	*Superintendent minister & Circuit meeting*
Include information in circuit publications including any web site	*Person responsible*
Ensure that training initiatives are developed, delivered, the office holders attend	*Circuit stewards*
Ensure that adequate records are kept of all volunteers and employees' attendance at training and that records of safeguarding concerns are kept indefinitely	*Superintendent minister*
Inform ecumenical partner churches and check they have a mechanism for good practice and referral[43]	*Superintendent minister*
Supervise and review workers with children and young people regularly	*Superintendent minister*
Monitor and review the administration, the policy and implementation regularly	*Superintendent minister*

3. Responsibilities of the District Synod

Responsibility	**Person responsible**
For developing a policy on Safeguarding which affirms, encourages and supports all those who work with children and young people	*Chair of District*
For general implementation of Safeguarding policy for the district	*Chair of District*
Support all Superintendent ministers and circuit ministers in their implementation of Safeguarding policy	*Chair of District*
Liaise closely with the Training Officers and District Safeguarding Team in ensuring adequate levels of training are provided	*Chair of District*
Ensure that all circuit office holders are aware of the terms of S.O.010 concerning the holding of office, duty or responsibility and systems have been established for sex offenders in keeping with SO690	*Chair of District*

34 See also ecumenical (LEP) Safeguarding checklist CTE website.

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Provide copies of Safeguarding handbooks for District Councils/Policy Committee	*Synod Secretary*
Include a statement about S.O.010(2) in District Policy Committee and Lay Employment Sub-committee agendas	*Chair of District/Synod Secretary*
Ensure that the Lay Employment Adviser/Sub-Committee has a copy of the 'Recruiting Safely' handbook and is addressing Safeguarding issues including 'Recruiting Safely'	*Chair of District*
Ensure that where there are employees or volunteers at district level they complete where relevant the recruitment and vetting procedures and that records are kept regarding these roles	*Chair of District/Synod Secretary*
Set up a District Safeguarding (children and young people) Advisory Team made up of suitably experienced *and* qualified People, including a Convenor and Chair[44]	*Chair of District/Synod Secretary*
Circulate the district policy to all Circuit Meeting Secretaries together with information on the District Safeguarding Team	*Synod Secretary*
Ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies	*Chair of District*
Ensure that, where there are district children and youth groups or events, the district policy is implemented. (In the case of regular groups the guidance for Church Councils should be followed.)	*Chair of District/Synod Secretary*
Ensure that those elected as representatives to Conference comply with the terms of S.O.010	*Chair of District*
Include information on the District Policy and Safeguarding Team contact in district publications	*Synod Secretary*
Monitor and evaluate the District policy and implementation each year	*Chair of District and DPC/DC*

35 This team may be combined with a District Safeguarding Adults Advisory Team – see 'Safeguarding Adults when they are vulnerable in the Methodist Church' handbook.

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4. Responsibilities of the Connexional Team

Responsibility	Person/s responsible
For ensuring that the Safeguarding policy is implemented, monitored and evaluated and the Methodist Church complies with the Law	*Designated team members with responsibility for implementing the policy and procedures, with the Secretary of the Conference*
Develop policy in the light of changing Methodist understanding and practice	*Designated Team members, with the Secretary of the Conference*
Respond to government initiatives concerning child protection	*Connexional Safeguarding Adviser*
Work with other denominations to both establish and support policy and best practice	*Connexional Safeguarding Adviser*
Oversee implementation of training strategy, and raising awareness	*Connexional Safeguarding Adviser*
Provide information needed to assist communications and systems	*Connexional Safeguarding Adviser with Communications office, including Publications*
Ensure that training initiatives are developed and delivered	*Discipleship and Ministries, with TOs and the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser*
Promote good practice in safeguarding procedures in all areas of the Church's life; monitor and evaluate implementation and procedures	*District Chairs and Connexional Team*
Review, amend and adopt appropriate Standing Orders	*Law and Polity Committee and the Conference*
Those who should be aware of the provisions of Methodist Safeguarding policy and procedures *[See also Safeguarding checklist for LEPs to be found on Churches Together web sites]*	*Local Ecumenical Partners*
MAYC regional/national events, Youth Council, and the participation schemes and work Connexionally funded	*Methodist Children and Youth office*

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APPENDIX D Code of Safer Working Practice

1. **Guidelines for Individual Workers**

2. **Additional guidelines for group leaders**

3. **Responding to child protection concerns**
   - imminent risk
   - what to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused

4. **Good practice guidelines for church sponsored activities for children and young people**
   - special needs
   - consent
   - registration
   - recommended staffing levels
   - safe environment
   - e-safety
   - transporting children on behalf of the church
   - Important telephone numbers

Terminology used in this Code:

- the word 'child' refers to any child or young person under the age of 18.
- The term 'group leader' is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity, who is answerable to the Church Council/Circuit meeting.

For guidance and good practice support resources and free downloadable forms for work with children, visit: www.childrenandyouth.org.uk

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1. Guidelines for Individual Workers

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect & dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Record any incidents of concern and give the information to your Group Leader. Sign and date the record.
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding representative.

You should not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above) should be initiated by the child.
- Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one child or group.
- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children.
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people.
- Share sleeping accommodation with children.
- Invite a child to your home alone.
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions.
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Allow strangers to give children lifts

Touch

Church sponsored groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely

that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming her/himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Church or Circuit Safeguarding Representative.

All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

2. Additional guidelines for group leaders

In addition to the above the group leader should:

- Ensure any health & safety requirements are adhered to
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept
- Keep register and consent forms up to date
- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present
- Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally
- Liaise with safeguarding representative over good practice for safeguarding.
- Always inform the safeguarding representative of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The safeguarding representative will liaise with the district safeguarding coordinator.
- Liaise with the church council/circuit meeting.

3. Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your group leader and/or safeguarding representative. Agree between you *who* will take *what* action and *when*.

If you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then again you should contact your group leader or safeguarding representative. The Local Authority Children's Services Duty Officer can also be a source of advice.

Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible. These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible. Try if possible to note from the register the child's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign the record and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

Ensure all notes are kept in a safe place.

If a child asks to talk in confidence **do not** promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.

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- Stay calm.
- Listen to the child attentively.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Allow the child to talk but do not press for information or ask leading questions.
- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell.
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand.
- Reassure the child that he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

Imminent risk

- If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure the safety of the child. Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Children's Services.
- If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

What to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused

- Agree with your group leader or safeguarding representative, who will make the referral.
- Make an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Children's Services. Make it clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child protection referral.
- Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family e.g. the child's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP (if known).
- Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the Local Authority web site) or letter. If there is no acknowledgement within 48 hours, chase it.
- Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral *unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at further risk*. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.
- Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team.
- Say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.
- For out of hours referrals, call the Emergency Social Work Team or where urgent, the police.

4. Good practice guidelines for church sponsored activities for children and young people

Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. If premises are being designed or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

Consent

Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the

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child/young person if he/she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. So for example, whilst parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday, a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.

Registration

A Registration Form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs including activities which the child is unable to take part in
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant.

Separate consent should be obtained for one off events and activities e.g. swimming and also for outings, weekends away, etc.

All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.

Any group that includes children who are under 6 years old and that meets regularly for more than 2 hours in any one day or for more than 14 days a year must register their group. Please contact your local branch of OFSTED[36] for advice.

Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below: More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0 – 2 yrs	1 person for every 3 children	1 : 3
2 – 3 yrs	1 person for every 4 children	1 : 4
3 – 8 yrs	1 person for every 8 children	1 : 8
Over 8 yrs	1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children	

- Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping, should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.

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- Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

Safe Environment

Display both the *Childline* telephone number in a prominent place where children & young people can see it and the *Parentline Plus* number for parents.

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, First Aid Kit and fire precautions should be checked and a Health and Safety Check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:

Venue

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Electric sockets should be covered.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The contents of the First Aid Kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.
- All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged have some First Aid knowledge and the church or circuit should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available.
- All accidents should be recorded in an Accident Book.

E – Safety

- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

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Transporting children on behalf of the church

Drivers

- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years.
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding representative.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

Private Car

- Children & young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church sponsored activities.
- All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts additional children should not be carried.
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

Minibus/Coach

- Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.

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IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

(please write in your local numbers)

LOCAL AGENCIES

Police (all non-emergency enquiries)	
Local Police Child/Family Protection Unit	
Local Council Children's Services/Social Care	
Local Emergency Social Work Team	
Local General Hospital	

CHILDLINE	0800 1111
PARENTLINE PLUS	0808 800 222

DISTRICT CONTACTS

District Safeguarding Coordinator	
District Children and Youth Adviser	

CHURCH and CIRCUIT CONTACTS (please write in your local numbers):

Name	Role	Phone
	Superintendent minister	
	Minister	
	Group Leader/organiser	
	Safeguarding children representatives: Circuit – Local Church	

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Appendix E A Covenant of Care – the Sex Offender policy as set out in CPD

This policy is due for formal review in 2011.

Standing Orders
Section 69 INVOLVEMENT OF SEX OFFENDERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

As to undertaking work with children and young persons, and as to appointment to any office, post or responsibility or engagement under a contract, see S.O. 010.

690 Arrangements for Involvement.

(1) When a person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution in respect of a sexual offence worships in a Local Church or seeks to become involved in its life, he or she may only do so in accordance with the provisions of clause (2) below.

(2) (*a*) The Local Church in question, acting by the minister in pastoral charge, must establish a small group, which will include that minister, to provide appropriate support to the person concerned. In establishing the group, the minister should whenever possible act together with the Church Council or, if that cannot be done, the church stewards. The provisions of Standing Order 607 shall not apply to the group.

(*b*) The group so established must undertake a risk assessment (where possible with outside assistance) in order to minimise the risk to others presented by the person concerned and to determine on what terms he or she may attend for worship and become involved in the life of the Local Church.

(*c*) The person concerned must agree to enter into a written contract setting out the terms determined in accordance with sub-clause (*b*) above and the contract must be signed and dated by him or her and by the members of the group.

(3) When a written contract has been made with a person under the provisions of clause (2) above, its terms must be regularly reviewed by the group. The group may at any time require the person concerned to agree any variation which it believes necessary for the avoidance of risk.

(4) The guidance approved by the Conference from time to time shall be followed in carrying out the requirements of clauses (2) and (3) above.
For the current guidance, see Book VI, Part 2, Section 12.

(5) A person to whom clause (1) above applies shall not be placed on the community roll maintained by the Local Church in accordance with Standing Order 054(7) before signing a contract in accordance with clause (2) above.

691 Changes in Church Representatives.

The members of any group established under Standing Order 690(2)(*a*) above shall be responsible collectively for ensuring that:

(i) the minister in pastoral charge of the Local Church is aware of any circumstances making a change in the membership of the group necessary or appropriate; and

(ii) information is passed on and pastoral support continues to be provided when there is a change of minister in pastoral charge of the Local Church or of other members of the group.

Changes in the membership of the group shall be made by the minister in pastoral charge and Standing Order 690(2)(*a*) shall apply so far as circumstances permit.

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692 Transfer.

(1) If a person to whom Standing Order 690 applies and whose name is on the community roll of a Local Church (whether or not as a member) removes from one Circuit to another, the minister in pastoral charge of that Local Church, in carrying out his or her responsibilities under Standing Order 055, shall ensure that the recipient minister or probationer is aware of the existence and terms of the contract made in accordance with Standing Order 690.

(2) A minister or probationer receiving notice that a person removing from one Circuit to another has made a contract with a Local Church in accordance with Standing Order 690 shall ensure that the provisions of that Standing Order are applied again if the person concerned wishes to attend worship or to become involved in the life of a Local Church in the new Circuit.

(3) If a person to whom Standing Order 690 applies and whose name is on the community roll of a Local Church (whether or not as a member) ceases to attend worship or to be involved in that Local Church but wishes to attend worship or be involved in another Local Church within the same Circuit, the minister in pastoral charge of the first Local Church shall ensure that the minister in pastoral charge of the second Local Church is aware of the existence and terms of the contract made in accordance with Standing Order 690 and the second minister shall ensure that the provisions of that Standing Order are applied again.

Guidance Part 2 Section 12 THE CHURCH AND SEX OFFENDERS

Procedures Necessary for Offenders to be Involved in a Church Community

The Conference of 2000 adopted a report, *The Church and Sex Offenders*. Included within it, in the section on 'Practical Implications', was a set of suggested procedures (at Section 7b) to be followed where an offender seeks to be involved in a church community. The Conference resolved (Conference Agenda 2000, Resolution 38/3(a)) that the procedure set out in section 7b of the report be adopted as the practice of the Methodist Church when a person who has been convicted of or has received a formal caution in respect of a sexual offence seeks to become part of a local church community. It also referred to the Methodist Council the question of whether the procedures set out in that section required to be set out in Standing Orders.

In a further report upon the issues in 2002, the Methodist Council recommended that it would be appropriate for those procedures to be referred to in Standing Orders but included in full in this Guidance Section. The Conference of 2002 adopted that recommendation, and Section 7b is therefore reproduced below. Section 69 of Standing Orders deals with the subject and S.O. 690(4) refers to the procedures set out here.

The 2008 Conference directed that the language of this Section be amended to make it gender-neutral.

The notice of motion* describes the church as 'a community of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, committed to the restoration of broken people and communities.' It clearly has a role to play in offering pastoral support and care to those in the Local Church and community who have committed sexual offences. What is more, a relatively high proportion of sex offenders have been involved in the life and worship of the prison chapel and would hope to continue their involvement in Christian worship and fellowship on release. Indeed, many sex offenders see the church as having a significant part to play in helping them rebuild their lives. Like everyone else, such offenders have much both to receive and contribute within the life of a Local Church

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community and their participation in the worship and fellowship of a local church enables faith to grow and develop. For the protection of the church community, survivors, and particularly children and young people, but also for the protection of the offender (who needs not to be put in situations where he or she could be vulnerable to accusation or to the opportunity to re-offend) it will be important that the basis of their involvement in a Local Church is clearly understood and stated.

We suggest Methodist churches should adopt the following procedure:

i. Pre-release

Where the offender is approaching release from prison, it will be important wherever possible for the chaplain of the prison to be in contact with the minister of the Local Church and Circuit where the offender hopes to settle on release. If the circuit minister is aware of the arrival of a sex offender but has not heard from the prison chaplain, the minister should try to make contact with the chaplain, who may be able to describe the treatment received by the offender and the kind of programme that will be in place to help him or her return to the community. It may be possible for a visit to be arranged so that the minister can meet the chaplain and the offender. It will also be crucial for those responsible in the Local Church to be in contact with the local risk management panel, the offender's probation officer and the police, so that any agreement regarding involvement in the Local Church is known about and seen as part of the multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach to the oversight of the offender upon release from prison. In approaching and seeking to work with secular agencies there may be some initial suspicion and it may help to provide the agency with a copy of the Methodist Church's procedure or even this whole report, to demonstrate the Church's willingness to work together with other agencies in the responsibility for sex offenders and the protection of potential victims. *[The Conference of 2000 referred to the Methodist Council the question of how the procedure might be published for use in the Church and in a form which could be made available to risk management panels, probation services, the police and other agencies.]*

For known sex offenders already living in the community and involved in the life of the church, the same provisions should be made.

ii. Setting up a small group within the church

A small group should be set up, consisting of approximately five persons, including the minister, persons who have agreed to offer pastoral support for the offender and accompany them in worship and other church activities, someone with expertise or experience in this field and someone to represent the wider church community. The group should acquaint itself with any therapeutic programme the offender has undergone or will continue to be part of. The group should meet the offender, their probation officer and other appropriate people so that clear boundaries can be established for the protection of children and young people and to reduce the likelihood of false allegations or suspicions. This group will, at best, operate alongside other agencies in a multi-agency approach to the offender's rehabilitation.

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iii. Carrying out a risk assessment

One of the first tasks of the small group will be to carry out a risk assessment. This will involve looking at the church building and activities with a view to identifying potential risks that will need to be guarded against or which could lead to the offender being vulnerable to allegations. The offender's probation officer or another member of the risk management panel may be willing to help with this assessment as part of their arrangements for the offender. Having identified the potential risks the group needs to consider how they can be minimised either by a change in practice or by monitoring or restricting the offender's participation in any particular activities. The results of the risk assessment will lead to the creation of an agreed 'contract' with the offender.

iv. Writing a contract

When the boundaries and terms of involvement have been discussed and agreed with the offender, they should be written into a contract (see below). While a written contract sounds very formal, sex offenders can be manipulative and test boundaries. A written contract clarifies the terms on which the person is involved in the life of the church. The contract should involve the person's family and partner who may also be attending church and need to be informed. It might begin by setting out the pastoral support and care being offered by the church and then move on to other conditions, such as some of the following examples:

* I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people
* I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the small group
* I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people
* I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the small group, nor any area where children's activities are in progress
* I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home
* I accept that 'x' and 'y' will sit with me during church activities, accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know that I am a Schedule 1 offender/registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act
* I accept that 'z' will provide me with pastoral care
* I accept that there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care
* I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with church leaders or members of the small group as and when necessary
* I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be banned from attending the church, and in such circumstances the church leaders may choose to inform the statutory agencies (eg probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation
* I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported
* I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every _____ months and will remain for an indefinite period.

(adapted from Guidance to Churches: protecting children and appointing children's workers, Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service).

The document needs to be signed and dated by the offender and by the church representatives.

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v. Small group to meet regularly

The small group should continue to meet the individual from time to time to review the arrangement and address any concerns. If boundaries are not being kept, or if the contract is not being kept in other ways, it is important to address the problem. (In extreme cases, where boundaries continue not to be kept, it may be necessary to prohibit the offender from coming on the premises.) When officers or ministers change in the church it will be important to ensure continuity of awareness and provision of pastoral support for the offender.

vi. Making people aware – who needs to know what?

A sex offender coming to join a congregation may not want people to know his or her history. One of the important matters for the small group and the offender will be an agreement on who needs to know. Without agreement on this, it will not be possible for the offender to join the congregation. Key people, especially those responsible for leading children's and young people's groups, need to know that the person is attending the church, that he or she should not be having contact with the children and that he or she should never be on his or her own with children and young people.

There is much to be said for explaining the circumstances to the whole congregation, to promote understanding and support for the individual but also to ensure that church members do not unwittingly allow children contact with the individual concerned. However, this needs to be weighed against any need for confidentiality or pastoral sensitivity. It will be important to obtain advice from the statutory agencies and the risk management panel. The need to know must be balanced with the danger that the offender may be hounded out of the community (to his or her detriment and to the greater danger of other children if he or she decides to maintain a lower profile next time around).

Always we should promote awareness within the church of what would happen if a sex offender joined the congregation. It could be explained that from time to time this might happen and, if it does, then the procedures are as described in this report (i.e. that people who need to know because they work with children in the church are informed; the church liaises with other concerned agencies; a small group will link with the offender; there will be a contract; arrangements will be reviewed regularly.) This information is particularly important to survivors. They are likely to ask (and need to know) how they will be kept safe. Who can they go and talk to if they feel frightened, worried or hurt?

[The 'notice of motion' refers to a resolution adopted by the 1997 Conference in these terms: The Conference directs the Methodist Council to establish a working group with relevant expertise and experience to consider the ways in which appropriate and informed pastoral support and care may be given to those in the Local Church and community who have committed sexual offences, and to bring specific recommendations to the Conference of 1998.*

The Conference does this, recognising that as a community of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, committed to the restoration of broken people and communities, it must be sensitive to the feelings and needs of existing and potential sufferers from abuse, as well as the needs of offenders.]

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Appendix F Reporting Serious Cases to the Charity Commission – requirements

This is a summary of the guidance on the Charity Commission website, for more details see www.charitycommission.gov.uk/investigations/rsinotes.asp#3

A report should also be made to the insurance company when such incidents arise that are likely to involve liability, i.e. financial or reputational risks.

It is Methodist Church policy that statutory agencies should always be notified first, especially when there is a serious risk of harm or risk of serious harm or in checking out whether this is the case. This should occur even if the facts are not clear. It is not our role to investigate in matters that are of a criminal nature. If in doubt talk you must speak with the relevant officer children's social care in the LSCB or the LADO (in England) or their equivalent (in Scotland or Wales).

Others parties including insurance and Charity Commission, or other agencies that 'need to know' must also be informed (on a confidential basis) in short order, including the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser and the Media office, when necessary. The minimum information that is needed by the other party should be disclosed, in proportion to the seriousness of the concern. The Charity Commission and Insurance company confidentiality policies can be checked.

Notification should usually be made without disclosing the full names/details of the people involved.

A summary of duties from the Charity Commission:

Trustees must comply with the legal duties of charity trustees in the administration of a charity. Trustees have a general duty to take reasonable steps to assess and manage risks to their charity's activities, beneficiaries, property, work or reputation.

We aim to ensure that our regulation of charities is proportionate and focused on risk. Serious incident reporting is one of our key tools. It ensures that we can provide assistance at the earliest opportunity, targeting our resources where the risks are highest and helping to put charities back on a secure footing where necessary.

Annual Returns declaration

If your charity has an income over £25,000 you must, as part of the Annual Return, sign a declaration that there are no serious incidents or other matters relating to your charity over the previous financial year that you should have brought to our attention but have not. It is an offence under section 11 of the Charities Act 1993 to provide false or misleading information to the Commission. If you sign the declaration on the Annual Return we will take this as your confirmation that there are no serious incidents you should have told us about.

By reporting serious incidents you show that you are aware of difficulties that have arisen and that you have taken appropriate action. This is very important because safeguarding the assets

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of the charity and the charity's beneficiaries are key responsibilities. If a serious incident that has not been reported becomes known to us at a later date, we may consider taking action against the trustees.

Best practice

As a matter of best practice, any serious incident that has resulted or could result in a significant loss of funds or a significant risk to a charity's property, work, beneficiaries or reputation should be reported to us immediately, not just on completion of the Annual Return. This will enable us to offer you guidance as soon as possible and protect the charity and its beneficiaries.

Suspicions, allegations and incidents of abuse or mistreatment of beneficiaries

You should report this if any one or more of the following things occur:-

- There has been an incident where the beneficiaries of your charity have been or are being abused or mistreated while under the care of your charity or by someone connected with your charity such as a trustee, member of staff or volunteer.
- There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the charity.
- Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened, regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place.
- You have grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred.

As well as reporting to the Charity Commissioners, you should also notify the relevant regulator or statutory agency responsible for dealing with such incidents.

We realise that the sector is diverse and that defining the beneficiaries and people connected to the charity may not be straightforward. If you are not sure whether to report an incident, please contact us.

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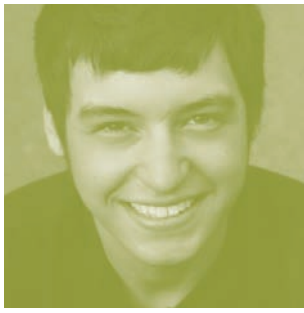
Policy for the
Methodist Church

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS



A Methodist response to the protection of adults when they are vulnerable

The Methodist Church

PE504-SG-10

Safeguarding Adults

Policy for the Methodist Church

2010

Approved by the Methodist Conference 2010

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Joint Statement of Safeguarding Principles for the Church of England and the Methodist Church[1]

Preamble

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 disclosures and registration with[2] the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

1 A copy of this text, in poster format, can be found at Appendix A. The poster can be displayed on the church notice board to confirm the local church acceptance and commitment to the Safeguarding Policy Statement.

2 Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

Introduction

'Adult safeguarding incorporates the concept of prevention, empowerment and protection to enable adults who are in circumstances that make them vulnerable to retain independence, well-being and choice and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect.'[3]

The purpose of this document is to set out policy, procedures and guidance. All the procedures set out in this document are either requirements in law or as a result of Methodist policy and therefore must be followed. Should specific circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation, then the District Safeguarding Coordinator must be consulted and any variation must be recorded.

1.1 Our theological approach

Every human being has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. Christ saw all people as valuable, especially those who were vulnerable. He gave them love, attention, time and respect.

Every person is equally precious to God. Each one needs the assurance that respect for this brings. Individuals who suffer abuse often experience a loss to their identity and worth; there are often feelings of shame and guilt. The Church is intended to be a place where men and women, children and young people, those who are hurt and damaged, may find healing and wholeness. It is our calling to be agents of healing and recovery in such a way that enables all who have suffered from abuse to lead lives with dignity in a context that is as safe as possible. It is about speaking words of peace. It is communication of shalom; that is of justice, healing and peace for the whole of the individual, as well as for the community.

God is present and at work in the world in a multitude of ways. A Church indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit might especially be a place where the wonderful character of God is manifested. The Church is called to witness to that truth. As individual Christians and as part of the Church, our vocation is to reflect the character of God. We are called to welcome and care for the oppressed, the marginalised, and the victims of injustice. Safeguarding good practice concerns the development of safer expressions of care to all and underpins the love and welcome of God for all people.

Justice is part of the outworking of love. The Church must hold in tension concerns for both justice and compassion. Nevertheless, those who have suffered abuse have sometimes not been heard or found an unsympathetic hearing. They may be disbelieved, discouraged and damaged further. Other people tend to side with the alleged perpetrator. This occurs in all parts of society, but it is particularly hurtful when it occurs within the Church. Such actions compound the sense of injustice that many feel. In answer to the question "What does God require of us?" the need to act justly is set alongside the need to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

3 The Association of Directors of Adult Services.

Many who have endured abuse consider that mercy towards those who have sinned is set above the need for the victims to be enabled to find justice. Both are essential. In creating humankind God made us to be together, to live in community. When one suffers we all suffer. We are all made poorer by every incidence of child or adult abuse, as by all sin. In finding the grace to act righteously towards those who suffer, we also experience transformation through grace. We become better people and our churches become safer places for all.

In similar ways offenders may also be assured that they are precious to God and find healing and wholeness. Because redemption and the possibility of forgiveness are so central to the gospel, the Church is not only well-equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders but is also challenged by the issues their presence raises for us. The Church is also part of a society where collusion with violence in families, emotional abuse or certain taboos on sexual abuse often holds sway. Church people have sometimes required those who have suffered abuse to forgive; instead it is our calling to hold on to both justice and grace and to build safer church communities, often in challenging circumstances. We need also to understand forgiving and receiving forgiveness as lifelong processes.

Our congregations can be a refuge for those who have perpetrated abuse but are seeking help in maintaining a non-abusive way of life. We have also to be aware that some who abuse may see church membership as an opportunity to be close to children, vulnerable adults or vulnerable parents and carers in order to continue their abusive patterns of behaviour. Experience shows that whether penitent or not, those who abuse always need support in taking responsibility for their own actions and in stopping their abusive behaviour, and of course the vulnerable need protecting from them. The genuine penitent will accept the need for careful arrangements, including some restrictions, for their return to church fellowship. This is in line with the Church's realistic understanding of sin and its effects and the Church's responsibility to love all God's people.

The gospel accounts remind us of Jesus' humanity and vulnerability throughout his life. He gave up all but the power of love. He gave up wealth, security and status. He listened to and ministered to those who were powerless and vulnerable; he appointed fallible and weak disciples who needed to discover their limitations and find strength by living in God's grace with each other. Those who are humble and vulnerable themselves are often gifted with a ministry with those who are most in need, including with children and with adults who have suffered. There is therefore a challenge for the Church to encourage ministry, service and leadership in ways that promote discernment of one's boundaries and limitations, reliance on God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, thus developing compassionate, collaborative and enabling ministries which value careful listening to all.

All abuse is an abuse of power and a scourge on individuals, on our Church and in our society whenever it occurs and we must name it as such, doing everything we can to prevent it. We are to nurture children and adults as fully as we can in Christ's name.

A Christian approach to safeguarding adults will therefore expect both individuals and communities to:

- create a safe environment for children, adults and their carers
- act promptly on any complaints made
- care for those who have been abused in the past
- minister appropriately to those who have abused
- provide opportunities for healing and flourishing.

God's mission is a message of good news, of love and welcome for the poor and marginalised. The Church must take seriously both human propensities to evil but also the God-given resources of goodness, peace, healing and justice, in short his love, his life.

1.2 The societal context

In recent years, society as a whole has become more aware of the extent of harm to adults, inflicted deliberately or neglectfully. In 2000, the Department of Health published *No Secrets*,[4] a document developing and implementing inter-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults, including the creation of Safeguarding Adults Boards in each local authority area. This guidance, which is currently under review, provides a framework for the safeguarding of adults, including recommended structures for the investigation by local authorities of allegations of abuse. Voluntary organisations, such as churches, are also asked to develop similar procedures if they are providing services, or are in regular contact with adults who might be vulnerable, and to participate in the protection of adults in a wider context. The message is that safeguarding of adults is everybody's business. There have been other developments, including The Mental Capacity Act 2005, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the development of the Independent Safeguarding Authority from 2009, as well as the creation of Local Safeguarding Adults Boards.

In 2002 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland produced the report *Time for Action*,[5] which in part challenged churches to respond more compassionately and effectively to adults who had been sexually abused. In 2007 the Methodist Conference accepted the report *Creating Safer Space*, which affirmed the Church's commitment to best practice in respect of work with both children and vulnerable adults.[6]

4 Department of Health, No Secrets (London: HMSO, 2000).

5 CTBI, Time for Action (London: CTBI, 2002).

6 NOM 15 clause 5.2.4 of the report.

2 Vulnerable Adults

2.1 Vulnerability

Vulnerability is a part of being human and no one is invulnerable. We refer to the Church as the 'broken body of Christ'. However, in the context of this policy, vulnerability has a particular meaning. *All* people may be vulnerable at some time or times of their lives. Vulnerability can be permanent or temporary and can be of a greater or lesser degree. It can be increased by various factors including any of the following:

- sensory or physical disability or impairment
- learning disability
- physical illness
- mental illness
- dementia
- substance and alcohol misuse
- impact of an event in life such as bereavement, the actions of others or a change in living situation.

Vulnerability may bring with it some difficulties in making decisions or communicating those decisions. This may range from simple decisions, such as what to choose to eat, to more complicated decisions, such as whether to participate in certain activities or where to live. The capacity to make decisions should always be presumed to exist and care should be taken to understand what choices are being made, even where this is expressed non-verbally or in a different language. If the vulnerability prevents the ability to make *some* choices, it should be assumed that *other* choices are not so limited unless it is clear that this is so.[7]

7 Mental Capacity Act 2005.

2.2 Definitions

The term 'vulnerable adult' has a number of different definitions. In order to bring into focus those adults for whom the Church should have a particular care, this is the definition which will be used in this policy:

Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.[8]

The Criminal Records Bureau defines vulnerable adults as follows:

A person aged 18 or over who receives services of a type listed in paragraph i below and in consequence of a condition listed in paragraph i below or has a disability of a type listed in paragraph iii below:

i a) accommodation and nursing or personal care in a care home
   b) personal care or support to live independently in his or her own home
   c) any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or National Health Service body
   d) social care services
   e) any services provided in an establishment for a person with learning disabilities

ii a) a learning or physical disability
   b) a physical or mental illness,

8 The definition of significant is a matter for the workers concerned. It should take into account issues such as the vulnerability of the individual, the gravity and extent of the harm, the length of time of the harm and the intention of the alleged perpetrator as well as the effect upon the individual.

chronic or otherwise including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
c) a reduction in physical or mental capacity

iii a) a dependency upon others in the performance of or a requirement for assistance in the performance of basic physical functions
b) severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others
c) impairment in a person's ability to protect him/herself from assault, abuse or neglect.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines a vulnerable adult as:

A person who has attained the age of 18 years and:
a) is in residential accommodation
b) is in sheltered housing
c) receives domiciliary care
d) receives any form of health care
e) is detained in lawful custody
f) is in contact with probation services (i.e. receiving help or supervision)
g) receives a welfare service of a prescribed description
h) receives any service or participates in any activity provided specifically for persons [who have particular needs due to age; any form of disability; a physical or mental problem which will be prescribed; together with two other issues which are not relevant in this]
i) receives direct payments
j) requires assistance in the conduct of his own affairs.

This is an important definition as it bears on the decision whether the worker needs to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority and whether the Church needs to check that registration before employing that person, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. (See *Recruiting safely in the Methodist Church.*)

Note The Mental Capacity Act includes young people over 16 in its ambit. *No Secrets*[9] in 2000, however, defined a vulnerable adult as a person aged 18 or over "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or able to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation". Thus, depending on the context, the term may have different meanings. **The important thing to remember is that the Church needs to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse, harm and neglect**. As for government guidance, *Safeguarding Adults* stated that the emphasis should be on enabling adults to "retain independence, well being and choice and to access their human right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect".[10] Those who consider that an adult is vulnerable should deal with situations relating to that adult within that context.

Scotland – definition of a protected adult

A **protected adult** is an individual aged 16 or above who is receiving certain types of services. There are four categories of services specified in the Protection of Vulnerable Group Act (**PVG Act)**. The exact nature of these services[11] is set out in section 94 and regulations, but in summary they are:

9 Department of Health, No Secrets (London: HMSO, 2000).

10 Department of Health, Safeguarding Adults (London: HMSO, 2006).

11 FROM PVG CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GUIDANCE NOVEMBER 2009

Healthcare services:
- Provided or secured by the NHS or provided by independent operators, (which concern the treatment, care and support of, and provision of advice and assistance to individuals in relation to their health and well-being)

Community care services:
- provided or secured by a council under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 or the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, or services for which the council has made a direct payment

A service by a person carrying on:

- a support service
- an adult placement service
- a care home service, or
- a housing support service

as defined in Part 1 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

2.3 Capacity

The issue of capacity is important. Capacity is not a universal concept. It must be applied in a specific context: is this person able to make this specific decision at this particular time? Adults are presumed to have capacity to make all decisions about themselves. Those who work with them should use every endeavour to obtain the decision from the adult. If this fails, then the person who is working with the adult may make day to day decisions, e.g. what will they have for lunch. More major decisions, such as with whom they will have contact, need to be made in a more structured way. This will generally involve Local Authority Adult Services. Advice can be obtained from Adult Services if there is uncertainty about an important decision or a situation where harm may occur. If urgent, an immediate referral should be made.

2.4 Good Practice

The following are adapted from the Home Office Safe from Harm Guidelines:

1. Adopt a policy on safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. Ensure a policy statement is displayed on the premises.
2. Plan the church's work to minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults may occur or where situations can be misinterpreted (e.g. ensure the presence of more than one adult where possible; ensure recording of visits; make arrangements for safe transport).
3. Apply appropriate procedures to all paid and voluntary staff.
4. Ensure clear role descriptions, review and training plans are in place for all staff in writing.
5. Ensure safe recruitment practices and that checks and references are always undertaken and institute a probationary period for each new worker.
6. Train all workers in safe practice and safeguarding including updating training.

Welfare services:

- encompassing caring and support activities being performed in the voluntary and private sector that do not come under any of the first three categories
- this includes any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to individuals with particular needs, AND
- is provided in the course of work to one or more persons over the age of 16
- is delivered on behalf of an organisation
- requires training to be undertaken by the person delivering the service,
- has a frequency and formality attached to the service, and either
- requires a contract to be agreed between the service provider and the recipient of the service prior to the service being carried out, or
- is personalised to an individual adult's needs.

3 Values underlying the policy[12]

Christian communities should be places where all people (children and adults alike) feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. The Church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical, emotional and spiritual environment and the attitudes and actions of workers.

A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right in common with all people to:

- be treated with respect and dignity and with recognition of abilities and gifts
- have their privacy respected
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible
- be able to choose how to lead their life and make their own decisions
- have the protection of the law
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication
- be heard.

Adult vulnerability must be recognised as a human condition that affects people's ability to participate. Churches must seek to live out our calling by valuing all people and the contributions each individual can make.

12 Adapted from the Church of England publication Promoting a Safe Church (London: Church House Publishing, 2006).

4 Forms and signs of harm

Harm is that which results from abuse, neglect, bullying and harassment. It may take the following forms. It should be noted that the various forms of abuse and harm can overlap.

4.1 **Physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. It may include the inappropriate use of medication and the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, health. Abuse can obviously be suspected if the person is seen to have injuries, particularly if these recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without explanation. It may be that the person indicates that she or he does not want to be with a certain person.

4.2 **Emotional or psychological abuse**, including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. This may occur directly or indirectly by telephone or internet. This may be seen in a person becoming quiet or withdrawn or conversely becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. They may show a change in characteristic such as becoming helpless or tearful. It should be noted that such signs may also be seen in those who are physically abused or sexually abused. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.

4.3 **Sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.

4.4 **Financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. There are also material signs to watch out for, such as a sudden change in a person's finances, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings, or getting into debt. Watch out for any official or financial documents that seem unusual, and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing.

4.5 **Neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. This may be seen as a person looking unkempt or dirty and their personal hygiene being compromised. Their weight may alter.

4.6 **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This may be observed in conversations or in reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. An example of this is where a person rubs their skin in order to remove the colour or who puts him/herself down in terms of their gender or sexuality.

4.7 **Spiritual and ritual abuse**
In the church context there has been developing realisation that spiritual abuse is another form of harm. The

Church of England *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*[13] cautions those who minister to beware of abusing their position. In *Domestic Violence and the Methodist Church – the Way Forward*,[14] there is evidence of spiritual abuse issues.

Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice: this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.[15]

If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. Careful supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way.

4.8 Domestic abuse

The terms violence/abuse are used interchangeably throughout this report. The Home Office describes domestic violence as follows:[16]

Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Usually it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

Domestic violence occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, and children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they've seen, and there is a strong connection between domestic violence and child abuse.[17]

No age group is particularly protected from or damaged by the impact of domestic violence. Key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence is an alternative, safe and supportive residence.

4.9 Forced Marriage

Guidelines on forced marriage are set out in *Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Handling Cases of Forced Marriage* HM Government 2009 from which the following extracts have been taken:

13 Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy (London: Church House Publishing, 2003).

14 A report accepted by the Methodist Conference 2002.

15 Adapted from the Church of England publication Promoting a Safe Church (London: Church House Publishing, 2006)

16 http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/

17 Further guidance is available in this Handbook.

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.[18]

Forced marriage is a form of child/ domestic violence against women and men; it should form part of existing child and adult protection structures, policies and procedures.

In line with other publications on domestic abuse, these guidelines focus mainly on women's needs and not men's. This is because 85% of cases referred to the Forced Marriage Unit involve women and the consequences for women are different than those for men.

Although these guidelines focus on women, much of the guidance applies to men facing forced marriage – and men should be given the same assistance and respect when they seek help.

4.10 Institutional abuse

This type of abuse is seen where an institution is inherently discriminatory toward a particular group. It may occur in a care home where the residents are routinely referred to in a derisory fashion or where their privacy and dignity is routinely compromised. An institution may then be unable to safeguard residents from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. The Church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.

18 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16(2).

5 Implementing the policy

5.1 Implementation in the local church

The local church needs to ensure that it has undertaken a review of its own situation, e.g.:

- What is the building like? Is it accessible?
- What activities are undertaken on the premises?
- What are the personnel for those activities?
- What is its mission?

Each church, circuit and district should develop a safeguarding policy which includes both children and adults. Model policies are provided separately in the Safeguarding Handbook. These represent the minimum requirement. Churches, circuits and districts should consider what additions may be required to reflect the local situation. The District Safeguarding Groups for adults and children will be available to assist in this process.

The policy should include a date for review which should be no less frequent than annual, so that the local church confirms its acknowledgement of its responsibility for these issues. The church should appoint a Safeguarding Adults Representative. This may or may not be the same person who is responsible for safeguarding children's work, but should be someone who has knowledge of the issues related to safeguarding adults. It is important to work out how the policy will be implemented and to have an action plan for each year as well.

If the church is involved in a local ecumenical partnership it should decide which Church's policy to follow and check with both/all Churches' authority as appropriate.

5.2 Implementation in the Circuit

The circuit may have activities of its own and the process which is undertaken for the local church needs to be undertaken for the circuit also, taking account of the need to identify responsibility for activities and individuals' needs. The circuit also should consider the support it offers to the local church. The circuit needs to appoint a Safeguarding Adults Coordinator who must make him/herself known to the District Safeguarding Group so that information can be disseminated. The responsibility for implementation lies with the Circuit Meeting and circuit staff and stewards, so the Safeguarding Coordinator must have access to this group and to the Circuit Meeting, including a right to speak at the meeting and give an annual report.

5.3 Implementation in the District

The district also may have activities of its own and the process for the circuit needs to be undertaken for the district.

The district will also have responsibility for ensuring that a group of people who are specialists in safeguarding are available to support the circuits and the local churches, to provide advice on good practice, respond to incidents and to encourage and support training across the district. A description of the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Group can be found in Appendix C.

The district will already have a Safeguarding Group for children.[19] It will also be necessary to establish a Safeguarding Group for vulnerable adults. This may be the same group as for safeguarding children, expanded to include the appropriate expertise and experience for vulnerable adults. Some districts may prefer to establish a different group entirely, either to reflect the different experiences or to reflect the amount of time needed for the issues.

If the latter model is selected then there should be regular communication between the two groups. A number of the issues of safeguarding are common to children and vulnerable adults and it would be confusing if two groups were offering advice and training which was not reflective of this. The groups need to coordinate responses and training around domestic abuse in particular. It is possible to do this either by having joint meetings or to have a shared time between the two meetings. The Coordinator of the group needs to be able to liaise with relevant local authority Adult Social Care personnel.

The Training Officers have responsibility where this is one of their priorities to enable and facilitate Safeguarding Adults training across the districts, but the Safeguarding Adults group will have a responsibility to monitor the safeguarding content and respond to requests for training alongside the Training Officer. In many cases they will participate in the delivery of training.

5.4 Implementation at Connexional level

The Connexional Team has responsibility for providing expertise and for enabling the resourcing of this area. It also has responsibility for liaison with other agencies including government on a national basis.

19 Formerly known perhaps as a Taking Care Group.

6 Promoting good practice

6.1 Underpinning safe and inclusive practice

These principles, adapted from *The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities*,[20] for those working in the Mental Health services, provide a reference point for those working with individuals, carers, families, colleagues and the wider community to address safe and inclusive practice.

Working in partnership. Developing and maintaining constructive working relationships with individuals, carers, families, colleagues and wider community networks. Working positively with any tensions created by conflicts of interest or aspiration that may arise between the partners.

Respecting diversity. Working with individuals, carers and families in ways that respect and value diversity, including age, ethnicity, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality.

Practising ethically. Recognising the rights and aspirations of individuals and their families, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible. Allowing individuals to make their own choices.

Challenging inequality. Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion on individuals, carers and families. Creating, developing or maintaining valued social roles for people in the communities they come from. This includes ensuring the buildings and practices allow inclusion. Buildings should be assessed to check that they are as accessible as possible and that aids and adaptations have been used. This may include the use of ramps, loop systems, etc.[21] The worship and other activities within the church should also be as accessible as possible and the 'messages' given by those should be checked. For example, does moving forward and kneeling to receive Communion exclude those whose mobility is compromised? Does certain language cause pain to some people? Does the environment created within the church include everyone? Inclusion may mean that the church needs to consider making services available to particular groups, such as worship specifically for those who are frail, or have dementia or have learning difficulties. Inclusion also means enabling people to fulfil their discipleship and calling.

Promoting recovery. Working in partnership to provide help that enables individuals, families and carers to tackle problems with hope and optimism and to work towards a valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of any problem.

Identifying people's needs and strengths. Working in partnership in the context of the preferred lifestyle and aspirations of individuals their families, carers and friends. Materials provided for activities should be available as

20 Department of Health, The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities (London: HMSO, 2004).

21 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 draws all similar legislation together. Further guidance is available from those who deal with property at Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ telephone 0161 236 5194 and on the Methodist Church website www.methodistchurch.org.uk.

widely as possible. Within worship, material should be provided in large print (at least 18pt font) and material provided by PowerPoint should be supplemented if necessary.[22]

Promoting safety and positive risk taking. Empowering the individual to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their lives. This includes working with the tension between promoting safety and positive risk taking, including assessing and dealing with possible risks for individuals, carers, family members and the wider public.

Personal development and learning. Keeping up to date with changes in practice and participating in life-long learning, personal and professional development for oneself and colleagues through supervision, appraisal and reflective practice.

6.2 Safer recruitment – a brief summary

Safer recruitment is not dealt with here in detail as it is covered in the companion volume. Please refer to *Recruiting Safely in the Methodist Church 2010.*

Safer recruitment applies to all roles, paid or voluntary, office holders (appointees), candidates for ministry and all employed roles. It applies to all churches, church organisations and parts of the Methodist Connexion, where there is work for or with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

6.3 Training

All workers with vulnerable adults should receive training. This will include the following:

- Training specific to the role undertaken.
- Generic training in relation to the activity and the building.
- Training in relation to vulnerable adults. This will include dealing with the specific issues relating to vulnerable adults. Adults may have a range of vulnerabilities which could be addressed by the appropriate use of aids and adaptations or particular skills. Specialist training may be needed with these.
- Adults may express their vulnerability by a range of behaviour and training may be needed in how these are dealt with and how staff are supported to avoid inappropriate behaviour and to recognise this type of behaviour including bullying in themselves and others.
- Training will also be needed in relation to the issues of decision-making with adults whose capacities are impaired.

6.4 Advocacy

Church workers are often placed in the role of advocate. Advocacy for adults who are vulnerable is especially important. Advocacy is about speaking up for, or acting on behalf of, yourself or another person. Advocacy can help individuals to:

- make clear their own views and wishes
- express and present their views effectively and faithfully
- obtain independent advice and accurate information
- negotiate and resolve conflict.

Some people aren't clear about their rights, or have difficulty in fully understanding these rights. Others may find it hard to speak up for themselves. Advocacy can enable people to take more responsibility and control for the decisions which affect their lives.

22 Resources are available from Methodist Church House telephone 020 7486 5502.

Advocacy principles

- What the person communicates and wants is the most important thing.
- Advocacy enables individuals to do more for themselves and lessens their dependency on other people.
- Advocacy should help people to make informed choices. An advocate must ensure the individual is making real choices based on good quality information.
- Advocates should not have a conflict of interest. They should be independent.

N.B. Safeguarding Advisers or Coordinators at circuit or district level are not expected to take responsibility for all advocacy e.g. for disability rights or access issues.[23] These are the responsibility of the whole Church, although some Safeguarding Advisers may have the necessary skills and may wish to be involved in this area. While safeguarding does relate to these areas, and there are areas in common, this is an area which is distinct from the core tasks of responding to good practice queries and issues, to specific concerns and in enabling and supporting training.

6.5 Cultural Diversity

In their publication *Cultural Diversity in Britain*[24] the Joseph Rowntree Trust noted in their conclusions on the role of the faith communities:

> … the faith sector is increasingly focusing on intercultural dialogue from within a perspective of human understanding and conflict reduction. It may be useful for faith organisations to consider broadening their view to assess the advantages of cultural mixing and cross-fertilisation.

Section 6.1 [Underpinning safe and inclusive practice], sets out an approach to working with individuals, carers, families and communities. This is an approach which has a resonance in a society where cultural diversity is a reality.

23 You should consult your District Disability Adviser.

24 2006.

7 Guidance for those who exercise pastoral care[25]

25 Adapted from Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, Church of England 2003.

Not everyone who receives pastoral care is vulnerable within the definition at section 2.2. However, all those involved in pastoral care of others, whether paid or unpaid, clergy or lay, should be working within these guidelines. Following such guidelines will not only protect vulnerable people but also help to ensure that workers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

Pastoral relationships

Exercising any kind of ministry involves workers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the well-being of others and how they ensure the well-being and safety of themselves and others. People in positions of trust necessarily have power, although this may not be apparent to them; therefore respecting boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making the following guidance even more necessary.

- Church workers should exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.
- Church workers must be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.
- Church workers who exercise a 'healing ministry' should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.
- Church workers should recognise their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice). In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.
- Church workers should consider issues of ethnicity and gender in their ministry.
- Church workers should avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.
- Church workers should treat those with whom they work or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.
- Care should be taken when helping with physical needs, washing and toileting, always respecting the choices of the individual concerned. It may be necessary for specialist training to be given in these areas and workers should always consider whether this help can be given in terms of their own safety and that of the vulnerable adult.
- Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations should be handled sensitively. Workers need to recognise such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements must be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned.

- Church workers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or drugs.

Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters. Church workers should be aware of their language and behaviour. For example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the worker should be discerning about the motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist.

The church worker should consider in advance:

- The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, the worker's dress.
- The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby).
- The physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past.
- Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction.
- The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone and personal safety in visits, especially in the evening.
- The personal safety and comfort of all participants.
- Establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration, and the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example, gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted.
- The specific pastoral needs of individuals and whether the worker has the skill to meet these without additional support. Certain people will need skilled and professional support to which pastoral work will be supplementary. It may be that the initial pastoral task in such a situation is to work with the individual in supporting them to access professional help.

Working with colleagues

The standards maintained within a pastoral relationship are equally relevant in relationships with colleagues. Harassment or bullying should never be condoned. All workers need to be aware of the possibility of stress within the workplace. The needs of family should be acknowledged and all who work together should acknowledge the boundaries between work and home, allowing sufficient time for relaxation and holidays. Everyone who works with vulnerable people should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to discuss their work in supervision.

- Church workers should be aware of the responsibilities, function and style of other church workers and encourage cooperation and consultation between workers in the tasks they do.
- Colleagues should not be discriminated against, harassed, bullied or abused for any reason.
- Colleagues should not be penalised for following this guidance or for taking action regarding others and this guidance.
- When leaving office or relinquishing any task church workers should relinquish any pastoral relationship except with the agreement of any successor.

- Church workers should know to whom they are accountable and be regularly mentored by them or another person who can assist. Such mentoring is especially necessary for those undertaking a continuing individual pastoral ministry of counselling, or when their ministry takes them outside normal church work.
- Church workers should ensure that their tasks can be carried out by another if they are ill or otherwise unable to fulfil their responsibilities. This means that appropriate records should be maintained and a diary of engagements kept.

Sexual conduct

The sexual conduct of church workers may have an impact on their ministry within the Church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Workers should be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

- Church workers must never sexually abuse or harass an adult or a child.
- Church workers must take responsibility for their words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood) or talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.
- Church workers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and should refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.
- Church workers should avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted.

Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the Church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they could be accepted.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved.

There are particular issues in relation to Lasting Powers of Attorney and wills.[26] Lasting Power of Attorney can be made by an adult with capacity and can deal with issues of finance and/or welfare. When the person making the Lasting Power of Attorney loses their capacity (ability to make decisions), the person named as Attorney can continue to make decisions on their behalf. The safeguards in this instrument are that it has to be registered with the Court of Protection. It would be

26 The Lasting Power of Attorney is the successor to the Enduring Power of Attorney.

appropriate if an individual wishes to name a church worker as Attorney if the individual received independent legal advice on the subject before entering into this. This safeguards the church worker from possible issues of undue influence. However, the church worker should consider this carefully and may wish to seek their own advice which can be accessed through the District Safeguarding Adults Group. This is not a task to be taken lightly.

In relation to wills, the guidance relating to Lasting Powers of Attorney should be followed where appointment as an Executor is being considered or where the individual is considering a bequest to a church worker or to a church. This should always be raised in supervision and with the District Safeguarding Adults Group for advice.

Record keeping and privacy

- Church workers should consider keeping a daily record of pastoral encounters to include date, time, place, subject and actions to be taken.
- The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of abuse or mistreatment.
- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years).
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation.

Behaviour outside work and Christian ministry

In church ministry behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. Church workers are expected to uphold Christian values throughout their lives.

8 Responding to abuse

See the flow chart (Appendix F).

Disclosures may not always be made verbally or in writing to the worker. Sometimes, a worker will observe a situation which seems to be abusive or neglectful. Sometimes the adult has no means to communicate verbally but communicates distress by some other means, such as tears. Careful 'listening' is important and an adult may need support to tell their story. It is important that the story is received and taken seriously. It is not the worker's job, nor that of the church, to conduct an investigation. That is the task of the Local Authority's Adult Services and the police. Immediate safety should be ensured if necessary.

8.1 Process and confidentiality

The first issue which needs to be taken account of is confidentiality. An adult will be presumed to have capacity to make decisions for him/herself. Therefore, if an adult requests confidentiality in respect of an issue, this should be accepted. (The worker should be able to access their own support in dealing with the issues and conflicts this raises.) A note should be retained of the matter.

The exceptions to this are as follows:

- Where the disclosure relates to harm to another person. So, for example, if the disclosure is of domestic abuse in relation to a partner.
- Where the disclosure relates to a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. For example, if an adult discloses childhood abuse and the alleged perpetrator is still in a position to harm children. Similarly if the complaint relates to a worker.
- Where the disclosure is by an adult who does not have the capacity to make a decision as to whether the matter should be dealt with through an adult safeguarding route, i.e. adult social care; for example, if an adult in the late stages of dementia shows a worker bruises which appear non-accidental in origin and all attempts to find out what the adult wants done with this information fail.

Once a disclosure (with the exceptions above) has been made the procedure adopted for the church should be followed. In cases of emergency or where there is need for urgent action, the Local Authority Adult Services should be informed (if necessary by using their out-of-hours number) or the police. Where the need is less urgent or in any event as soon as possible, the worker should ensure that their immediate line manager, the minister and the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator are notified (unless that person is implicated in the disclosure). In respect of notifying anyone else, such as carers, advice should be taken from the Local Authority or police (if urgent) or from the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator. The worker to whom the disclosure has been made should ensure their own pastoral needs are met during this process, as such issues take a clear emotional toll.

Harm which is significant should always be referred to the statutory agencies, subject to consideration of confidentiality issues.

When a disclosure is made the worker should listen carefully to what is being communicated and do so without asking

leading questions (those which presume or prompt a particular answer). If there is any evidence of the abuse this should be preserved and sealed.

If a worker has received a disclosure, they should record in writing the contents of that disclosure. The record should be as clear as possible and should include such description as is appropriate. It should avoid opinion and should be dated and signed.

The worker and those supporting them should always find out what process is being adopted by the statutory agencies for this will have an impact on both the worker and the vulnerable adult. This can usually be undertaken with the assistance of the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator. Support should always be sought by the worker. It may be that a disclosure leads to criminal or other proceedings and it can be daunting for a worker to give evidence in court. Support for this process can and should always be given through the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator.

It should be remembered that dealing with safeguarding issues in relation to vulnerable adults should include the adult (and wherever possible their carers) as much as possible. Safeguarding should not be imposed on adults without their involvement.

8.2 Record keeping and privacy[27]

- Church workers should consider keeping a brief record of pastoral encounters to include date, time, place, subject and actions to be taken. The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child/adult protection or might be a record of suspicion of abuse or mistreatment.
- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 70 years).
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation. The Data Protection Act 1998 prevents the publishing of information without consent from the person concerned. However, disclosure is permissible where a person is unable to give consent or consent is not given and disclosure is necessary in the public interest or where disclosure is made to the police for the purpose of detecting or preventing crime. Advice should be sought on this from the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator.[28]

The Methodist Church is registered with the Data Protection Registrar and therefore documents (including electronic documents) may only be held for the purposes for which they are given. It should be understood that such documents can be required to be produced either to a person about whom they are written, for the purpose of detection or prevention of crime, or for the purpose of court proceedings.

8.3 Information Sharing

The Methodist Church has a good practice information sheet – *Information Sharing*. This document can be downloaded from the resources section of the Safeguarding pages of the Methodist website.

The following is a summary of good practice from the DCSF.[29] Among other

27 With Integrity and Skill Methodist Conference 2008 and further guidance on record keeping and retention of records on the Methodist Church website www.methodistchurch.org.uk

28 Records should be kept securely with a procedure for collecting and retaining records.

29 DCSF *Information sharing guidance* 2008.

things this good practice requires that all ministers share key information which is needed for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults with their successors, with safeguarding reps at church, circuit or district levels as needed and with the local authority or the police in particular cases as required.

Seven golden rules for information sharing

i) Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is only shared appropriately.
ii) Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could, be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
iii) Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
iv) Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your decision on the facts of the case.
v) Consider safety and well-being: base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
vi) Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it. It is shared only with those people who need to have it. It is accurate and up to date. It is shared in a timely fashion and is shared securely.
vii) Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

If you are unsure about any of these, consult your District Safeguarding Coordinator.

9 Care of adult survivors[36]

Adult survivors of abuse include those who have survived sexual, physical and emotional harm or neglect. They may be survivors with other vulnerabilities such as learning disabilities. The abuse can have been experienced in childhood or more recently as an adult. Most abuse is experienced within the family or community, but some children or adults have been subjected to abuse within a church setting.

It is known that many people within the Church are survivors of abuse. However, they will not necessarily make themselves known within the Church. Indeed their experiences may be known to nobody. Many women and men have never found anyone they can trust enough to tell. The Church needs to make sure all its practices take this into account. This requires a consideration of practice and language. This is particularly likely to be the case if the abuse has included elements of ritual practice, when items such as the cross will have particular significance. It may be that touch is a difficult area and the Church will need to consider its practice in passing the peace in Communion. Derisory language should always be challenged and language within worship should be considered. Whilst the use of the Lord's Prayer is essential to worship, nevertheless, the use of the word 'father' may be excluding to some people because of their childhood experiences. Consideration should be given to the use of inclusive language even in the Lord's Prayer, at least some of the time.

Adult survivors may show a range of behaviour as a result of their experiences. This can range from withdrawal and depression to anger, substance abuse and self-harm.

This can all lead to a challenging pastoral situation. The person offering pastoral support should in turn identify someone to provide him or her with support and advice. This important but challenging work should never be attempted in isolation.

If a survivor decides to tell someone of their experiences, they may need to do so repeatedly so that they can 'process' their story. It may be necessary to inform Adults or Children's Services or the police, which will require significant support, particularly if criminal proceedings ensue. Issues of forgiveness may require resolution for the survivor. There is no easy or quick solution to these issues and the survivor should not be hurried, nor made to feel guilty, nor made to do anything (such as forgive) for which they are not ready. They need to be accepted as they are, to know that God loves them unconditionally and to be confident that the church community is with them on their journey, however long it may be and whatever direction that journey may take. It may be that additional professional services are needed to support this process and those concerned should approach the District Safeguarding Group which will be able to provide advice on access to resources and services.[30]

30 See Conference report 'Tracing Rainbows' available at www.methodistchurch.org.uk

10 Ministering to those where there are concerns about previous behaviour

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of providing good practice for ministering to, and providing pastoral care for, those who have been convicted or cautioned is to enable those who might pose a risk to be able to worship and be part of a church community more safely. The procedures outlined here and in the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* are also to be used as a model of good practice when someone is suspended or awaiting trial for sexual offences in order to both safeguard those involved and all members of the church community.

N.B. Standing Orders are currently being revised in relation to working with children and young persons or vulnerable adults and as to appointment to an office, post or position of responsibility and relating to 'contracts' with those who are convicted or cautioned.

10.2 'Covenant of Care'

The *Church and Sex Offenders* Report 2000 recommended the setting up of 'Support and Monitoring' groups to manage those who have convictions and cautions for sexual offences against children or adults in churches/circuits. (This is in SO690f and Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance section of CPD. It is reproduced as Appendix E in *Safeguarding Children and Young People* 2010.)

These arrangements should be regarded as a 'covenant of care'. It is proposed that they be called a 'Covenant of Care agreement'/'Covenant of Care arrangements' in future.

Key components of such a Covenant of Care:

- Pre-release phase where applicable/possible.
- Setting up a small group at church and/circuit level.
- Risk assessment – this may not be an externally commissioned professional risk assessment but it will be informed by these where possible.
- Writing a contract – ideally together with the person involved and obtaining their agreement and understanding. Monitoring arrangements should be part of such an agreement.
- Meet regularly and review membership, training and support for the group.
- Review the contract – at regular intervals – not less than annually, or when circumstances change.

N.B. Such a group can be set up 'in principle' in advance by Church Councils.

10.3 The agreement

The guidance in Standing Order 690f[31] and in Part 2 Section 12 of the guidance[32] offers a framework for this. This is to be reviewed in 2011, but the following are additional points and do not replace the guidance as they stand.

Additional areas which may need to be considered in developing a contract/agreement that works:

- Residential events, especially 'all-age' events
- Events in another church or church organisation, circuit or national events
- Finding another church or circuit when

31 In CPD.

32 Also in CPD – at the back.

there are victims/survivors in former/current church
- Opportunities for the safe development of the subject's discipleship once they have demonstrated cooperation and trust with the agreement.

Sensitive or difficult matters for the Superintendent/minister in pastoral charge and the group to consider:
- Insisting a church provides for a sex offender, when the church or minister rejected them outright.
- Developing a contract where there are 'old matters' convictions or cautions on someone's record but where some sort of contract is necessary.
- Deciding what cases can be 'light touch'.
- Keeping interest and energy of the monitoring group.
- Worship/membership. This should be considered with great care for the victims in the case.[33] The presumption should be that unless there are good reasons the sex offender should worship elsewhere.
- Sustaining the contract for years and possibly decades.
- The provision of training for the members of the group and the wider church on these things.
- The development of discipleship for the subject over many years.

33 Or on occasions when necessary, other alleged victims or survivors of abuse.

11 Handling disagreements and complaints

11.1 Introduction

The Methodist Church has a formal Complaints and Discipline procedure for members and officers.

Disagreements may arise within the church or in relation to the church. This may be a minor issue, which can be resolved between those involved and this will apply to the majority of disagreements. However, if a disagreement is not capable of such resolution, it should be taken seriously and not ignored.

In relation to complaints, each circuit has a local complaints officer in connection with the Complaints and Discipline procedure of the Methodist Church. This will often be the Superintendent Minister of the circuit. However, it should be accepted that anybody in the church who receives a complaint should deal with it in some way. This may be by resolving it, if it is a minor issue, or by passing it on to the local complaints officer. However, the local church should have a complaints procedure which is aimed at dealing with issues expeditiously and appropriately.

This procedure could helpfully name a person within the church who will take responsibility and whose name and some means of contact is available within the church. Such a procedure shows that the church takes complaints seriously and wishes to improve its practice. Further details about the formal Complaints and Discipline procedure can be obtained from Part 11 in the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* or from the District Office.

The District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator should always be consulted about suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Investigations by the statutory authorities must also take place before the Methodist Complaints procedures. See section 8 above.

11.2 Suspension

If a complaint is made against a worker, consideration should always be given to the suspension of that worker. Advice should be obtained from the District Safeguarding Adults Coordinator. If the complaint is, or may be, of criminal conduct, urgent and active consideration should be given to referral to the police and the rationale for any decision should be documented. In less serious matters, careful thought should be given to the ability to resolve any complaint and the ensuing training needs. The pastoral needs of the worker should be actively considered and met within the church, with support from the District if appropriate.

11.3 Wider implications

It should be noted that matters of this type always raise pastoral issues for other people. Those who work alongside the worker may well be suffering from stress and may feel an abuse of their trust. The families of the worker and the vulnerable adults concerned may also feel such an abuse of trust, and the whole congregation may feel their sense of mission compromised. The minister and the church stewards need to ensure resources for these additional tasks are available and this is likely to require support from the district.

11.4 Referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority

If a worker is prosecuted or dismissed as a result of abusive conduct towards vulnerable adults, there is a duty to refer the matter to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. If a worker hands in his resignation prior to the completion of disciplinary or criminal procedures, that duty still exists. The District Safeguarding Adults Group Coordinator will assist with this process. For more information, see *Recruiting Safely in the Methodist Church* 2010.

12 Resolutions

1. The Methodist Conference adopts the policy document entitled *Safeguarding Adults* and directs that it be published and implemented throughout the Church.

2. The Conference further directs the Methodist Council:
   (a) to ensure that proposals for dealing with the issue of safeguarding vulnerable adults in processes of learning and development are formulated and brought to the Council within the next 12 months; and
   (b) to include the implications of this policy in a review of the policy and procedures entitled *The Church and Sex Offenders*.

3. The Conference directs the Law and Polity Committee to consider whether any changes to Standing Orders are required in the light of the policy 'Safeguarding Adults'.

4. The Methodist Conference requires that:
   (a) Districts appoint a District Safeguarding Adults Group or additional members of an existing Safeguarding group in accordance with models that are recommended in the policy 'Safeguarding Adults' together with a coordinator for Safeguarding Adults, and that districts support and resource these roles and the group should report to the District Policy Committee or its equivalent at least annually.
   (b) Circuits appoint, support and provide resources for a Circuit Safeguarding Adults' Coordinator, who report to the Circuit Meeting at least annually.

13 Appendices

Contents

A) Safeguarding Policy Statement in poster format
B) A table of responsibilities
C) The role of the District Adults Safeguarding Group and Coordinator
D) A checklist for churches
E) Resources
F) Flow chart for referral

Appendix A Safeguarding Principles

The Methodist Church

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 disclosures and registration with[34] the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

34 Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

Appendix B Table of responsibilities

Church Council

General implementation of policy	Minister in pastoral charge
Ensuring safeguarding forms are completed	Minister in pastoral charge
Ensuring no office holder is in place where they are unable to sign form	Minister in pastoral charge
Ensuring all officers understand policy	Minister in pastoral charge
Ensuring copies of the handbook are available and given to relevant workers	Church Council secretary
Including safeguarding on Church Council Agenda and retain copies of forms	Minister in pastoral charge/Church Council secretary
Preparing a policy	Working group
Adopt the policy	Church Council
Share policy with church	Stewards
Promote awareness and training, and keep records of attendance	Safeguarding coordinator
Risk assessment of premises	Property stewards and Church Council

Circuit

Circulate copies of policy to churches	Circuit Meeting secretary
Ensure all churches have policies	Superintendent minister
Ensure relevant CRB checks are made	Superintendent minister
Ensure circuit office holders complete form	Superintendent minister
Ensure awareness training and good practice	Circuit Leadership team (Circuit stewards and staff)
Including safeguarding on Circuit meeting Agenda and retain copies of forms	Superintendent minister

District

Develop a policy	Chair
Implementation of policy	Chair
Support Superintendents	Chair
Ensure District Officers sign form	Chair
Provide copies of booklet to DPC	Synod secretary
Support District Safeguarding Group	Chair
Resource District Safeguarding Group	DPC and treasurer
Ensure district policy is implemented	Chair/synod secretary
Ensure that those elected to Conference comply with standing orders	Chair
Respond to requests for help and training	District Safeguarding Group
Work with other agencies	District Safeguarding Group
Advise on implementation of policy	District Safeguarding Group
Promote awareness and good practice	District Safeguarding Group

Conference

Develop policy and guidance	Designated person
Respond to government initiatives	Secretary of Conference – with designated person
Work with other agencies and churches	Secretary of Conference – as above
Organise a programme of awareness	Secretary of Conference – as above
Ensure the development of training	Secretary of Conference – as above

Appendix C The role of the District Safeguarding Adults Group and Coordinator

i. Ensure a response to requests for help, advice, information and training.[36]
ii. Ensure support in implementing District and Connexional policy and any legal requirements.[37]
iii. Ensure that the Chair, Superintendents and District Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance. A report will be delivered to the first District Policy Committee meeting of each Connexional year by a member of the District Safeguarding Group, which will include a note on the monitoring of district events.
iv. Promote programmes of awareness and good practice.
v. Work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) in safeguarding issues.
vi. Ensure that it has maintained its own knowledge and skills.

The District Safeguarding Adults Group should be supported by the district through training for themselves, professional supervision, a telephone for the coordinator/convenor of the group and other expenses as necessary.

The Chair or their delegated deputy[38] should attend the group at least once a year.

35 Some of these things fall to the Safeguarding Adviser located in Development and Personnel, others are for Discipleship and Ministries working with the Training Officer network.

36 Including help on specific cases/allegations.

37 Such as mandatory vetting and barring.

38 Continuity will need to be maintained as much as possible.

Appendix D A checklist for churches

Church Council policy	What else is needed?	Who will take action?	Action reviewed – date and notes
1 An overview: a) implementation/action plan and b) review timetable c) allocated responsibility for this d) equality and diversity issues discussed			
2 Safer recruitment procedures: a) records of vetting processes – i.e. criminal records and ISA registration/ PVG scheme membership. b) registration forms, references, identity c) the person with responsibility for the activity and volunteers d) reviews of probation, annual reviews, training and development e) the code of conduct – distributed and discussed			
3. **Planning of activities:** a) staff ratios and balance b) written risk assessments c) reviews of risk assessments d) responsibility for occasional events e) equipment f) transport g) permissions i.e. for photography h) E-Safety			
4. **Training and development:** a) induction b) arrangements for team supervision c) individual supervision or support d) review of training needs and planning			
5. Responding to incidents: a) Incident book b) First Aid c) Local police child protection and Adult Social Care numbers d) responsibility for referral e) responsibility for reporting to others on a need-to-know basis			
6. Who else needs to know about the policy a) where is it displayed/made available b) local ecumenical contacts c) lettings and hirers			
Other – please add			

Signed:

Review date:

Appendix E Resources

Relevant organisations

Sight
Royal National Institute for the Blind
105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE
www.rnib.org.uk

Hearing
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL
www.rnid.org.uk

Mental Health
Mind
15-19 Broadway
London E15 4BQ
www.mind.org.uk

Older People
Methodist Homes for the Aged
Epworth House
Stuart Street
Derby DE1 3EQ
www.mha.org.uk

Age UK
Astral House
1268 London Road
London SW16 4ER
www.ageuk.org.uk

Action on Elder Abuse
0808808 8141
www.elderabuse.org.uk

Dementia
Alzheimer's Society (also have information on other dementias)
Gordon House
10 Greencoat Place
London SW1P 1PH
www.alzheimers.org.uk

Learning Disability
Mencap
123 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0RT
www.mencap.org.uk

Physical Disability
The Shaftesbury Society
16 Kinston Road
London SW19 1JZ
www.shaftesburysociety.org.uk

SCOPE
6 Market Road
London N7 9PW
www. scope.org.uk

Domestic Violence
Women's Aid
08457 023468

Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
www.caada.org.ukk

Substance abuse
www.ukna.org.uk (drugs)
www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk

Asylum seekers
Stan Platt
Advisor in Immigration and Asylum to the Methodist Church
50 Leeds Road
Selby
North Yorkshire

Survivors
Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse
c/o 38 Sydenham Villa Road
Cheltenham
Gloucester
GL52 6DZ

Survivors UK (support for male survivors)
2 Leathermarket Street
London SE1 3HN
www.survivors.org.uk

Respond (support for those with learning difficulties who have been abused)
3rd Floor
24-32 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2HD
www.respond.org.uk

Resource material is available from the above organisations.

Your local authority Adult Services department and your District Safeguarding Adults Group will have resources, particularly those which are local.

Written resources

- Department of Health *No Secrets* (London: HMSO, 2000)
- CTBI *Time for Action* (London: CTBI 2002)
- MHA has published a number of books on care of the elderly.

Responding to an allegation of harm to an adult who may be vulnerable

Adult does not have capacity

Is this urgent?

Yes

Refer to adult services[2] or the police and notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] for monitoring and support

No

Notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] to consider options:

1. Referral to adult services for multi - agency consideration
2. If this is a matter solely for the church, develop a strategy to address the harm

Adult has capacity

Is there risk of harm to others?
(Always disclose harm or potential harm to a child or vulnerable adult)

Yes

Is this urgent?

Yes

Refer to adult services[2] or the police and notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] for monitoring and support

No

Notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] to consider options **(see left)**

No

Does the adult want a referral?

Yes

Support adult to make a referral to adult services[2] or the police and notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] for monitoring and support

No

Notify minister and safeguarding rep[1] for monitoring and support

1. In some cases the concern will relate directly to the minister or safeguarding representative. Where a minister is involved, contact the Chair of District and/or the Connexional Safeguarding Adviser immediately. For everyone else, contact the District Safeguarding Representative for advice
2. Where the concern relates to someone who is working with children or vulnerable adults (either employed, post holder or volunteer) contact the District Safeguarding Representative to discuss possible notification to the Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent role.

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PRACTICE GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT THE REPORT DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE METHODIST CHURCH TAKING ACTION

PE501-SG-10

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1 Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to support districts, circuits and churches in following through the resolution and recommendations from the report *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action*, brought to Methodist Conference in June 2005 (agenda no.48). In the report, the main focus is on abuse of women by male partners, but abuse of all kinds is unacceptable, thus these *Good Practice Guidelines* apply in **any** relationship (1.5).

The terms violence / abuse are used interchangeably throughout this report. The Home Office describes domestic violence as follows:

Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Usually it's a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

Domestic violence occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, and children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they've seen, and there is a strong connection between domestic violence and child abuse.

Aims

2

- To raise awareness about domestic abuse in districts, circuits and local church communities.
- To increase awareness of and access to support services for victims of domestic abuse and where appropriate for perpetrators.
- To offer suitable training from appropriate specialist agencies for key staff and relevant church leaders and to encourage church members to undertake basic training.
- To encourage churches to become places of safety.
- To encourage collaborative working with other denominations and agencies.

The Methodist Church seeks to offer a safe place for all people in its worship and its community life, where boundaries that safeguard acceptable behaviour are known and respected, practices are openly addressed and where inappropriate or harmful behaviours and attitudes are addressed.

About Policy

3

In its Recommendations, *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action* proposes that churches adopt a code of practice which is based on the Charter on page 6 of these guidelines. Developing policy is not just about having a policy statement, but also about gaining a working knowledge of the effects of domestic abuse on all involved, and using pastoral and practical strategies to assist people who are in an abusive relationship. A policy helps people think through the issues. Policy documents give a structure to the work of prevention and support, and are a useful reference for monitoring.

(*Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action* 4.1 and Recommendation 1)

These guidelines include the Charter, and also a model policy for a local church (Section 14, p22), that demonstrates how the Charter can be used to develop an action plan for the church in straightforward stages.

4 Charter

This church -

1 **holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent/ incompatible with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living;**

2 **accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem which occurs in church families as well as in wider society;**

3 **undertakes to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic violence;**

4 **will work with the support agencies, will learn from them and support them in appropriate ways, and will publicise their work;**

5 **will play its part in teaching that domestic violence is a sin;**

6 **believes in a God of love, justice, mercy, and forgiveness;**

7 **will teach what it means to be male and female, equally made in God's image;**

8 **will seek to appoint advisors to encourage the use of good practice guidelines and keep the Church informed about the implementation and development of this Charter and the Recommendations of this report.**

(From a Charter developed by Churches Together in Gloucestershire, and adapted by Churches Together in the Merseyside Region, The Baptist Union of Great Britain, and others)

Responsibility 5

(Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action 4.5)

In each district, the working party suggests that a group (or an individual) is set up which takes responsibility for domestic abuse issues by following up the recommendations of the report Taking Action and the resolutions from Conference. It may be possible for this to be part of the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer, or in any event should be done in close liaison with her/him.

This will entail

- encouraging the dissemination of and use of these *Good Practice Guidelines;*
- developing a library of resource materials and information, using available resources such as those listed in the Resources section of these guidelines (p18 onwards);
- encouraging local churches and circuits to be aware of relevant local phone numbers and support services;
- being a point of contact for ministers, lay leaders, and church members and able to offer advice and information to them;
- advising and informing the district, and monitoring practice;
- enabling and encouraging workshops and other forms of training through networking with local support services and agencies
- encouraging the district to mark 25th November as the international day against Violence Against Women, or its closest Sunday

Prevention, Protection and Justice, Provision and Support 6

Across England, Wales and Scotland there are now comprehensive provisions for responding to domestic violence in the courts. These cover matters dealt with in the criminal, civil and family courts. Advice about any of these matters should be without charge from solicitors, using public funding. Detailed information can be found on the Women's Aid website, and the Rights of Women website provides a detailed Injunctions Handbook.

7 How Can The Church Participate In Prevention?

(Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action 4.7)

Raising awareness through teaching and worship

Working with children and young people

Sharing information about local agencies

Training people at all levels of the Church

7.1 Raising awareness through teaching and worship

(see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action*, Sections II and III 3.6 to 3.10)

- Worship leaders can speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching and prayers especially but not exclusively on November 25th. (The International Day of Action Against Violence Against Women.) Useful material can be found in these guidelines in Section 16 *Further resources* (p23), and in the Theology section (Section II) of *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action.*

- Ministers, deacons and church leaders should be offered resources so that they can give clear statements that domestic abuse is wrong, and tackle the myths that perpetuate disregard of abuse (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action* Section I p13*).*

- Gender inequality must continually be challenged in all aspects of the life of the Church. Opportunity to discuss these issues within the church community should be offered in districts, circuits and local churches.

- Language should reflect our beliefs about equality and dignity, and not increasingly marginalise those who may already feel of little value. [1]

- Thought needs to be given to the way we use the Bible, and how theological emphases can be affirming or damaging to those caught up in abusive situations (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action,* Section II Theology).

7.2 Working with children and young people

- There is an increasing awareness of Safeguarding throughout the Church in relation to children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable. An addition to existing policies is recommended, providing clear information on what to do if a child or young person discloses information about domestic abuse. This should include recognising the need to ask someone competent for advice, and who to approach.

- Workers with young people, Sunday school and Junior Church teachers, and leaders of weekday clubs for children and young people should be given some training on domestic abuse, alongside leaders ministering to the adult congregation.

[1] *Inclusive Language and Imagery about God.* Report to Methodist Conference 1992

- Leaders should aim to affirm and model good, positive relationships in their work with young people.

- Awareness of the local schools' Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme can be used to open discussion about respect in partnerships and working relationships. Discussion might include such topics as –

  What qualities do I value in people I know and in my rôle models?
  What does it mean to respect difference?
  When should I keep a secret for myself or a friend?
  Who can I go to for help and support? [2]

- Youth leaders can be encouraged to invite a guest speaker to stimulate discussion, perhaps from the Domestic Violence Forum or the Police Family Unit.

7.3 Sharing information about local agencies

- Local churches are encouraged to display posters and information from the local support agencies - Domestic Violence Forum, Women's Aid, Refuge, Victim Support, Respect – and to make the phone number of the local women's refuge available in the church and hall. See Section 14 (p19) for contact information.

  These can help to make it clear that the church is safe for victims to talk and is a place where perpetrators will be challenged.

- Links can be made with relevant ecumenical organisations such as Churches Together in England (CTE), Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), CYTÛN (Churches Together in Wales), the World Council of Churches Project to Overcome Violence Against Women and the new campaign Restored www.restoredrelationships.org.uk, all of which have useful resources or contacts. (See Section 16 *Further resources*, p24)

- MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) now operate across the United Kingdom. These meetings consider the most serious 10% of domestic violence cases. They receive referrals from the police, Domestic Violence workers (DV), Womens Aid and any other voluntary agency or group that wishes to make a referral. This includes the local church, usually via a DV worker or someone else working specifically in this field. The aim is to develop a safety plan in each case based on the combined knowledge and commitment of everyone working with the family and then track progress over coming months. Information is available through CAADA (coordinated action against domestic abuse) www.caada.org.uk

- Churches or circuits are encouraged to join the local Domestic Violence Forum (most towns and districts now have a such a Forum). These can be found through the phone book or Citizens Advice Bureaux, or via the internet.

[2] Taken from *Respectful Relationships: Raising awareness of Domestic Abuse in Primary School* Peterborough Domestic Violence Forum

7.4 Training people at all levels of the Church

The main report, *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action,* covers the subject of training, in paragraphs 3.18–3.22. Training and awareness-raising will need to include those preparing for pastoral ministry, in-service training, and training in circuits and local churches. Basic awareness of the extent and effects of domestic abuse on individuals, families and society should be an essential part of core training for all pastoral ministry. Training will assist individuals and churches to reflect on how domestic abuse affects everyone caught up in it, and how best they might support someone within their church community.

Basic listening skills, and understanding when more help is needed, must be included in the training for pastoral workers and listeners. (See Section 13, p18)

It is also vital that people at all levels of the Church are encouraged to reflect upon the issues raised in the Theology Section (Section II) of *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action*.

Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action also emphasises (paragraphs 3.23-3.24) the importance of collaborative working with other agencies. This can include both the sharing of good practice, and benefitting from specialist expertise. Agencies such as the local Domestic Violence Forum, Women's Aid, or the local Safeguarding Board may offer training modules at different levels for other statutory and voluntary bodies (see Section 8 for more information). They are usually very willing to work with churches to provide training or information. Collaborative working has a strategic place in enabling the church to play a positive role in the community.

Circuits may like to consider setting up a study day to help raise awareness in local church congregations of the issues.

Further Training

8

The Methodist Church has a network of Training and Officers who are a point of contact for all training.

Participating in a training day set up for other agencies is an excellent way of discovering how others work, and enables opportunity to develop good networking practice. This means it is much easier to access support from other agencies, as well as being able to offer appropriate support from the church, when that is needed.

Training modules may use video clips, agency presentations, and group work. Modules may include the following:

Basic training

1 Raising Awareness:

What is domestic abuse?
Looking at the myths
Understanding attitudes
What do other agencies do, and how do they work?
Networking with other agencies

2 What are the effects of domestic abuse on women, men and children?

Life cycle events
Effect on self-esteem and behaviour
Why do women stay?
What help is available?
Links between child abuse and domestic abuse
What about contact issues?
Links with alcohol and drug abuse
Effects on health

Specialist training

In addition, some places will have the facility to present specific training modules for those working with particular groups of people directly involved in abusive situations, but this is more specialised training:

3 Working with victims and survivors

4 Working with perpetrators

5 Working with children

9 What Happens When There Are Allegations Of Abuse?

When allegations are made, there are immediately questions which need to be considered. There are degrees of urgency and risk where disclosure and allegation are concerned. People may disclose long-standing abuse, which may have ended or be on-going. A victim may be safe but traumatised, where there is no new allegation or disclosure, but support and healing are still needed. Another issue is about police involvement – a victim should not be under any pressure to involve the police in order to get a response from the church.

Questions to have in mind in deciding how to proceed include -

- Are the victim and any children in immediate danger? (see Section 11 *Disclosure Flow Chart* on p15 of these guidelines)
- Has the victim voiced a concern about someone, or is someone else doing so? In the latter case, is the victim aware this is being raised?
- Ask yourself if this is likely to be a formal complaint under the churches disciplinary procedure, or is it primarily a need for help and support ?
- Has there been a complaint to the police, and if so, what action has been taken?

Congregations caught up in the situation may need help; holding the tension (eg between those who are "on the side of" one partner or the other) can be very difficult. This is where the support of wider church (circuit or district) can be invaluable, and could be part of the role of those with district responsibility. (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church…Taking Action* Section III and these guidelines Section 5 *Responsibility*)

Offering support and protection involves recognising the need for work with perpetrators to be undertaken by someone with specialist skills, and where pastoral support from the church can be offered alongside.

There is a distinction between an abuse where there is already a criminal investigation, or the abuser is subject to a court order, and an allegation which has not been taken to the police. It is at this point that most churches will feel the need to consult with someone with district responsibility in order to make an appropriate response where appointed or liase with a local specialist agencies.(see pp 19-21 for national specialist help)

It is also important to remember that abused and abuser cannot both be supported in the same church community unless **that is the express, independent wish of each, nor can they be supported pastorally by the same person.**

Safety of ministers, deacons and church workers

The safety of church workers is important.

Good practice in pastoral listening, whether by a minister or deacon, a lay leader, or another member of the church community, means that there will always be more than one person on the premises during planned meetings. Quiet and confidential places should be available for listening, but ideally someone else should also be aware of where and when confidential listening is taking place. This protection is for both listener and the one seeking help.

It is important that those who listen know when it is essential to say that they must talk to someone else, whether it is for their own need, or for that of the seeker or when it is mandatory. (eg awareness of child abuse or other safety issues or criminal action)

Those who are listening need to be aware of the nature of, and constraints of pastoral relationships.

10 What Is The Role Of The Church In Offering Protection And Support To Survivors Of Abuse?

10.1 Responding appropriately

This involves providing resources for individuals and church communities so that they can respond appropriately and helpfully to allegations of domestic abuse, recognising that abused women and men find it difficult to tell their story and may approach a friend in the congregation rather than a minister or pastoral worker.

Research tells us that women may approach a number of individuals before finding belief and reassurance. It is likely that a distressed woman will sound out a friend or relative before approaching anyone in authority. Male victims of abuse also find it very difficult to confide in anyone.

Professional expertise is essential for more specialist work but it is essential that tackling domestic abuse is not sidelined, but is made the responsibility of the whole church community. Training in how to respond is also essential – if someone is not believed, or is not listened to appropriately, or if good information and support is not given, their progress can be put back for years.

Perpetrators. It is important to be able to hold perpetrators to account but also to be able to respond to perpetrators seeking help. [See these guidelines Section 12 *What about pastoral care for perpetrators?*]

10.2 The role of the church

In these circumstances, the role of the church is to walk alongside the victim on the journey back to wholeness. This may be done in partnership with specialist help from other agencies. Churches can offer real friendship at times of isolation and low self esteem, offering encouragement and hope so that the individual can start to feel safe.

The **culture** of the local church is important (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church… Taking Action* Section III). Church life, which has an openness, where processes are transparent and people feel they can be honest with each other, will allow an abused person or an abuser to talk about what is happening.

10.3 Safety first

This is where the basic principles for pastoral workers and listeners are helpful (see these guidelines, Section 13 (p18)).

i **Belief in what is being** said has to be the starting point when someone makes a disclosure of domestic abuse, as with child abuse.

ii **What kind of support** is the person looking for or needing? This will depend on many factors not least the emotional state of the victim and the nearness of the perpetrator. Trust and confidentiality are vital for the safety and well being of the victim and those who are supporting them. Once a support relationship has been established between victim and listener other agencies can be contacted for more specific advice and help. It is important to realise that from the moment of disclosure the victim can usually only cope with taking one step at a time.

iii **Essential for maintaining the safety** of the person alleging abuse and the family are

- confidentiality.
- one church or one pastoral carer, should not try to support both partners in one fellowship unless this is the expressed wish of each, individually (in which case reference should be made to the District support person or group). Trying to support both partners makes the church unsafe for the victim and may be seen to condone the behaviour of the abuser. **It should never be the victim who has to leave the church unless this is the only safe option.**
- working with other agencies – it is essential that the church members, ministers or pastoral workers do not take on a rôle outside their competence.
- in the case of allegations against ministers, or staff members, the Methodist Church's complaints procedure should be followed.

iv. Emergency plan

Where appropriate, talk through an emergency plan to ensure that a victim who decides to return home can escape safely at any time. More information is available about governemnt services from www.direct.gov.uk or in the voluntary sector from www.womensaid.org.uk
The key points for emergency planning are:

1. Plan an emergency escape and get your neighbours' support if possible
2. Keep money safe for taxis, bus fares and telephone calls.
3. Make sure you have your own key to the house.
4. Have clothes ready for you and your children in case of need.
5. Get the telephone numbers of your nearest Women's Aid group, the Police, Samaritans, Social Services your GP and any personal numbers you need.
6. Try to have your Post Office Child Benefit Account Card, your rent book, bank book, marriage and birth certificates, passport and driving livence with you when you leave.

10.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality needs to be emphasised. It is vital that those offering support keep confidences over addresses, information about children and schools etc, and about where and when it is safe to contact the person who is being abused. It is important not to undertake to pass on letters from the perpetrator - the victim knows where the perpetrator lives and can contact them if they wish.

10.5 Children

Children are also at risk in situations of abuse. They know much more than parents suspect. 90% are in the same room or next room when abuses are happening**.** Children who see a parent being abused may be physically injured trying to intervene, and in any event are at risk of emotional and psychological abuse. There is also increasing evidence of crossover between domestic violence and other forms of direct child abuse. This highlights the importance of a **Safeguarding policy,** and of always knowing and respecting the limits on confidentiality when a child is at risk.

10.6 Offering support and referring on

It may be appropriate to refer to another agency or the district the Connexion for support. When there are no children, permission from the victim must be sought before doing this. Ask if the victim would like another opportunity to talk with you or clarify what is hoped for from the church and what it is realistic to offer. If the victim does not wish you to refer to another agency, you should provide key contact details, so that they can make contact in their own time if they so wish. (See Section 14, p19)

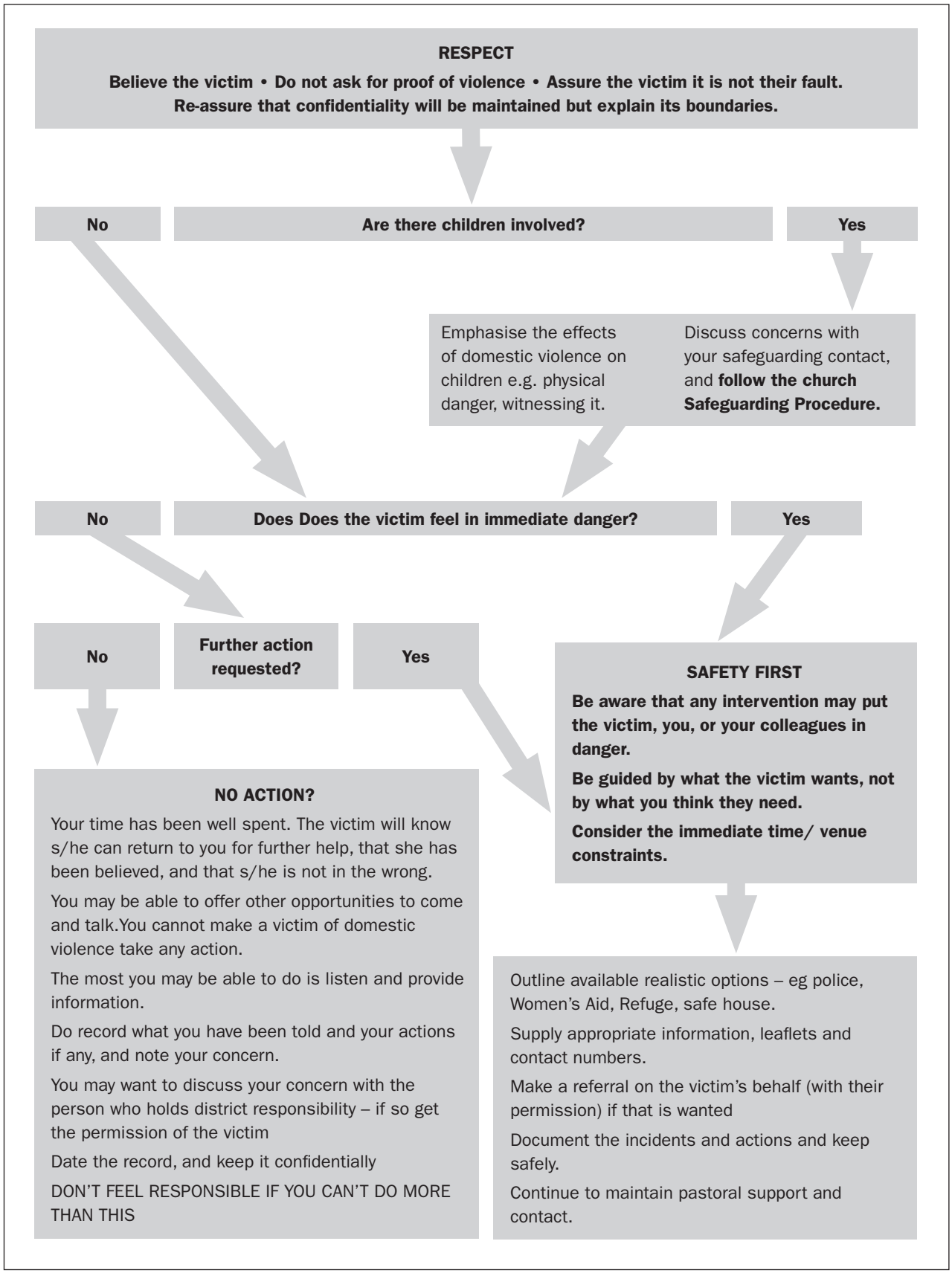
10.7 Risks

Leaders and workers must be aware that the greatest risk for the victims of domestic abuse is at separation or immediately after separation.

NB it is NOT the role of the church or its minister or members to intervene between partners.

Disclosure Flow Chart

11



12 What About Pastoral Support For Perpetrators?

Challenging perpetrators to take responsibility for their attitudes and actions is part of demonstrating that the church considers domestic abuse unacceptable. However, working with perpetrators is extraordinarily difficult work, **which ministers and deacons are not trained to do**. Despite what a perpetrator might say, or sometimes a minister feeling that this is a part of pastoral care, it is better that work with perpetrators be undertaken by someone with specialist training, and a proven track record. Appropriate pastoral support can be offered in addition to this, from the presbyter or deacon preferably with the knowledge and co-operation of the specialist, or agency concerned. Pastoral care for perpetrators should be provided by a church and supporters who are not at the same time providing care and support for the victims or survivors.

There are not many intervention programmes working with perpetrators, and those run by the probation service work mainly with men who have been convicted. Communities will need to be realistic about the level of support which can safely and effectively be offered to perpetrators who do not have external support.

Pastoral Care for Perpetrators - Guidelines

Time for Action has reproduced Pastoring Guidance for those who support child sexual abusers, taken from the Code of Practice for the Diocese of Southwell. It emphasises the view that ***"most professionals who work with perpetrators believe they will need maintenance counselling for the rest of their lives. In theological terms, recovery from the 'sin' of sexual abuse is a daily ongoing process".*** [1]

The proposals outlined here are very similar to those in *Time for Action* -

- Those who are providing support should feel able to work alongside agencies or services working with the individual on a validated, accredited intervention programme, with the knowledge of the individual concerned. (This may be a probation officer.)

- It should be made clear that it is expected that individuals who are known to be perpetrators will accept whatever discipline the church has agreed, either through the national organisation, or by the local congregation.

- There should be clear guidelines on recruitment and discipline, with reference to domestic abuse, as there are for child abuse and for sex offenders: for example, whether someone is limited in holding specific offices. If this means a perpetrator worshipping at a different church, not attending particular groups, not taking leadership roles, then this should be seen as part of the acceptance of the need for repentance and the desire to lead a new life in a different way.

- It may be appropriate to draw up a contract between the church and the perpetrator, which outlines any activities, roles or behaviour which are proscribed and any agreed activities. The contract will be known only to the minister, those who are providing support, and any essential officers of the church, and to whoever is working immediately with the individual concerned (eg probation officer).

[1] *Time for Action* Appendix 1 page 156

What About Pastoral Support For Perpetrators?

12

- Desire to see the best in people must not cloud realistic expectations and perceptions
- Those who are providing support will need their own ongoing support, and opportunity to ensure they remain comfortable with that role, and the issues which may be raised.

13 Basic Principles Of Good Practice For Pastoral Workers And Listeners

PRIVACY	Ensure that there is a private place, where someone wanting to talk is comfortable to speak. Don't put yourself at risk.
RESPECT	Allow enough time to talk, and LISTEN. It is important to be NON-JUDGEMENTAL, as people may be afraid they will be condemned by the church. Treat people with respect and sensitivity – it is difficult enough to talk about these issues. Don't ask what they did to provoke abuse.
CONFIDENTIALITY	Treat what is said in confidence. Let the individual know that the listener can be trusted, but also ensure that they are aware of the limits of confidentiality. It might be necessary for safety reasons, either for the individual or for a child, that some information is shared. Always be prepared to ask the victim if you may speak to someone who can offer further help, or to explain if an issues arises where you are aware of the need to talk to someone else – for example, if child abuse is also an issue, or if safety is compromised.
BELIEVE WHAT IS SAID	Victims of abuse need to be believed, and fear that they won't be, and may easily be discouraged from ever speaking out again if they sense disbelief.
REASSURANCE	It may be necessary to reassure someone who is suffering or has suffered from abuse more than once, that abuse is not the fault of the victim.
KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS	Recognise the work of other agencies and work with them. Be able to signpost someone to services that can help, and encourage them to use appropriate help. Offer to accompany them to an appointment if that would help.
SAFETY	Safety is the first priority for the victim and any children. Plan ahead when possible, so that workers or colleagues are not placed in a dangerous situation, and take sensible precautions to avoid putting yourself in danger. It is not safe to 'check the story' with the perpetrator, or to challenge him in any direct way. To do so places the victim, children and yourself at serious risk. If it is absolutely necessary to raise the issue with the perpetrator, you should plan carefully and usually obtain professional advice before doing so.

Training and support for workers

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM Most areas now have a domestic violence forum, at which both statutory and voluntary agencies are represented, to enable agencies to work and plan together, with a full-time or part-time co-ordinator who can offer information. The Forum will usually offer training opportunities at different levels for those who need to be aware, and for those who are working directly with victims or perpetrators. Details can be found through the phone book or through Citizens Advice Bureaux.

CAADA/MARAC Multi-agency risk assessment conferences are held for the most serious situations. The aims is to produce a shared safety plan that all agencies work to. A referral to MARAC can be made by anyone working with the family. More information on the CAADA website (coordinated action against domestic abuse) www.caada.org.uk

RESPECT is a registered charity and national membership organisation, promoting best practice for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services in the UK. Among RESPECT's aim are the belief that safety is the primary goal of all work with perpetrators and that domestic violence is unacceptable and must be challenged, that men can change, that men are responsible for their use of violence. RESPECT will provide information for those who are endeavouring to offer pastoral help for perpetrators.

The National Helpline is open Monday – Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm. Men who are perpetrators of abuse on a partner can themselves ring. The helpline will also take calls from other professionals, from concerned relatives, and about concern in other relationships. RESPECT will offer advice and aim to put callers in contact with appropriate local support.

NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBER	☎ 0845 122 8609	www.respect.uk.net

Support and help for victims

WOMEN'S AID is the key voluntary agency in this field. Local services may vary, but will usually offer emergency accommodation and often outreach support services. Each local WA agency is autonomous, but linked to the national refuge network, through the National Federation. Scottish Women's Aid is a separate federation.

	www.womensaid.org.uk
WALES	www.welshwomensaid.org
SCOTLAND	www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk

REFUGE also offer emergency accommodation and one-to-one counselling support in some areas.

	www.refuge.org.uk

14 Which Agencies Provide Help, And What Do They Do?

REFUGE PROVISION is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through a national helpline run by Women's Aid and Refuge.

FREEPHONE ENGLAND NATIONAL 24HR HELPLINE	☎ 0808 2000 247
SCOTLAND 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE	☎ 0800 0271 234
WALES 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE	☎ 0808 8010 800

POLICE / PUBLIC PROTECTION UNIT The police are often the first point of contact when domestic violence takes place. They aim to protect the victims, identify and protect children who may be at risk, take action where a crime has been committed and an offender identified, ensure appropriate support for the victim, identify cases of repeat victimisation and seek to provide necessary support.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES When children are present or involved, information may be shared with Children's Social Care by the Police, in order that the most appropriate support can offered, dependent on the available information and risk factors.

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE The National Probation Service works with both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse. It also supervises people on community sentences for domestic violence offences, and those on release from a custodial sentence under licence. The Service works to recognised national standards.

HOUSING Local priorities and policies may differ, but councils have a duty to arrange housing for anyone who is homeless, in priority need, and not intentionally homeless. It may help a victim to be accompanied to an appointment, to have a record of the episodes of violence, and to have supporting evidence from a social worker or doctor.

In Scotland, the *Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001* ensures the right of the abused person to remain in the family home in safety by the use of interdict and power to arrest the abuser.

HEALTH Domestic abuse has a substantial impact on the health and welfare of adults and children, and health care services are often the first point of contact for people living with domestic abuse. Victims may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, but often they are hoping someone will notice or ask, and so can be encouraged to speak to their health care workers, and may have an excuse for attending for some other reason.

HELP FOR DISABLED WOMEN experiencing abuse can be accessed through	www.edfwomen.org.uk/abuse.htm
CHILDREN NEEDING HELP can find information at	www.thehideout.org.uk
SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE The charity **Action on Elder Abuse** campaigns for the prevention of abuse of older people.	www.elderabuse.org.uk

NATIONAL HELPLINE for older people	☎ 080 8808 8141

Support for male victims of abuse and violence

MALE (Men's Advice Line and Enquiries) national helpline	☎ 0808 8010327
SURVIVORS UK Open Mon, Tues, Thurs 7pm – 9.30pm Help for men who have been sexually abused or raped	☎ 0845 1221201

Support for gay, lesbian and bisexual victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse

BROKEN RAINBOW HOTLINE Open Mon 2 – 8pm, Wed 10am – 1pm, Thurs 2 – 8pm. Help for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender victims of domestic violence	☎ 0300 999 5428

Other Agencies

Some of the agencies below will also have a local number in the phone book, which should also be made available in any local publicity.

RAPE CRISIS UK	www.rapecrisis.org.uk	
VICTIM SUPPORT	www.victimsupport.org.uk	☎ 0845 30 30 900
VICTIM SUPPORT SCOTLAND	www.victimsupportsco.org.uk	☎ 0845 603 9213

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX – Contact local branch
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ADVISORY SERVICES – Contact local agencies
AGENCIES WORKING WITH MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS – The following offer advice across the UK

Afruca If children are involved Africans Unite Against Child Abuse	www.afruca.org.uk	☎ 0844 660 8607
CIAC Chinese information and advice centre	www.ciac.co.uk	☎ 0845 313 1868 ex 211
Kiran Project Asian Women's support	www.kiranproject.org.uk	☎ 020 8558 1986
LAWRS (Latin American Women's Rights Service)	www.lawrs.org.uk	☎ 020 7336 0888
Southall Black Sisters For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women	www.southallblacksisters.org.uk	☎ 020 8571 9595 Mon – Fri 10am – 5pm Closed Wed
NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline		☎ 0800 800 500
SAMARITANS (UK)	www.samaritans.org	☎ 08457 90 90 90

15 Model Policy And Action Plan For A Local Church

Aims and intentions

This policy aims to encourage the church fellowship and organisations

1 to raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and the community

2 to ensure that teaching and worship reflect awareness of gender justice, use appropriate language, and say clearly that domestic abuse is wrong and must be condemned and affirm the Methodist Church stance that all human relationships are to be cherished.

3 to ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority, and to be aware of the need for confidentiality (*unless there are specific indications to the contrary, such as child protection or safety issues)*

4 to consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help

5 to encourage discussion of how the church might ensure those who feel marginalized are made welcome

6 to inform discussion on implementing the good practice guidelines, and the underpinning theology and principles.

Action Plan

1 Discussion with the church leaders, introduction to the church meeting, affirmation of the policy.

2 Defining the church's expectations of the fellowship and organisations and developing an action plan

- i Identification of an individual or group of people to take this forward
- ii Understanding how to listen and recognise when help and support are needed and how to access specialist help
- iii Introduction of appropriate information and leaflets
- iv Identification of training needs and how these might best be met, with broader training using organisations outside the church specialising in this field, and a process for ongoing training
- v A way of ensuring that people are aware of the policy and that principles are being met

3 Confirming when this policy was agreed, and when it will be reviewed (eg. annually)

Date: **Signed by:**	**Date of next review:** **Church Role:**

Further Resources

16

Bible study booklet *What is this place*

Six studies following the journey which a women experiencing violence may make, from recognition of her situation to making a new beginning. Price: £2.00 plus postage and packing.

Available from: Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH **Tel:** 020 7529 8132 **Fax:** 020 7529 8134

Following Jesus in a Violent World - Breaking the silence ...about domestic violence

Pack raising issues for local churches. Includes material for ministers, for those living with domestic abuse, and a charter for a local church. Price £3.50.

Available from: Baptist Union of GB, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT. **Tel:** 01235 517714

Home Truths

Five young people tell of their experiences of domestic violence in this short animated DVD. The DVD is suitable for a wide audience, but is particularly designed for use with 8-13 year olds in a youth group or school setting. (Published: 2000) Price: £10 to hire, £40 to purchase.

Available from: Leeds Animation Workshop, 45 Bayswater Row, Leeds LS8 5LF **Tel/Fax:** 0113 248 4997 **Email:** info@leedsanimation.org.uk

Women and Violence

Resource Pack produced by the Women's Network of the Methodist Church. (Published: 2000) Price £5.

Available from: Women's Network Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR **Tel:** 020 7467 5175 **Fax:** 020 7486 7792 **Email:** womens.network@methodistchurch.org.uk

Hitting Home: Domestic violence and young women

YWCA Briefing giving information and helpful resource list, including details of research papers. Price £4.

Available from: YWCA, Clarendon House, 52 Cornmarket Street, Oxford OX1 3EJ. **Tel:** 01865 304215 **Email:** campaigns@ywca-gb.org.uk

Breaking the Chains...

of the past, of the silence, of the churches' teaching .. on violence against women. A booklet of theological reflections and suggestions for discussion and action. Price £3.50, including postage

For information, contact: CTBI, 39 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1BX. **Tel:** 020 7654 7254 **Fax:** 020 7654 7222 **Email:** chlife@ctbi.org.uk

Understanding Domestic Abuse

nine-minute video and workbook. Useful for opening the subject and raising discussion.

Available from: Oadby and Wigston Domestic Violence Forum, c/o Helping Hands Advice Centre, 11b Leicester Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LD2 58D

Website

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/VictimsOfCrime/DG_4003136

Contains much helpful information, and useful links to other sites

Ecumenical organisations

Action of Churches Together in Scotland / Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland

Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland, Inglewood House, Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland FK10 2HU **Tel:** 01259 216980

Churches Together in England

27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH.
Tel: 020 7529 8132. **Email:** women@cte.org.uk

CYTÛN (Churches Together in Wales)

58 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3UR
Tel: 029 2046 4204. **Email:** post@cytun.org.uk

Notes

The **Methodist** Church

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MODEL CHURCH POLICIES

The Methodist Church

Model Church Policies

Policy for the Methodist Church

2010

Approved by the Methodist Conference 2010

The Methodist Church, Methodist Church House,
25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
Tel: 020 7486 5502
Email: safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

Appendix A Safeguarding Principles

The Methodist Church

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Principles

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of 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 disclosures and registration with[1] the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority 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.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

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

1 Or membership of (PVG scheme Scotland).

Appendix B Model Policies

i) A model church policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for ..... Methodist 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 of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The ..... Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable are paramount.

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

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. 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.

The ..... Church fully agrees with the Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space* 2007:

> *As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.*

The ..... 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 or institutional abuse or neglect. 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 ..... Church commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

The ..... Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The ..... Church commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

The ..... Church affirms and gives thanks for the work of those who are workers with children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises.

The ..... Church appoints ..... *(name)* as Church Safeguarding Adults Representative and ..... *(name)* as Church Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports him/her/them in his/her/their role which is to:

i) support and advise the minister and the stewards in fulfilling their roles
ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues
iii) liaise with Circuit and District Safeguarding Coordinators
iv) promote safeguarding best practice within the local church with the support of circuit ministers.

a) Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

b) Good Practice

We believe good practice means that:

i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
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 note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.
iii) The church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Church Council in written form. 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.
iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and escort are appropriate.

v) 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.

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

c) Appointment and training of workers

Workers will be appointed after a satisfactory CRB disclosure. Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first year of appointment. The other training needs of each worker will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, etc.) and each worker will have an annual review conducted by a named member of the Church Council and another worker within the organisation.

d) Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.

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

A leaflet will be produced and reviewed annually to be given to each worker with vulnerable adults outlining good practice and systems. The leaflet will be reviewed annually with this policy [Church Councils may produce their own material or use appropriate Connexional leaflets].[1]

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 will be ensured for such events. Notification of the event will be given to ..... *(name).*

h) Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement [which should include Safeguarding Form E],[2] will be given a copy of this policy and the leaflet. The lettings secretary will consider the various users of the building in making lettings[3]

i) Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations. However, a complaint may be made to a person who will be appointed by the Church Council and who is currently ..... *(name).* If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to ..... *(name)* who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of the Methodist Church which will involve initially speaking with the Local Complaints Officer who is ..... *(name).*

1 These have yet to be produced for vulnerable adults.

2 To be found in Recruiting Safely in the Methodist Church 2010.

3 Such as the code of practice or the pocket guide.

j) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council. The date of the next review is .....

k) Key concepts and definitions

i) Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iii) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

iv) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated .....

Signed ..... Chair of Church Council

ii) A model Circuit policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for ..... Circuit

This policy was agreed at the Circuit Meeting held on ..... It will be reviewed 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 of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

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

The ..... Circuit is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable is paramount.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. 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.

The ..... Circuit fully agrees with the Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space* 2007:

> *As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.*

The ..... Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. 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 ..... Circuit commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the Church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position

of trust. It commits itself to providing informed pastoral care to those in need, including the supervision of those who have committed criminal offences.

The ..... Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The ..... Circuit commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

The ..... **Circuit appoints** ..... *(name)* **as Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and** ..... *(name)* **as Safeguarding Children Coordinator and supports him/her/them in their role.**

a) Roles and responsibilities

Superintendent

1. Ensure all churches have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policies in place.
2. Support those in pastoral charge in exercising responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice.
3. Ensure the provision of pastoral support for those involved in issues of abuse and in management of sex offenders.
4. Ensure training opportunities are in place for all workers with children, vulnerable adults, for staff of the circuit and for members of the local churches in the circuit.
5. Ensure the Circuit Meeting appoints a Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and a Safeguarding Children Coordinator and that the details of that person are passed to the District office.
6. Ensure the Circuit Meeting reviews this policy annually.
7. Support the Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and the Safeguarding Children Coordinator in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

Circuit Stewards

Ensure agreed procedures are in place for Circuit and ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults.

Circuit Safeguarding Adults Coordinator and Circuit Safeguarding Children Coordinator

1. Support and advise the Circuit Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards in fulfilling their roles.
2. Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues.
3. Liaise with the District Safeguarding Group(s).
4. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.

b) Procedures for circuit events involving children or vulnerable adults

It is essential that circuit events that involve children or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church.

c) Responsibility for those planning and leading the event

All those involved in leading and running the event must be aware of the procedure.

The event should have been planned effectively and attention given to the following issues:

- Risk assessment and suitability of the activity and the premises.
- The appointment of a team to take charge of the event, including safeguarding and first aid personnel. Particular health or ability needs should have been taken into account.
- Numbers of children or vulnerable adults involved.
- Transportation following good practice guidelines.

d) Key concepts and definitions

i) Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iii) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

iv) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated .....

Signed ..... Chair of Circuit Meeting

iii) A Model District policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for ..... District

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The ..... Methodist District is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable is paramount.

The ..... Methodist District fully agrees with the Connexional statement reiterated in *Creating Safer Space* 2007:

> *As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.*

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

The ..... Methodist District recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. 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 ..... Methodist District commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

The ..... Methodist District commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

The ..... Methodist District commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable. It affirms the role of the District Safeguarding Group.

Purpose

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2010).

a) Roles and responsibilities

District Chair

- Support Superintendent Ministers in their implementation of safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their responsibilities in this area and will enable training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional personnel.
- Ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies
  Action The District Chair will support the District Safeguarding Group(s) in this area as requested.
- Each Superintendent will complete an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in the circuit and each church and that these have been annually reviewed. The Superintendent will send copies of policies to the District Safeguarding Group as requested by the District Safeguarding Group.
- Ensure that where are District Meetings and events, the district policy is implemented
- Support the District Safeguarding Group in taking forward incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
  Action The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group report to the District Policy Committee.

District Safeguarding Group

- Ensure a response to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Ensure support in implementing District and Connexional policy.
- The District Safeguarding Adults group will promote safeguarding adults awareness training across the District and will ensure that publicity is given to its contact numbers.
- The District Safeguarding Group will ensure that the Chair, Superintendents and District Policy Committee are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance. A report will be delivered to the first District Policy Committee meeting of each Connexional year by a member of the District Safeguarding Group, which will include a note on the monitoring of District events.
- Initiate programmes of awareness and good practice.
- Work collaboratively with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, Regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) in safeguarding issues.
- With the support of the District Chair ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.[4]

4 N.B. the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in Pastoral Charge.

b) Key concepts and definitions

i) Vulnerable Adults: any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of her or himself, or to protect her or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

ii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iii) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

iv) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.

Dated .....

Signed ..... District Chair

Date for review .....

The **Methodist** Church

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Working together

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND | The **Methodist** Church

to make our church communities safer

Safer Recruitment Policy
JUNE 2013

for the Church of England
and the
Methodist Church of Britain

This is the almost-final version of this policy. Some limited final decisions will be needed in autumn 2013, following which the final version will be considered by the House of Bishops and the Methodist Conference or Council.

This almost-final version is being issued now, at speed, because the Government are bringing into force important elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 on 17th June 2013, following a notice period of just 3 weeks.
This policy, with the '10 Step Procedure for All Recruitment', is designed to be read and used without amendment at the level of parish, church or circuit.

Most of the detailed background information is located in the appendices.

SECTION 1 Introduction

1. This policy replaces the 2010 interim policies (*Safer Recruitment* – Church of England, and *Recruiting Safely* – Methodist Church) and the supplementary guidance issued for both Churches in September 2012.

2. This policy is based on legislation which applies to the mainland of England and Wales, in particular the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended) and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. It forms part of the safeguarding framework for both the Church of England and the Methodist Church. It is the first occasion where the close working relationship between the two Churches is reflected by a single joint policy. [*Note: to avoid cumbersome language, the word 'minister' is used to apply to those who are ordained within either church*.] For further information, see:
http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding
http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/child-protection-safeguarding.aspx

3. No diocese or district is entitled to amend this policy although additional references to local arrangements can be inserted as an attachment.

4. This policy complies with the Government requirements for 'faith communities' as for other organisations – see *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013* which sets out as one of the requirements:

> *'Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check'. (Page 48)*

5. The information sheets issued May – August 2012 provide detailed information about the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. They will remain available on both main church websites.

6. This policy is being issued immediately in a pre-final format, because of the Government's short notice in bringing into force further provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. It will be updated in the autumn (2013) and considered in final format by the House of Bishops and the Methodist Council or Conference.

7. Both the Church of England and the Methodist Church provide further 'Human Resources' guidance about, for example, recruitment, management of staff, conduct and discipline. This policy is intended to supplement all such policies, and it applies to arrangements for all types of work: employment; office-holders; volunteers; students as well as other types of activity such as

internships. All this other guidance should cross-refer to this policy.

8. This policy is written to guide the appointment for all roles at local levels - parish, church or circuit. For appointments in other contexts – for example, within a Cathedral or at district / diocesan level - then the body with responsibility for the appointment must work with their lead safeguarding representative, to translate the principles and detailed provisions of this policy into their specific context.

9. Private arrangements made between families or friends are not covered by this policy, even where the people involved know each other through their church links. Only activities formally provided by the Church are covered.

10. For the Methodist Church in Scotland there is separate guidance relating to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. For other contexts, for example in the Island jurisdictions and the Diocese of Europe, then again every effort should be made to map the principles and detailed provisions of this process into their specific context.

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SECTION 3 Joint Statement of Safeguarding Principles for the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain

The Church of England works in partnership with other Christian Churches and other agencies in delivering safeguarding. In partnership with the Methodist Church, the following statement of principles appears at the head of each safeguarding policy:

We are committed to:

- the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry for all: children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and all adults
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

To this end…

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation.
- In as far as we can we will protect survivors of sexual abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse
- We will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- We will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

SECTION 4 Eligibility Groups for Safeguarding Criminal Record Checks

(see diagram overleaf)

This policy addresses how to recruit people in Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4. As part of both churches' commitment to creating safety within our communities, we will check all those where it is allowed in legislation to check – that is, where the role to be done makes the person eligible to be checked.

All aspects of recruitment and of safer working practice need to be pulled together if churches are to become safer places. Only a tiny percentage of adults who abuse children get caught and still fewer get convicted, so you must never rely solely on the criminal record check which, although crucial, remains only one element of safeguarding. This was noted by Lord Bichard when first introducing the system of criminal record checking:

'The danger is that too much reliance will be placed on CRB [now DBS criminal record] checks …. There is a concern that many abusers do not have convictions and that no intelligence is held about them. Therefore the selection and recruitment process if properly conducted
is an important indeed essential safeguard.' (The Bichard Inquiry Report 2004 para 4.62.)

Example

In the Methodist Church in the last 3 years only 2% of criminal records have contained any additional information. For the remaining 98%, the checks represent an inconvenient bureaucratic hurdle akin to renewing your driving license or passport.

Within the 2%, a large number of offences have no safeguarding implications for example shoplifting or cannabis possession in the distant past. These cases are likely to be filtered by the new arrangements so that the information will not come through to us. (See App. 6).

Within the remaining tiny percentage, the church has learned of a wide range of behaviours with serious implications for safeguarding including offences of adult and child murders; manslaughter; rape of 8 year old girl; incest; kidnap and subsequent indecent assault of an 11 yr old boy; domestic violence; driving with excess alcohol or under the influence of drugs; abuse in a care setting; theft from employer; physical violence (including stabbings) against children and adults; indecent assaults and rape of adults; gaining contact to children via the web; accessing abuse on the web; taking and selling indecent photographs.

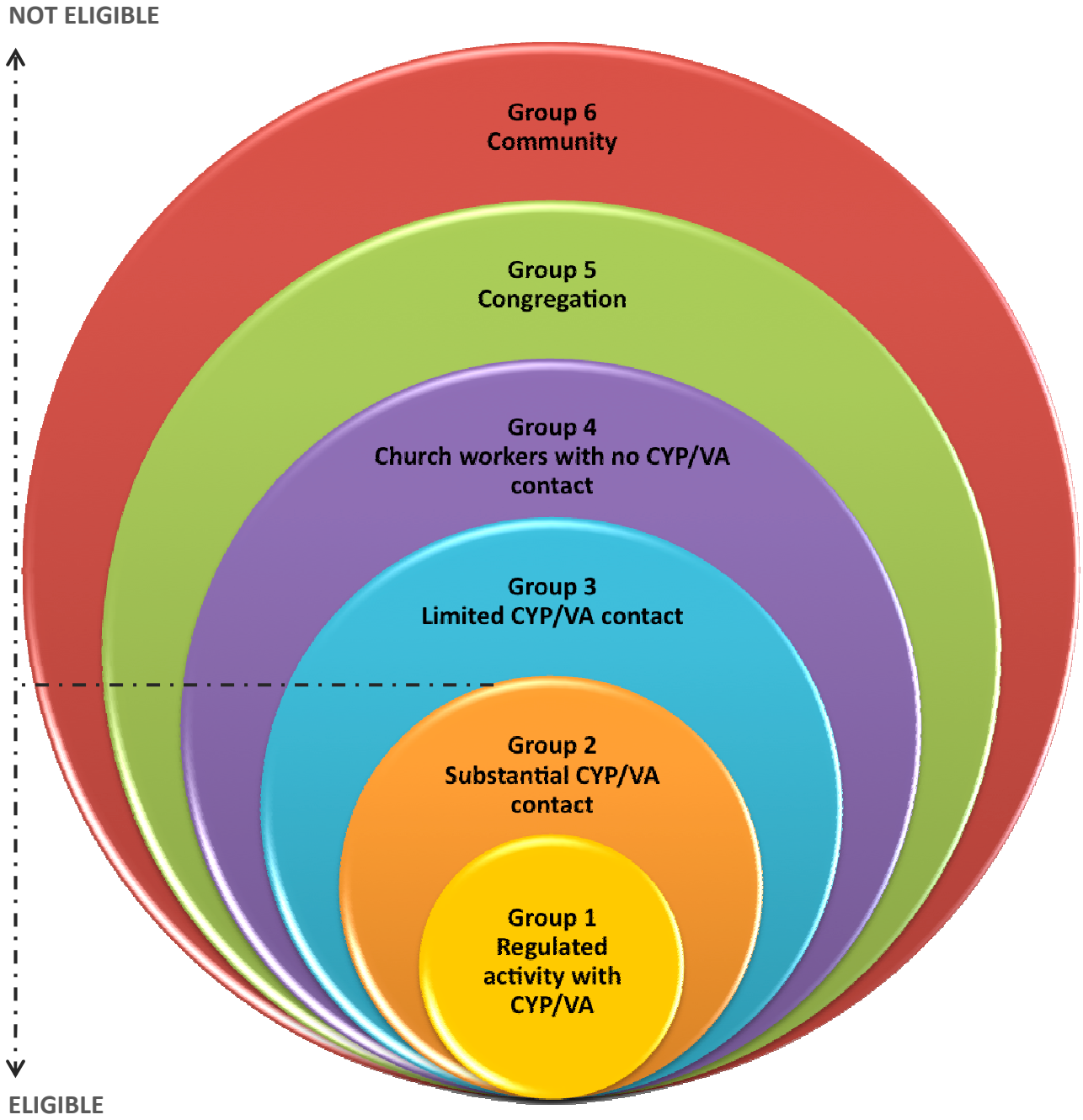
Groups 5 and 6, where we do not do checks, are also important. (See STEP 3.) They represent the largest group of people in church; and are where people who pose a safeguarding risk to either children or adults are often located – for example prisoners who attend church on release. Enhanced criminal record checks are not available for people in the community or congregations, but there should still be close working relationships between safeguarding leads in the church and the statutory services for example the police and probation service. This is set out in the safeguarding policies of both Churches. See also App. 13 for how 'Sarah's Law' can be used by the Church in some situations.

The Church is in a unique position in that as part of its mission, it welcomes all people including those who, because of their past behaviour, are deemed to pose a risk to others within the church community but are seeking help and support in turning their life around. This risk-taking activity at the core of the Church's mission means that it behoves the Church to pay increased attention to safer recruitment, safe working practices, and general good practice in terms of safeguarding. This includes remaining vigilant in relation to people in Groups 5 and 6, particularly if they begin to take on roles from Groups 1 and 2 without a proper recruitment process.

Case examples from Groups 5 and 6.
Group 5: A man was convicted of child sexual offences, many of which involved taking indecent photographs of children and selling them via the web. On release from prison, he expressed a wish to become a part of the life of a large city centre church. He was not allowed to have any role with children or vulnerable adults, but was welcomed as part of the newsletter team and his photography skills were put to good use. Some parents then notified the minister that the man had made up business cards describing his role as official church photographer and circulated them to parents from the nearby schools, offering competitive rates for photography sessions with the children. Only the prompt actions of parents, minister and then the statutory services prevented further harm.
Group 6: A minister realised that the new partner of her youth group leader had progressed from helping with laying out equipment and was staying through the sessions. The minister asked him to do a criminal record check and this revealed that there had been serious concerns about abuse of his own children in a previous marriage, although he had never been convicted of the crime because the children had been too distressed to give witness in court proceedings. The minister stopped him attending the group and also followed safeguarding advice to report his presence in the new family (where there were children) to the statutory services. Some years later, the minister heard that the man was being charged by the police with abuse of these children in the new family. Prompt and vigilant action by the minister, which she described pastorally as 'leading the man not into temptation', had protected the children in the church youth group albeit the tragedy still seems to have unfolded in the private family setting.

ELIGIBILITY

Criminal Record Check Eligibility Circles
in Relation to Children, Young People (CYP) and Vulnerable Adults (VA)



NOT ELIGIBLE:

Groups 5 and 6 - Red and Green
People within the congregation or known through community engagement.
Enhanced criminal record checks **cannot** be carried out on these groups. Any concerns need addressing through working with the police or social care as appropriate. Specific information can be requested from the police either through normal 'Working Together' arrangements or through the Child Sex Offenders Disclosure Scheme, (commonly known as 'Sarah's Law'). See App. 13.
Managing individuals who pose a specific risk is done in cooperation with the Probation Service and MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements.)

Note: there could be a significant risk when a member of one of these groups becomes known and trusted within the church, and then allowed to move into Group 1 or 2 without checks, because of the sense of trust the person has engendered (this can be understood as part of the process known as 'grooming'. This is one of the main reasons for the emphasis on safer recruitment processes in all situations.

Group 4 – Purple
Those who work for the Church and where it would be useful to know about any convictions but, as their work does not relate to children, young people or vulnerable adults, safeguarding provisions do not apply.
Enhanced criminal record checks **cannot** be carried out for this group. Basic disclosures can be requested for this group (currently only available via Disclosure Scotland, but anyone can apply) and other checks could be carried out for those that are charity trustees.
However, it should be noted that basic disclosures do have their limitations. Examples could include – treasurer, secretary.

Group 3 – Blue
Those who work for the Church and have limited contact with people (including children and vulnerable adults) through their role, but this contact is insufficient to cross the threshold for eligibility.
Enhanced criminal record checks **cannot** be carried out for this group. Examples include – gardener, cathedral shop assistant, church steward.

Note: the DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service formerly CRB and ISA) has found that too many ineligible applications from Group 3 are being made for enhanced checks. They seek church cooperation in limiting such applications.

ELIGIBLE:

Group 2 – Orange
Eligible for enhanced criminal record checks because of substantial involvement with children, young people or vulnerable adults but not within the changed narrower definition of 'Regulated Activity ', (for instance, because they are supervised).
The Government has said that work that was previously part of 'Regulated Activity ' (before the change in definition) will continue to be eligible for enhanced checks.
Checks for this group will NOT include information about whether the individual is barred.

Group 1 – Yellow
Those who undertake 'Regulated Activity ' with children or vulnerable adults. There is a legal requirement to check whether the individual is barred from 'Regulated Activity '. The changed definitions for 'Regulated Activity ' came into force from 10th September 2012. The barred check is usually done through the enhanced criminal record check.

Note: Only people of 18 and over should do Church work within Groups 1 and 2, and so NO criminal record check to be undertaken for anyone aged 16-18.

Section 5 Terminology

The procedure set out at Section 6 uses some specific terms as defined below. In each case, the day-to-day reality may be that the role is shared between a number of individuals (for example, the role of minister in a church with a group ministry). For the sake of clarity, we refer here to a single person in each role.

APPLICANT This is the person who is being considered for the role. Remember this can be an employee, a volunteer, an office-holder, or any other person appointed to a role e.g. student or intern.

APPOINTER This is the individual who is leading on the process of deciding whether applicants are suitable for a role, and of appointing them. S/he will usually be doing this on behalf of the church council, circuit meeting or parochial church council. S/he may be another volunteer, a colleague, the manager of a service, the chair or secretary of the relevant meeting, or the minister. The APPOINTER should keep a written record of all actions and decisions.

SAFEGUARDER This is the safeguarding representative at parish, church or circuit level. S/he focuses on the 'safer recruitment' part of the process. Only the SAFEGUARDER, at local church level, can approve the APPLICANT for work on receipt of a clear criminal record check. S/he should keep a written record of the actions for which she is responsible at STEPS XXX.

RESPONSIBLE MEETING This is the group which carries ultimate responsibility for the process at local level - either the church council, circuit meeting or parochial church council (PCC) or the trustees / management committee for a particular project.

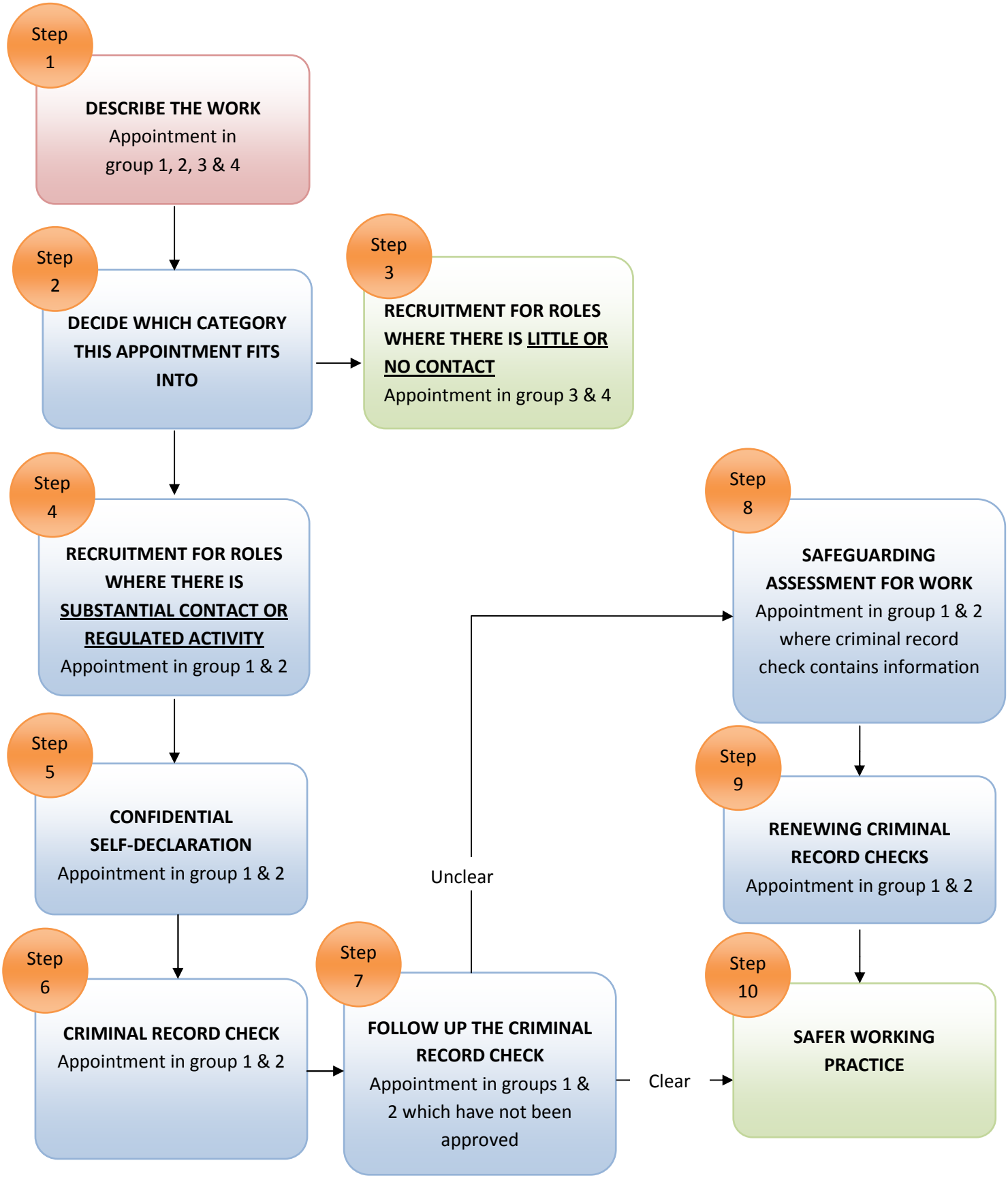
VERIFIER This is the person to whom the APPLICANT shows their ID documents when completing a criminal record check. The VERIFIER must complete the section on the form about the role and about the identity checks (Question w58 onwards.) The VERIFIER can be the same person as the APPOINTER, SAFEGUARDER, MINISTER or they may be someone without any other role in the process.

MINISTER This is the Church of England or Methodist minister who is in the leadership role for the relevant parish, church or circuit and who chairs the PCC / church council / circuit meeting. His / her specific responsibilities are: as chair, to ensure that this process is in place for all appointments; and as minister, to ensure that pastoral support is made available for all those involved where it is needed.

REGISTERED BODY This is the organisation that is registered with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to process both criminal record checks and checks on whether someone is barred from Regulated Activity. (See App. 3 for explanation of Regulated Activity.) Within the Methodist Church, the Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) acts as the Registered Body for the whole Connexion. The CAS website is a useful source of further advice www.churchsafe.org.uk. Within the Church of England, there are different arrangements for each diocese. Sometimes the diocesan Registered Body acts as an 'Umbrella Body' in that they provide access to the DBS for other non-registered organisations - for example when the smaller organisation requires less than 100 criminal record checks per year.

DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS.)This is the newly created public body, from 1st December 2012, which combines the functions of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Agency.

SECTION 6 The 10 Step Procedure For All Recruitment



Step 1

DESCRIBE THE WORK

For appointment to all Roles in groups 1, 2, 3 and 4

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER

TASK

Ensure you have a written outline for the role. If it is a paid role this should be a formal job description / person specification. If it is a voluntary role, you may prefer a simple role outline (see Appendix 1).

For all roles in Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4, you should include in your role outline reference to the fact that the church is committed to safeguarding and that if, at any time, the person in this role sees or hears anything that could suggest a safeguarding risk, or has any other reason to feel concerned, then s/he should report it immediately - either to his / her 'manager' (you need to insert the name and role title) or to the safeguarding representative.

Step 2

DECIDE WHICH GROUP THIS ROLE FITS INTO

For appointment to all Roles in groups 1, 2, 3 and 4

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER

For Groups 3 and 4, the Appointer can take this step alone.

For all Group 1 and 2 roles, or if you are uncertain about which group a role fits into, you should always consult with the SAFEGUARDER.

TASK

On the basis of the written outline in Step One, decide into which category this role fits in terms of contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Add this information to the written outline from Step One.

The Group is determined by the level of contact with children, young people (under 18s) or vulnerable adults - see Eligibility Circles page 7 and also the lists in Appendix 2.

Step 3

RECRUITMENT FOR ROLES WHERE THERE IS LITTLE OR NO CONTACT

For appointment to all Roles in groups 3 and 4

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER, in consultation with the RESPONSIBLE MEETING.

The SAFEGUARDER does not need to be involved for Group 3 and 4 decisions unless the process raises safeguarding questions.

TASK

Decide what recruitment steps should be taken, for example written application; interview, reference/s, self-declaration form, access to basic criminal record checks (available for anyone but currently only via Disclosure Scotland only). These roles are important even though they do not include working with children or vulnerable adults.

Note: for roles in groups 3 and 4, the individual should not be asked to disclose spent convictions from the past, or other information such as findings in the family court or civil court. This is important as it offers everyone the chance to put past difficulties behind them. There is no safeguarding interest to override this right to rehabilitation, since the role has been assessed as having little or no contact with children or vulnerable adults. Both Churches fully support this belief in rehabilitation and no-one should never try to undermine the principle via unfair questioning or inappropriate criminal record checks.

On occasion, a local church has wanted to use the Confidential Self-Declaration for people who do not fit into Groups 1 or 2. This can be done provided that only information about unspent convictions is requested. We have no right to ask for information about spent convictions in these circumstances.

See Appendix 6

Step 4

RECRUITMENT FOR ROLES WHERE THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL CONTACT OR REGULATED ACTIVITY

For appointment to all roles in groups 1 and 2

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER and SAFEGUARDER, in consultation with the RESPONSIBLE MEETING.

The SAFEGUARDER will be available for advice throughout the recruitment process.

TASK

Decide the details of how to recruit to roles in groups 1 and 2
Note: you should never agree to someone starting in one of these roles until the criminal record check has been received and the APPLICANT is approved for the work. This applies to both paid and voluntary roles.

Ensure that all information about the role, (the initial advert, any written material, the job description / person specification, reference questions and then the interview questions) emphasises the commitment of the church to safeguarding and safe working practice. Any information and any advert should always state that an enhanced criminal record check will be undertaken.
No applicant for any of these roles should be left in any doubt that the church sets high standards of safety and that the role will be undertaken in a culture of 'informed vigilance.'
Note: research with sexual offenders has confirmed that they can be deterred from applying for roles where this level of safeguarding activity is made obvious from the outset. It is therefore a crucial step to take in protecting our children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The guidance for recruitment methods in relation to these roles is:
Group 1 Regulated Activity (volunteer or paid position)
Always follow a formal recruitment process with application, interview and references.
Always require a self-declaration form and then a criminal record check (Steps 5 and 6).
Group 2 Substantial contact (paid position)
Always follow a formal recruitment process with application, interview and references.
Always require a self-declaration form and then a criminal record check (Steps 5 and 6).

Continued overleaf…

… continued

Group 2 Substantial contact (volunteer position)
Decide what level of recruitment is necessary dependent on the role – there should be some form of interview and taking up of references as a minimum.
Always require a self-declaration form and then a criminal record check (Steps 5 and 6).

Note: creativity and flexibility is needed in a church setting, to ensure that these processes happen without being experienced as unduly formal or rigid.
Note: where the APPLICANT seeks to use a friend from within church as referee, every effort should be made to supplement this with a reference from someone more objective – where possible, from a professional work context.

Step 5

FIVE CONFIDENTIAL SELF-DECLARATION

For all appointments in group 1 and 2 positions
(substantial contact / Regulated Activity)

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER and SAFEGUARDER should decide which of them does this with the individual. It should usually be the same person who arranges for the criminal record check, since the two things can be done at the same time.

TASK

Once you have decided who you are going to appoint to any role (either paid or voluntary) then you must always require the person to complete a Confidential Self-Declaration Form (See App. 9) as a preliminary to a criminal record check. This asks the individual to reveal any convictions, cautions or other relevant information – although this must take into account the Disclosure & Barring Service filtering rules see guidance in App. 6).

- This process offers the individual the opportunity to flag up for you any information that may come through on the criminal record check.
- Remember that people can be deeply embarrassed about incidents from their past even when there is no link with safeguarding.
- The process is confidential and the information should not be shared except within the recruitment process and for the purposes of safeguarding.
- Should the individual wish to discuss the information with someone, then either the minister or the diocesan safeguarding adviser / district safeguarding officer can be involved as appropriate.

See STEP 3 for using the Self-Declaration Form in other situations.

Step 6

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

For all appointments in groups 1 and 2
(substantial contact / Regulated Activity)

WHO DOES THIS?

The VERIFIER completes sections w, x and y on each criminal record check.

The Update Service should always be the SAFEGUARDER since it is only the SAFEGUARDER who can approve an individual for work.

TASK

Once the confidential self-disclosure has been completed, the APPLICANT should undertake a criminal record check. No-one can start a role with children, young people or vulnerable adults before the check has been received and the APPLICANT approved for work.

1. Criminal Record Check

This can be completed either by a paper form or on-line via your REGISTERED BODY, if the REGISTERED BODY has that facility (see App. 8.)

When completing the form, the Disclosure & Barring Service has asked us to clarify as follows:

- Question e55 asks the APPLICANT: 'have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning?' The APPLICANT should now ignore this question and instead treat this question as if they were being asked: 'do you have any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings?' (For more information about spent convictions, see App. 6.)
- Question x61 asks you to state your role. You should always start as follows – and then add more specific detail.
  'Child Workforce'. Use this for any position that involves working/volunteering with children.
  Adult Workforce'. Use this for any position that involves working/volunteering with adults.
  'Child and Adult Workforce'. Use this for any position that involves working/volunteering with both children and adults.

Continued overleaf…

… continued

- Question x64 – tick YES only if this role is Regulated Activity (group 1) with children
- Question x65 – tick YES only if this role is Regulated Activity (group 1) with vulnerable adults
- Question x66 asks about homeworking. All ministers should tick this box. For other roles, decide on a case-by-case basis. The APPLICANT needs to be prepared that when they tick this box, the police may disclose relevant information about others at the same address. In order to minimise intrusion into private life, this box should only be ticked if direct work with children or vulnerable adults may take place in the home. For example, a youth worker who returns home after the session and writes up his or her notes, does not need to tick the box if this is the only work done at home.

2. Update Service

This is a new facility, provided by the Government to help with 'portability' of criminal records. It can only be used if the individual is already registered. The Church of England and the Methodist Church will decide whether to support use of this service after the first months of its operation, to enable any teething problems to be resolved. Meanwhile, if an APPLICANT is already registered to use the service via work in a different organisation, the SAFEGUARDER will need to follow the steps set out below. (See App. 7 for more information about the Update Service and about portability.)

- individuals must show you their most recent paper criminal record check, provide identity check documents as for a criminal record check, and give you their Update Service ID number for you to access the service on-line.
- If the paper check is not clear (i.e. contains any information at all) then you cannot approve – move straight to STEP NINE.
- If the initial paper check you have been given is clear and the On-line Service confirms 'No further information', then you can approve the person to take up their role - move to STEP TEN.
- If the initial paper check you have been given is clear but the On-line Service says ' More recent information is available' then you cannot immediately approve the person. They must first carry out a new criminal record check and show you the result.

Step 7

FOLLOW UP THE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

For appointments in group 1 and 2 positions (substantial contact / Regulated Activity) unless they have already been approved for work via the Update Service route (see Step 6 above.)

Note: as from 17th June 2013, the Disclosure & Barring Service will only send a single copy of the criminal record check to the APPLICANT with no second copy to the REGISTERED BODY. The aim is that the APPLICANT then has the opportunity to challenge any information, before sharing with the church. We will need to monitor how this works as it is a very different arrangement from before.

WHO DOES THIS?

As set out, above.

The SAFEGUARDER must not approve for work any applicant with a disclosure which contains information. This remains the responsibility of the REGISTERED BODY working with either the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or the Connexional Safeguarding team.

TASK

- the SAFEGUARDER should keep a record of all criminal record checks sent to the REGISTERED BODY as well as any Update approvals they have made
- the SAFEGUARDER should follow up with the APPLICANT and the REGISTERED BODY for any checks where no response has been received within 4 weeks
- the SAFEGUARDER and APPOINTER should together ensure that the APPLICANT does no work (either paid or voluntary) until approved
- once received, the APPLICANT should show the criminal record check to the SAFEGUARDER. It must be kept strictly confidential for recruitment and safeguarding purposes
- if the criminal record check is completely clear (i.e. no information on the form beyond 'personal information', 'employment details' and 'counter-signatory details') then the SAFEGUARDER can approve for work
- the SAFEGUARDER must notify the REGISTERED BODY of all such approvals so that a central record remains available as it has been to date.
- the SAFEGUARDER must send to the REGISTERED BODY immediately by Registered Post, a copy of any criminal record check which contains information. S/he must provide full contact details for him/ herself and for the APPOINTER.

Note: this is a change of practice as previously no copies of criminal record checks have been allowed without CRB / DBS permission. The change to a single certificate means that the APPLICANT can now agree to the form being copied.

Step 8

SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT FOR WORK

For appointments in group 1 and 2 positions (substantial contact / Regulated Activity) where the criminal record check contains information.

WHO DOES THIS?

As set out, above.

The SAFEGUARDER should contact the REGISTERED BODY, the diocesan safeguarding adviser / district safeguarding officer or (in the Methodist Church) the Connexional safeguarding team for help at any point as needed.

TASK

- where the criminal record check reveals any information at all, this must be assessed for possible risk
- within the Methodist Church, such assessment is arranged by the Connexional safeguarding team, in co-operation with the district safeguarding officer. The final decision rests with the Connexional Safeguarding Advisory Panel (see Standing Order 232)
- within the Church of England, each diocese is responsible for arranging this process and reaching decisions
- the APPOINTER and SAFEGUARDER at local level have a crucial role to play, in supporting the APPLICANT whilst this process unfolds. The MINISTER is usually informed at this stage.
- the possible outcomes of an assessment for work are: approval; approval with conditions; not approved.
- difficult questions can arise about whether this sensitive information needs to be shared and with whom. Always seek advice from the diocesan safeguarding adviser / district safeguarding officer, or (in the Methodist Church) the Connexional safeguarding team, who may in turn seek legal advice.

Step 9

RENEWING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

For all appointments in group 1 and 2 positions
(substantial contact / Regulated Activity)

WHO DOES THIS?

- people working for the church (either in employed, office-holder or voluntary positions) carry individual responsibility for ensuring that their check is renewed within the five year deadline
- every parish, church and circuit should also have a system in place to monitor the criminal record checks and identify when the deadline is pending
- the system for criminal record checks for ministers is managed at diocesan or, in the Methodist Church, Connexional level. See App. 12 for the system in relation to ministers
- the diocesan safeguarding adviser / district safeguarding officer or (in the Methodist Church) the Connexional safeguarding team should be consulted where any difficulties arise
- the local authority designated officer (LADO) in England & Wales is available for advice. The LADO should be notified in any situation where a possible risk arises, including the receipt of such information via a criminal record check.

TASK

- criminal record checks should be updated every 5 years. The process set out in Step 5 (Confidential self-declaration) onwards should be followed
- the one obvious difference is that the person is already in role
- should there be delay in obtaining the updated criminal record check, the person is not approved by the Church to act and should stand down pending completion of the process. The diocesan safeguarding adviser / district safeguarding officer or (in the Methodist Church) the Connexional safeguarding team can be consulted about how to manage this situation
- should the criminal record check be returned with any information, the process at Step 8 should be followed
- at this stage, should the information received suggest a possible risk, then it may be necessary to consider suspension as a neutral act pending assessment and decision-making. Such a decision needs to be reached in consultation with those with responsibility at local, diocese/district or (in the Methodist Church) Connexional level.

Step 10

SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

WHO DOES THIS?

The APPOINTER and the RESPONSIBLE MEETING, with input from the SAFEGUARDER and MINISTER.

TASK

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 children, adults and workers.

Once the APPLICANT has been safely appointed, the church should provide:
- 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, especially being alert to unsupervised contact through church, outside of the work role.
- oversight, supervision
- information about who s/he is accountable to and whom s/he is accountable for

See App. 10 for more information.

APPENDICES

1. Role outlines

For all role outlines, even those in Groups 3 and 4, it is important that there is an explicit statement stating:
- The Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately raise this with their [APPOINTER / manager] or [SAFEGUARDER] (you should insert specific names and role titles.)

Examples of role outlines based on examples shared by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, are as follows. These could be set within a job description for an employee or in a letter of welcome and thanks to a volunteer.

The document should detail the role outline (examples below) and also:

a) Times of work (e.g. monthly rota; once each week etc)
b) To whom you will be accountable (e.g. Sunday school superintendent, youth club leader, pastoral visitor coordinator)
c) Arrangements for notification if you are unable to fulfil the responsibility (e.g. telephone the person listed above)
d) Any practical arrangements e.g. process for paying expenses; provision of equipment.
e) Any arrangements for induction, training and support
f) Safeguarding statement – as above – plus the requirement to renew the criminal record check every 5 years
g) Arrangements for continuing oversight and review (for an employee a review could be an annual professional appraisal following the probation period: for a volunteer it may be more of a conversation with the person listed at (b) above).
h) Show an appreciation of the person's commitment and make a responding commitment to offer support as needed for the person to complete their role in a successful way.

Role Outline Examples (based on examples shared by the Episcopal Church of Scotland)

Creche Assistant – supervising babies and toddlers (i.e. those too young to attend classes) during church services to allow parents to attend the service (i.e. where this takes place in a separate room and the parents are not present)
Sunday School Teacher – teaching classes for children held separately from Sunday services.
Youth Group Leader – teaching and leading activities for children in church premises at

other times in the week.
Youth Camp Leader – leader at residential events for children. A children's residential camp is held at [ ] for two weeks each August, and other events are held throughout the year.
Pastoral Visitors - Ministers (or the PCC, church council) may appoint, train and supervise members of a congregation to assist them in visiting those with particular needs. Training would include awareness of the needs of the people they will visit, guidance on conduct, how to report concerns etc. Various workbooks and other training materials are used. Pastoral visitors are carrying out the church's ministry of providing support, advice and spiritual guidance.
Outreach Project Workers - Outreach projects are church initiatives which target a group of people with a specific need e.g. drug or alcohol dependency, visual impairment, dementia or other mental health difficulties and provide support (often more 'hands on' support than pastoral visiting) to meet the needs of the individuals. Training relevant to the particular project is undertaken. The work may be with individuals or groups. Work with groups would include provision of support and fellowship. Work with individuals would include assistance with shopping or household tasks and repairs etc.

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APPENDIX 2 Criminal Record Checks for Church Roles

TABLE A Those in Group 1 (Regulated Activity) who require an enhanced criminal record check plus barred list check - tick yes to Q x64, 65 or both, on the application form.

Note: you should always assess each role individually – see STEP 1 and 2.
See App. 3 for more detailed information about Regulated Activity.

1. Church of England ministers. All C of E ordained ministers including archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deans, ordained and licensed clergy, stipendiary parish clergy, SSM and NSM clergy, chaplains, locally ordained clergy, clergy with 'permission to officiate', and those seeking ordination training or ordination.	2. Methodist ministers. All Methodist ministers including ordained presbyters and deacons, those candidating for the ministry, probationer presbyters and deacons, and all supernumerary presbyters and deacons still capable of a preaching or pastoral ministry.
3. Work with children. Youth workers, children's workers, managers of youth and children's workers in Group 1 (Regulated Activity) roles, bell ringers who teach children, music leader where the choir / music group is mainly with children or young people, server 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.	4. . Work with vulnerable adults. This includes pastoral visitors where the role includes direct feeding, physical care, or assistance with financial matters; also driving (organised by the church) to medical or social care appointments
5. Managers (Regulated Activity). Those managing workers who undertake Regulated Activity with children or vulnerable adults, for example Sunday School Superintendent, the manager of a luncheon provision for adults with serious physical disabilities where help with feeding is required, or the Bellringer Tower captain who manages those who train children.	6. Managers (supervised workers in Group 2). Those managing workers who work with children, where the role would have been Regulated Activity were it not for the level of supervision provided (see App. 3 for more details) with children or vulnerable adults – for example the manager of a crèche worker who is never alone with children and whose work is always directly observed.

TABLE B Those in Group 2 (substantial contact) who are likely to require an enhanced criminal record check without a barred list check - tick no to Q x64 and 65 on the application form.

Note: you should always assess each role individually – see STEP 1 and 2.

See App. 4 for more detailed information.

7. Work alongside parents Those working with children in the presence of their parents, carers, or supervisors, but where on occasion the worker cares for the child without the parents present – including family worker and leader of parent & toddler groups or Messy Church.	8. Previous definition of Regulated Activity Those whose role was (pre 2012) deemed to be Regulated Activity (with either children or vulnerable adults) and therefore now fall into Group 2 – eligible for criminal record but not for barring information. (See App..4) This includes members of PCC, church council, and circuit meetings especially the Church Wardens, senior stewards, and leaders for safeguarding. It also includes some specific roles for example visitors into schools e.g. Open The Book volunteers.
7. Substantial work with children. All those working with children or young people where either the period condition (frequent, intense, overnight) is not met or where there is sufficient supervision to move the role out of Group 1 Regulated Activity . See App. 3 below. For example – a volunteer youth worker whose turn on the rota is only every other week (not frequent) or for example the crèche worker who is never alone with children and whose work is always directly supervised .	8. Substantial work with vulnerable adults Those working with vulnerable adults where the role is substantial (Group 2) but does not fit the criteria for Regulated Activity . This includes some lay readers, worship leaders and local preachers; drivers for church activities; pastoral visitors/ assistants / home visitors

Table C Those whose role is unlikely to be eligible for an enhanced criminal record check – but will still need consideration see Steps 1, 2 and 3 (i.e. Groups 3 and 4). There is still a need for careful recruitment and attention to safe working practice.
Note: you should always assess each role individually since it may be that the person does have substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults.

9. Safeguarders Safeguarding representatives at parish, church, circuit, district, diocese or national / Connexional level – unless as member of trustees (as for churchwardens and Methodist senior stewards) (see App. 11).	10. Limited or no contact with children or vulnerable adults. For example, shop staff, tour guides, welcome teams, refreshment servers, flower arrangers, sidesmen and women, gardener, verger, caretaker, choir leader, musical director, organist, choir members.
12. Those in 'peer' or self-help arrangements For example, a support group for the families of drug or alcohol abusers – a person who previously had this problem, but now joins the group to share the experience of getting through it, or a parent supporter who has had personal experience does not need a criminal record check.	

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APPENDIX 3.
Definitions for Group 1 roles - Regulated Activity

(remember: checks for Regulated Activity roles include the check of the Barred lists for children and / or vulnerable adults – see Q x64/65 of the criminal record form.)

Ministers

Within the Church of England and the Methodist Church, all ordained ministers with authority to exercise their ministry are deemed to be undertaking Regulated Activity (Group 1) and are therefore required to undertake an enhanced criminal record check with barring information requested (Qs 64 & 65.) A minister / member of the clergy, once ordained, is expected to provide a range of services, including pastoral care, when exercising his/her ministry[1]. So, where a person is ordained and is authorised to exercise his/her ministry they have the authority required[2] to undertake work which is 'Regulated Activity '.

It is recognised that the individual could be called upon to undertake this work at any time without any further accreditation or approval process. Such an individual is therefore deemed to be part of the workforce carrying out 'Regulated Activity ' irrespective of the remit of his/her current post or the nature of his/her current role. For example, an ordained Church of England priest who is an academic with the appropriate Bishop's licence could start working in a church youth club within the diocese without any further check or validation process. In short, this means that all ordained ministers / clergy with authority to exercise their ministry are expected by the Church of England and the Methodist Church, to complete criminal record checks which include a barred status check.

Vulnerable Adults

The current Regulated Activity definition for adults was tightened by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. It is now defined by the role and not by the characteristics of the recipient –i.e. their type or level of vulnerability.

Within a Church setting, those undertaking Regulated Activity with adults will be limited to the small number of roles where the person concerned is involved in the relevant activities set out below. Differing from the children's definition, there is no period condition (frequency, intensity, overnight) for these activities. If a worker is expected to do them as part of the role at any point, then the role becomes Regulated Activity. An Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List check must therefore be undertaken.

Apart from the work of health or social work professionals (not usually relevant for church roles) the relevant activities are as follows – and include those who supervise / are responsible for people undertaking this work directly:

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[1] For example: 'Declare the Good News, celebrate the sacraments, serve the needy, minister to the sick, welcome the stranger, seek the lost. Be shepherds to the flock of Christ. As you exercise mercy, do not forget justice; as you minister discipline, do not forget mercy;' (taken from the Methodist Ordination Service. Or see Canon C24 – Canons of the Church of England – 'Of priests having the cure of souls':- '6. He shall be diligent in visiting the parishioners of the benefice, particularly those who are sick and infirm; and he shall provide opportunities whereby any of such parishioners may resort unto him for spiritual counsel and advice.'

[2] For example if he/she is not currently in the Methodist Connexion and would need reinstatement, he/she is not automatically approved to carry out 'Regulated Activity ' for the Church. Similarly, a member of the clergy in the Church of England who is not exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Canon C8 (which includes Permission to Officiate). In such cases the relevant individual would not be automatically engaging in 'Regulated Activity '.
of England who is not exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Canon C8 (which includes Permission to Officiate). In such cases the relevant individual would not be automatically engaging in 'Regulated Activity '.

- help with washing/dressing; eating/drinking; toileting;
- teaching someone to do one of these tasks.
- help with a person's cash, bills or shopping because of their age, illness or disability. (A good example is helping someone pay a household bill. Posting the letter for the housebound person is not Regulated Activity but taking the money from them to pay at the PO counter is Regulated Activity.)
- helping someone in the conduct of their affairs (for example, a Power of Attorney for someone who is not a relative or friend. This would be very unlikely in a church context and ministers in particular are advised never to accept Power of Attorney for a church member).
- driving someone (because of their age, illness or disability) to/from places in order to receive health, personal or social care. (Note: not as family or friend but as part of the church role.)

Children (birth to under 18 yrs old)

To meet the definition of Regulated Activity for work with children, the Period condition criteria must be met and the person must not be supervised to the level of the definition below.

In addition, those who supervise / are responsible for people undertaking work which meets these criteria, are deemed to be undertaking Regulated Activity .

The Period condition is defined as where the activity meets one or more of the following:
Frequently - at least once a week
Intensively - 4 days in a 30 day period
Overnight - between the hours of 2am and 6am

Supervision. The question of whether or not a worker (or volunteer) is supervised is important.
The Government has not provided a formal definition, but rather left each organisation to implement its own definition. In most church situations, one worker will not be acting as the formal supervisor of another worker. The more usual pattern would be for people to co-work. The Church of England and Methodist Church define supervised activity as:
Activity where the supervisor - who has him / herself been safely recruited - is always able to see the supervised worker's actions during his / her work.

Where you are uncertain whether this level of monitoring can be maintained continuously – for example, ensuring cover for all holidays and sickness absence by the supervisor - then the role is *not* a supervised position.

This is complex: an unsupervised position (to this definition) is Group 1 Regulated Activity but a supervised position is not Regulated Activity – it falls into Group 2 Substantial Contact. In addition, managers who provide supervision to the level of this definition, and therefore moves the worker out of Group 1 Regulated Activity, are themselves in Regulated Activity (see Box 6 in App. 2 above.).

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APPENDIX 4 .
Definition for Group 2 roles - 'Substantial' contact with vulnerable adults or children

Vulnerable Adults

The DBS provides two categories which fit within this group (our emphasis). There is a complex legal pathway[3] underlying this provision of which the outcome is as stated here.
Note: The definition of 'vulnerable adults' and 'Regulated Activity ' applies to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act definitions, 2006.

- Any work which was previously defined as Regulated Activity relating to vulnerable adults
- Any position which otherwise involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of vulnerable adults

Children

The threshold frequently quoted by Government is that the level of contact should be greater than the sort of casual contact with a local shopkeeper. In church terms, examples would be more contact than the door steward or coffee maker after service.
The DBS provides three categories which fit within this group (our emphasis):

- Any work which was defined as Regulated Activity relating to children within the meaning of Schedule 4 Part 1 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 before the coming into force of section 64 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 on 10th September 2012.
- Any regulated position within the meaning of Part 2 of the Criminal Justice & Court Services Act 2000 (CJCSA). (This does not include those working with 16/17 year olds on work experience.)[4]
- Any position which otherwise involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children.

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[3] The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 states that this is within the meaning of section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as it had effect immediately before the coming into force of section 65 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This has now been amended by SI 2013 No 1194 the Police Act Regulations 1997 (Criminal Records) (Amendment) and a new definition of 'work with adults' inserted into the relevant legislation.

[4] Note: this legislation is pending review. It forms a crucial part of the provision – for example all Sunday school teachers or youth club volunteers, working on a rota, are only eligible for can enhanced check because of the 'regulated position' provision in the CJCSA. The Church has been working with the Government in relation to this issue and it is hoped that this will be clarified by the Government before the final version of this policy.

APPENDIX 5
Barring from Regulated Activity (i.e. Group 1 roles.)

Decisions about whether to bar an individual were previously made by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), which in turn took over all the information on previous professional barred lists - for example 'List 99' in education. In December 2012, ISA merged with the Criminal Records Bureau to form the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All organisations are required to take barring seriously:

- it is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred to apply for a Regulated Activity role – so organisations have to be clear when advertising or recruiting about the nature of the role
- it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a Regulated Activity role
- it is a legal requirement for an organisation to refer to the DBS for consideration of barring, any individual in Regulated Activity where for safeguarding reasons the organisation has either terminated the employment; failed to appoint; or would have terminated the employment had the individual not moved on through resignation, retirement or re-deployment. It is good practice to send a copy of such referrals to the local police as well.

The Government has decided that, as 'Barring' applies to Regulated Activity (Group 1) positions only, then checks for those in Group 2 (Substantial contact) positions will not provide this information. This was strongly opposed by many safeguarding organisations as the Protection of Freedoms Act was debated in Parliament. The Government confirmed that the criminal record check would provide the cautions / convictions on which the barring decision was made and that, where it is known to the police, any further information which contributed to the decision will be provided as Additional Information. For this reason it is strongly recommended that where any referral for possible barring is made, a copy of that referral should also be provided to the police locally so that all relevant information is known.

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APPENDIX 6
Rehabilitation of offenders, 'spent' convictions and the DBS filtering arrangement

Rehabilitation and 'spent' convictions.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provides that, subject to certain exceptions, those convicted of a criminal offence who have not re-offended during a specified period from the date of conviction will be deemed rehabilitated and their conviction 'spent'. The period of time that must pass before a conviction is spent depends on the sentence imposed rather than the nature of the offence.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 amends these time periods, but this is not yet in force. Further notification will be issued once this is in force.

Sentence	Rehabilitation period for people aged 18 and over when convicted	Provisions of the new LASPO Act, waiting to be brought into force.
Absolute discharge (i.e. offence committed but no penalty imposed)	6 months (Under 18: 6 months)	No rehabilitation period
Fines, probation, community service, reparation, compensation, curfew	5 years (Under 18: 2.5yrs)	Spent after 1 yr
Custodial sentence (up to 6 months)	7 years (from date of conviction) (Under 18: 3.5yrs)	Spent after 2 yrs
Custodial sentence (over 6 months, up to 2.5 yrs)	10 years (from date of conviction) (Under 18: 5 yrs)	Spent after 4 yrs
Custodial sentence over 2.5 yrs	Never spent (Under 18: never)	Custodial sentences between 2.5 and 4 yrs – spent after 7 yrs Over 4 yrs – never spent

Most spent convictions do not need to be disclosed to a potential employer. Failure to disclose a spent conviction is not a lawful ground for dismissal or exclusion.

The Church of England and the Methodist Church fully support the principle of rehabilitation and apply it to all recruitment practice.

Those posts with regular contact with children, young people and other vulnerable people, are excepted from the relevant provisions of the 1974 Act. Applicants for such posts will be advised that they will be subject to an criminal record check from the DBS before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions, and other relevant information, subject to the DBS's filtering provision – see below.

The Methodist Church has set restrictions about the roles that can be undertaken by those

who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults. See Standing Order 010 and the Policy 'Safeguarding Children & Young People.'

DBS Filtering of old and minor offences on Criminal Record Certificates

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance

Note: This is complex for applicants as they work through completing the Confidential Self-Declaration and the Criminal Record Check (Steps 5 and 6). The local SAFEGUARDER should help them work through any decisions, taking advice as needed.

Legislation has now been introduced to amend the law as a result of the Court of Appeal decisions in *R (on the application of T) v Chief Constable of Greater Manchester and others; R (on the application of JB) v Secretary of State for the Home Department; R (on the application of AW) v Secretary of State for Justice [2013] EWCA Civ 25*. In these cases, the Court of Appeal ruled that the automatic disclosure of all convictions and cautions on criminal record certificates, regardless of their relevance for the job in question, was disproportionate and therefore, it was incompatible with the right to private life under article 8 of the European Convention for Human Rights, (this "filtering" was also one of the recommendations contained in Sunita Mason's report (Recommendation 5) – A Common Sense Approach – Phase 1 – February 2011).[5]

From 29 May 2013, the DBS has removed certain specified old and minor offences from criminal record certificates. In summary:

For those 18 or over at the time of the offence:

An adult conviction will be removed from a DBS criminal record certificate if:
- 11 years have passed since the date of conviction
- and it is the person's only offence,
- and it did not result in a custodial sentence.

Even then, it will only be removed if it does not appear on the list of specified offences (such offences include murder, stalking offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 or offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 etc. See the following link for the range of offences https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check[6]. In addition, if a person has more than one offence, then details of **all** their convictions will always be included.

An adult caution will be removed after 6 years have passed since the date of the caution – as long as it does not relate to one of the specified offences included in the abovementioned list.

For those under 18 at the time of the offence:

- The same rules apply as for adult convictions, except that the time period is 5.5 years

[5] The relevant statutory instruments amending the current law are:- Police Act 1997 (Criminal Record Certificates: Relevant Matters) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013

[6] This is not the complete list as the legislation also extends to cover similar offences committed under the law of Scotland and Northern Ireland or under laws relevant to the armed services.

- The same rules apply as for adult cautions, except that the time period is 2 years.

Criminal Record Certificates

As a result of these changes, the DBS has amended question e55 on the DBS application form for a criminal record check. (See STEP 6.) The DBS has asked Registered Bodies to notify applicants of this change when asking them to complete the DBS application form. Currently, question e55 asks the applicant '*have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning?*' The DBS states that applicants should now ignore this question and treat this question as if they were being asked '*do you have any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings?*'

Note: to reflect this change, the Confidential Self-Declaration form (Step 5) has also been amended.

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APPENDIX 7

DBS Update Service and Portability

Update Service

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/201178/Applicant_guide_v2.0_23.05.13.pdf

This came into being from 17th June 2013. It is a mechanism whereby an individual's criminal record can be constantly updated and accessed electronically. This prevents the need for repeat criminal record applications in relation to different roles. The service is free for volunteers and at an annual cost of £13 for others.

Joining the service is an individual decision. The APPLICANT needs to register within 14 days of receiving a fresh paper criminal record check and then renew registration annually or sooner, following a change of address.

The Church of England and the Methodist Church will make a decision in the autumn 2013, following any initial teething problems for this new IT system, about whether to support registration with this service for people who work for the Church. The process set out in this policy outlines how to respond where an APPLICANT has already joined the Update Service via work outside the church.

Portability.

This is the term employed by the Government for using a criminal record check obtained in one role, for a different role sometimes with a different employer or organisation.

There can be some portability of a criminal record check within the Church as follows:

- anyone applying for a further role within the same parish, church or circuit does not require a second criminal record check, if the work is with the same 'workforce' i.e. children or vulnerable adults
- where someone wishes to work/volunteer in a role with the different 'workforce' (for example, someone who has volunteered at a youth club now offering to work as a driver for a housebound adults scheme) then a new criminal record check is required.

To accept a pre-existing criminal record check from a body outside the Church, the following requirements must be met:

- the check must be completely clear (i.e. no record of cautions, convictions or additional information.)
- it is less than 2 years old.
- it is for a similar position
- the applicant's identity is verified.
- the APPLICANT is still in the post or job for which the check was obtained.
- a reference from the previous employer or appointer is obtained to ensure that the APPLICANT was appointed following receipt of the check.
- the issue date and serial number of the check is recorded together with the applicant's name and date of birth.

- A Confidential Declaration Form must be completed.

There are some circumstances where a new criminal record check should always be made:

- where the APPLICANT is registered with the Update Service, the criminal record is easily accessible and always updated. It should therefore always be checked .
- where a person applies for an employed position working with children or vulnerable adults
- where a person is candidating for the ministry (Methodist Church) or seeking ordination training (Church of England) then a new criminal record check is always required.

  Note - once accepted for training, there is no requirement for the training institution to do a new criminal record check where the one obtained for at the stage of candidating / seeking training can be provided.

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APPENDIX 8
Registered Body

All criminal record checks are carried out by a Registered Body (or Umbrella Body – see Terminology section) – i.e. a body registered by the DBS as meeting the required standards to do this work. The Methodist Church works through Churches Agency for Safeguarding (CAS). CAS now has an 'E-bulk' facility so that applications can be done either via the paper-based traditional format, or electronically via 'E-bulk'. E-bulk asks the same questions as the paper format but enables a much quicker response from DBS. Methodist ministers currently should not use the E-bulk process unless your District has arranged a mechanism whereby you can be refunded for the cost of the application. The CAS website is a useful source of further information www.churchsafe.org.uk

Within the Church of England, Dioceses have a varity of different arrangements so information will be provided separately within each diocese.

The DBS has confirmed that they will notify the Registered Body once a criminal record check has been issued to the APPLICANT, in those criminal record checks that have gone through the electronic e-bulk system. It is not yet clear whether they will make similar provision for checks done via the paper-based route.

The DBS notification will say either 'clear' or 'see certificate'. No details about the nature of any disclosure will be provided.

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APPENDIX 9
Confidential Self-Declaration

The Confidential Self-Declaration should be completed by the APPLICANT before any criminal record check is sent off. It can be completed at the same time. The purpose is to offer the APPLICANT the opportunity to share any information before it is disclosed through the criminal record check. Many APPLICANTS with information to share have indicated that they have valued this opportunity to be honest from the outset of the process. This form has also proved extremely useful in the small minority of situations where the APPLICANT has indicated that there is no information, and the criminal record check proves the opposite.

The form will be amended before the end of June 2013 to comply with the DBS filtering provision (see App. 6 above.)

On occasion, the form is used in situations other than linked with a criminal record check. This can be done provided that only information about unspent convictions is requested. We have no right to be told information about spent convictions in these circumstances.

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APPENDIX 10

Tips for Safeguarding in Recruitment and Working Safely

The commitment of the Church to welcoming everyone into our community, means that recruitment and working practices need to be exceptionally rigorous. There is a risk that offenders may move into an organisation like the Church, now that public sector organisations have become more stringent about their recruitment and working practice.

Because of the importance of recruiting safely, there is a great deal of literature available. Much of this relates specifically to the risks of sexual abuse since this is one of the main areas of abuse. The lessons apply equally to all kinds of abuse, against children and adults.

The NSPCC[7] last year interviewed a number of sex offenders and used this perspective to analyse what is needed. Child sex offenders are known to be particularly manipulative and often rely on charm as a part of the grooming process not just in relation to their victims but also with regard to those adults which surround the victim and would ordinarily protect him or her from abuse. The report noted that many of the convicted child sex offenders described not only grooming children, but also their families and 'provided indications of how they managed the impressions of the communities they lived and worked in…'

Recruitment

- The safeguarding work in the diocese of Chichester has revealed the way in which an offender, once known and trusted within a community, can take advantage of that trust to move between work positions and abuse with freedom. The only defence is to apply the standard procedure without distinction for whether the 'applicant' is a friend, colleague, or someone previously unknown
- Leave the applicant (whether they be friend, colleague or newcomer) in no doubt , from the information provided, that your organisation takes safeguarding seriously
- Follow up any gaps in the chronology of a person's work history
- With references, if you use a standard pro-forma, ensure you ask explicitly about any safeguarding concerns
- Where any queries arise from a written reference, ensure you also speak to the author by telephone. Too often people 'hint' at difficulties in their written reference but the reader does not pick up the implication
- Ensure that at least one of your questions enables you to assess the person's commitment to working in a safe way, as well as understanding of the importance of safeguarding.
- No-one should start work until approval has been given following receipt of the criminal record check.

[7] *Towards Safer Organisations 11 – Using the perspectives of convicted sex offenders to inform organisational safeguarding of children* (2012) NSPCC

Safer Working

- Culture. Safe working practices rely on a safe organisational culture. 'For an organisation to have a satisfactory child-centred culture with children's well-being and welfare at the core, it must have clearly articulated set of values and desired organisational behaviours. It then needs defined methods to adhere to and monitor the effectiveness of those behaviours' (NSPCC 2012)
- Boundaries. Be alert to the question of boundaries. The Methodist Church President's Safeguarding Inquiry in 2011 highlighted this. There are many different boundaries: for example, a worker approved to be a pastoral visitor with some older, disabled people should not also be helping at youth club without a separate recruitment process. Another example is where a youth worker starts meeting with some of the young people away from the youth club, even having individuals to stay overnight at home – or where the worker starts communicating in a private capacity on Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Framework. Provide the framework for all workers (paid or volunteer) of accountability, induction, support, development, oversight, review. This can look very different dependent upon the context and the role – but the framework is always needed.
- Reporting. Ensure that everyone knows that they are expected to report anything that raises a safeguarding concern. Concerns can arise in many ways but they always need reporting so that they can receive proper consideration. Too many church people have had to say 'If only I had said something sooner .....' about situations of abuse.

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APPENDIX 11

Criminal record checks - guidance for specific situations

'One-off' Visitors or Helpers

Where a volunteer's role will be a one-off, such as accompanying staff and children on a day outing or helping at an event (e.g. a holiday club), recruitment measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is known to the organisation and is always supervised.

It is not necessary to obtain a criminal record check for visitors who will only have contact with

children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time. It is good practice to ensure that visitors sign in and out and are escorted whilst on the premises by a member of staff or appropriately vetted volunteer.

Lay readers (Church of England), local preachers / worship leaders (Methodist Church)

It is expected that both during training and once accredited that new Lay Readers, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders will be engaged in church services which are for children or include children, (such as parade services), and vulnerable adults, (such as services in care homes, or in taking extended communion to the housebound).

It is therefore required that:

- New Lay Readers should obtain a criminal record check before their training commences
- New Local Preachers should obtain a criminal record check prior to going 'on trial'
- New Worship Leaders should obtain a criminal record check before their training commences
- For all current Lay Readers, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, decisions should be based on the nature of their current duties.

Pastoral visitors

Those who are engaged in pastoral visiting or are appointed as pastoral workers for the general congregation will not normally be required to have a criminal record check as they usually fall into Group 3 .

For those pastoral visitors whose work is more focused on adults or families with increased vulnerability, then a decision needs to be made about whether the role fits into Group 1 or 2. If so, a criminal record check is required .

Those coming to work from abroad

For overseas candidates who have not previously lived in the UK, and also for UK candidates who have lived abroad for significant periods, the APPOINTER should make an additional check

by asking the APPLICANT to obtain a certificate of good conduct /police record from the relevant embassy or police force, wherever that is available.

Where an applicant is from, or has lived in, a country where this provision is not available, or is a refugee / asylum seeker with no means of obtaining relevant information from their country of origin, the APPOINTER should take extra care in taking up references and carrying out other background checks. For example, additional references should be sought and at least one reference, from a previous work place, should be followed up by phone as well as letter.

People sent by the Church to work abroad

The Church should undertake a criminal record check in relation to people we send abroad. The nature of the check (i.e. with /without a request for barring information at Q x 64/65) will depend on whether their work will be in Group 1 (Regulated Activity) or Group 2 (substantial contact.)

Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), church council or circuit meeting

Where the parish, church or circuit works with children and/ or vulnerable adults, then all members of these governing bodies, as Charity Trustees, are deemed to be in Group 2 and as such are eligible for a criminal record check. The detailed justification for this is that prior to the Protection of Freedoms Act they were engaged in Regulated Activity according to the previous definition, and therefore remain eligible for a criminal record check without barring information.

Remember that any members of these groups who directly supervise or manage the work of someone in a Group 1 role (Regulated Activity), are by definition themselves also in Group 1 and therefore a criminal record check plus barring information should be undertaken.

A minimum of three checks should always be undertaken: the safeguarding lead person and the two church wardens (C of E) or senior stewards (MC). For the other members, the meeting can decide on what checks are appropriate. It would not normally be deemed necessary to require checks from the all trustees.

See: July 2012 Protection of Freedoms Act Information Sheet, for information about further provisions for trustees, separate from the safer recruitment arrangements.

Note: apart from via this important provision of membership of the PCC, church council or circuit meeting, there is no eligibility for church wardens, stewards or safeguarding representatives.

Ecumenical events

For an occasional event, a decision should always be made about which body is 'hosting ' the event. This matters both for safeguarding and for insurance arrangements.

When recruiting the workers (either paid or volunteer), suitable assurances should be obtained from the 'home' church or organisation which first recruited them, that the person has been recruited safely with criminal record check if required.

For a more permanent arrangement – for example, a street pastor provision via the local Council of Churches – a decision should be reached about whether the group should organise criminal record checks or whether one of the ecumenical partners should take the lead for all members. This usually mirrors the arrangements for safeguarding generally, so that if the Church of England or Methodist procedures are being followed by the group, then it makes sense for that denomination to take the lead with criminal record checks. Alternatively, where the group is of sufficient size to make it appropriate to have an

independent arrangement for criminal record checks, then the group should also have independent safeguarding policy and procedures.

‘Peer’ or self-help arrangements

Family members, or other vulnerable adults, do not require a criminal record check where they are assisting a leader in providing an activity for people who experience the same situation as themselves or their relative / close friend.

Student placements

When offering student placements for professional or vocational training where there is a practice placement element, a criminal record check should be applied for as soon as the place on the programme has been accepted, so that the information is received prior to the student commencing the work-based elements of their training. No student should ever start a placement where part of the role would fit within Group 1 or 2, without first having been approved through the criminal record process.

Caretaker

Most caretakers fall into group 3 and are not therefore entitled to an criminal record check. Where the role involves significant involvement with vulnerable groups, this needs spelling out on the application form since ‘caretaker’ will be rejected.

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APPENDIX 12
Criminal record checks for ministers

Within the Church of England, each diocese has an independent arrangement for criminal record checks. Senior clergy are checked through Lambeth Palace.

Within the Methodist Church, there is a standard system as follows:

1. All ministers are deemed to be doing Regulated Activity and so both checks are necessary. In practice, that means completing the standard DBS form, ticking 'Yes' to Qs 64&65.

2. The checks are required every 5 years or earlier at any stage where safeguarding concerns arise.

3. Fresh checks are NOT required when the minister moves between Districts. The only exception to this rule is when the minister moves to the country of Scotland from elsewhere in the Connexion. The reason for this is that the PVG scheme which operates in Scotland differs from arrangements elsewhere and therefore a fresh check is required.

4. Checks are required for all candidates for the ministry and again before they are first stationed.

5. Payment is not required to be attached to the form as this is settled centrally by the Connexion. The exception to this is if you wish to do the check electronically, in which case you need to attach payment and seek re-payment later from the District. You can only do this if you have cleared it first with the District.

6. No person should start working in the role of minister without checks having been done and clearance given. This applies to probationer ministers (see above) and to others, for example, those entering as a result of a transfer panel or at the request of their local church.

7. Ministers who are 'authorised to serve' or who are 'associate ministers' retain a primary base for ministry within their own denomination. For now, the criminal record and barring checks should therefore be done by the denomination, and confirmation provided to the Methodist Church.

8. Ministers who come from abroad should provide information from the previous countries of residence, as set out in App. 12

9. Development & Personnel will email all District Chairs each quarter to notify the District of those ministers whose checks are due.

10. Checks are required for all presbyters and deacons, including supernumeraries, irrespective of whether they are in active work. The provision is that they are capable of a preaching or pastoral ministry. Chairs should notify the Secretary of Conference on an annual basis in October, of those ministers whom they deem incapable of ministry on the grounds of age or infirmity. The final decision about whether the checks are required will

rest with the Secretary of Conference.

11. Supernumerary ministers should normally be described as volunteers. The exception would be when a supernumerary minister is paid for specific work by a circuit – in this case they are deemed employed. The fee is then paid by the Connexion as with all working ministers.

12. Confidential Declaration Form . This form is for completion by everyone doing a criminal record check. It gives the individual the chance to disclose information up front. It also enables the church to hold them to account should they fail to do so. Ministers' forms should be returned to the Office of the Secretary of Conference, marked 'Confidential Declaration Form'.

13. Ministers and deacons are based in a manse as the base of their ministry. It therefore follows that they should all tick Yes at Q66. People should be aware (as set out in the Recruiting Safely policy) that this means the police will check the names of all adults known to be linked with that address and may disclose relevant information about these other people.

14. The application can be verified either by another minister or by a lay verifier.

15. Where the disclosure contains information – i.e. it is a 'blemished' or 'unclear' disclosure – then the minister should provide a copy of the certificate immediately, either to the district safeguarding officer who will then pass it on, or send it directly to the Methodist Church Connexional safeguarding team. Someone from the Connexional team will contact the minister to invite him / her to explain, amplify or challenge the information. Any communication will be with the minister directly or with the Connexional Governance section and Chair of District as appropriate, rather than with the verifier.

16. As mentioned above, the process in Scotland is different. This is clarified in a separate PVG policy document for Scotland. For the Island jurisdictions, arrangements need to be put in place which match as closely as possible with the system for England and Wales.

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APPENDIX 13
Sarah's Law - The child sex offender disclosure scheme

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sex-offender-disclosure-scheme-guidance

This information is provided because there are occasions when the SAFEGUARDER in a church or diocese / district may need to consult the police locally about an individual who is in Group 3,4,5 or 6 – i.e. not subject to the criminal records check system. Usually this information sharing process can proceed relatively simply, under the provision of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2012.* Where the police find difficulty in disclosing to you necessary information, then these provisions may be of use.

The sex offender disclosure scheme in England and Wales (also known as "Sarah's Law"), allows any individual to formally ask the police if someone with access to a child has a record for child sexual offences. Police will reveal details confidentially to the individual most able to protect the child (this will usually be parents, carers or guardians) if they think it is in the child's interests. (Scotland run a similar nationwide scheme called 'Keeping children safe' which allows parents, carers and guardians of children under 18 years old to ask the police if someone who has contact with their child has a record for sexual offences against children, or other offences that could put that child at risk).

Individuals who require further information on how the scheme operates in their community and how to make applications for disclosure should contact their local police force for more information.

If a disclosure is made, the information must be kept confidential and only used to keep the child in question safe. Legal action may be taken if confidentiality is breached. A disclosure is delivered in person (as opposed to in writing) with the following warning:

- "*that the information must only be used for the purpose for which it has been shared i.e. in order to safeguard children;*
- *the person to whom the disclosure is made will be asked to sign an undertaking that they agree that the information is confidential and they will not disclose this information further;*
- *a warning should be given that legal proceedings could result if this confidentiality is breached.* ***This should be explained to the person and they must sign the undertaking***" (The Child Sex Offender (CSO) Disclosure Guidance Document, Home Office - 2011, p.16, paragraph 5.6.24).

If the person is unwilling to sign the undertaking, the police must consider whether the disclosure should still take place.