

Loughborough Methodist Circuit Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy was agreed at a Circuit Meeting held on

Chair of Circuit Meeting		
Name	Signature	Date

It will be reviewed and agreed by the Circuit Meeting annually.

1 Introduction

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.

Loughborough Methodist Circuit, and its churches, are 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 and at risk are paramount.

Loughborough Methodist 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.

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.

Loughborough Methodist 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.

Loughborough Methodist Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take many forms including 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.

2 Commitment

Loughborough Methodist 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.

Loughborough Methodist 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.

Loughborough Methodist 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.

Loughborough Methodist Circuit 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.

3 Safeguarding appointments

Loughborough Methodist Circuit appoints *Senya White* as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and as Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports her in her role.

Loughborough Methodist Circuit appoints *John Pipet, Rob Newton, Anne Temple and Jo Unwin* as "Creating Safer Space" Foundation Module trainers in the circuit and supports them in their roles.

4 Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Methodist Safeguarding Handbook (2017).

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 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 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 Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and a Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) 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 Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children) in their work, providing access to resources to enable them to fulfil their functions.

5.2 Circuit Stewards

Ensure agreed procedures are in place for Circuit and ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults.

5.3 Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Children)

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. Work with Ministers and the District Safeguarding Officer regarding any safeguarding concerns, including attending the circuit staff meeting if necessary.
4. With the support of the Superintendent ensure that any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred as necessary.

5. Inform the District Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding concern or incident within 24 hours.
Liaise with the District Safeguarding Team, Church Safeguarding Officers, and safeguarding representatives of local ecumenical partners.
6. Keep up-to-date with Connexional policies, procedures and guidance, and communicate them to Church Safeguarding Officers.
7. Receive risk assessments, policy and other safeguarding documents from churches, forward them to the District Safeguarding Team if required.
8. Agree with the Superintendent about how and where records should be stored, and who should have access; communicate the arrangements to the Church Safeguarding Officers.
9. Meet with the Church Safeguarding Officers at least annually.
10. Attend training and District safeguarding events as necessary.
11. Review the Circuit Safeguarding Policy at least annually, and send a copy to the District Safeguarding Team.
12. Attend Circuit Meeting and report to the meeting at least annually on Safeguarding issues, including annual agreement of the Circuit Safeguarding Policy.
13. Support and encourage the Church Safeguarding Representatives to keep their Church Safeguarding Policies consistent with the Circuit Safeguarding Policy.

5.4 Circuit Safeguarding trainers

1. Attend District Safeguarding Training-the-trainer sessions.
2. Provide “Creating Safer Space” Foundation Module training (initial training and refresher training) sessions as required within the circuit.

5.5 Church Safeguarding Officers

1. Support and advise stewards in fulfilling their roles.
2. Provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues.
3. Maintain a Safeguarding noticeboard with current copies of the Church Safeguarding Policy, local contact numbers and national helplines.
4. Liaise with the ministers and the Loughborough Circuit and Northampton District Safeguarding Officers.

5. promote safeguarding best practice with the support of Circuit ministers and challenge instances where safeguarding procedures are not followed, reporting them to the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.
6. Keep proper records of all incidents and concerns according to Connexional policy (an example Safeguarding Record Form is appended to the pdf version of this document); store them as directed by the Circuit Safeguarding Officer.
7. Encourage all those in church roles to undertake the required safeguarding training and DBS checks, and update them as required; if they have not ensure the Circuit Superintendent is informed. This will mean liaising with the Circuit Administrator who holds the records.
8. Attend Safeguarding training, District safeguarding events, meetings for circuit safeguarders and Church Council meetings.
9. Review the Church Safeguarding Policy at least annually, checking it is consistent with the Circuit Safeguarding Policy (an example Church Safeguarding Policy is appended to the pdf version of this document).
10. Monitor safeguarding within the church and report to Church Council annually, including annual agreement of the Safeguarding Policy.
11. Collaborate with the Health and Safety Risk Assessment of the church to make sure safeguarding considerations are included.

6 Best Practice

We believe best practice means that:

- a) All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- b) 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 must be made and kept (noting, as a minimum, date, time and place of visit).
- c) Children, young people and vulnerable adults should be appropriately supervised by trusted adults at all times, and the building kept secure to prevent contact from unknown people.
- d) Church premises will be assessed at least annually (by the Health and Safety Officer or Senior Steward, or his/her delegate) 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. Church Councils will consider the extent to

which the premises and equipment are suitable or could practicably be made more suitable.

- e) Any transport of children or vulnerable adults organised by church or circuit groups will be checked to ensure
 - the vehicle is road-worthy and has insurance;
 - that each driver has a full driving licence and insurance;
 - there is an appropriate additional adult escort;
 - booster seats and seatbelts are used as required in law.
- f) Care must be taken to avoid inappropriate relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- g) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Circuit Meeting and each 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.

7 Appointment and training

- a) All church members who are post holders in the circuit or its churches are required by the Methodist Church to have attended "Creating Safer Space" Foundation Module training (CSS-FM) within the last 4 years and/or within 6 months of starting in the role.
- b) The Methodist Church's "Creating Safer Space" Leadership Module (CSS-LM) is mandatory for active Ministers, Circuit Safeguarding Officers and other leaders. Loughborough Methodist Circuit will encourage and support Church Safeguarding Officers to attend this course.
- c) Anyone working with children or vulnerable adults (both paid and voluntary roles) will be recruited in accordance with the Methodist Church's Safer Recruitment Policy. Satisfactory checks through the DBS may be required, depending on the role.
- d) Individual workers are responsible for ensuring their DBS is updated every 5 years if required for their role. If there is a delay s/he is required to stand down from their role or arrange complete supervision by somebody holding a satisfactory DBS certificate, until the checks are complete.

- e) Similarly post-holders are responsible for ensuring their CSS module(s) are updated every 4 years.
- f) Records of DBS checks and CSS training will be held by the Circuit Administrator under the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

8 Pastoral visitors

In terms of safeguarding, Pastoral Visitors will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training. The CSS-FM fulfils this requirement.

9 Circuit and ecumenical events

Where there is a permanent Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) or equivalent, the church(es) involved must ensure there is a suitable and sufficient Safeguarding Policy implemented. The following section applies to separate events and not to such partnerships.

It is essential that circuit or ecumenical events that involve children or vulnerable adults do not slip through the net because they are not owned by one church. Where a circuit or ecumenical event happens on a church's premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of its Church Council.

Any event must be 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 be taken into account.
- Numbers of children or vulnerable adults involved.

10 Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing must be ensured and a risk assessment carried out for all events off church premises (an example blank Risk Assessment Form is appended to the pdf version of this document). Notification of the event and the Risk Assessment must be given to the Church Safeguarding Officer prior to the event. The Church Safeguarding Officer shall notify the appropriate Circuit Safeguarding Officer and inform the District Safeguarding Team.

11 Internet and social media

- a) Loughborough Methodist Circuit, and its churches, have no control over what others post on the internet, nor how far anything reaches through being shared, liked etc, nor over subsequent editing of

images, thus it behoves us to be discerning about what is posted online. Individuals posting as Loughborough Methodist Circuit, or as one of its churches, (e.g. on a Facebook page) must follow the guidance in this policy. All church members are asked to consider this as best practice and to consider the possible consequences of publishing personal information and photographs. The following guidelines are based on child protection but should be observed with respect to adults also:

- b) The person who sets up a website or social media page is responsible for setting up the appropriate privacy and moderation, and keeping their log-in details secure. When that person wishes to finish their responsibilities they must ensure proper handover of “ownership” or close the account.
- c) Anyone fulfilling a moderation role online in the name of Loughborough Methodist Circuit or any of its churches must have completed CSS-FM within the last 4 years and hold a valid DBS certificate.
- d) Photographs and videos must be appropriate and should never be used without permission of everyone appearing in them, or from a parent or guardian in the case of children.
- e) There should be no use of names, nor should people be tagged (individuals are free to tag themselves).
- f) Personal information should be very limited: no contact details, no references to schools, workplaces or any other organisation to which a person is connected.
- g) There should be no sharing or “like”ing of items, except where originated (not just shared) by closely connected, trusted, groups.
- h) Moderators will seek to take prompt action where there is any report of mis-use of their site or page, but are not able to conduct extensive monitoring.
- i) Where email, or other internet messages are being sent to children, it should be copied to their parent(s) and to another adult (e.g. another Sunday School Leader).

12 Other groups on church premises

- a) The lettings secretary (or equivalent) will consider the various users of the building in making lettings.

- b) Regular users of Methodist Church buildings are required to have an approved Safeguarding Policy in place. They may either agree to use the church's policy or submit their existing policy for approval by the Church Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the Church Council. (Note: any Safeguarding Policy reasonably consistent with this document should be approved.)
- c) Users of church buildings who are external to Loughborough Methodist Church and its churches are responsible for their own DBS checks of leaders, staff and/or volunteers.
- d) Whenever a church building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement [which should include Safeguarding Form E],¹ will be given a copy of this policy.
- e) All users are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults (whether part of their group or not) are protected by taking reasonable steps to prevent harm occurring.
- f) Any user who receives a complaint, allegation or to whom a concern is reported, where it is related to the premises, must report it to the Church Safeguarding Officer.

13 Allegations

- a) Where an allegation is made against anyone working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults it must be reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer and the appropriate Circuit Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. They shall inform the District Safeguarding Officer and respond according to Connexional practice.
- b) The person accused must not continue to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults while the allegation is investigated. They are responsible for informing any other organisations with whom they work or volunteer.
- c) The Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers will maintain confidentiality and ensure that pastoral support is offered to the person(s) accused and affected.

14 Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints about the handling of an allegation or incident can generally be dealt with internally by the organisations.

¹ To be found in Recruiting Safely in the Methodist Church 2010.

Within churches, a person will be appointed by the Church Council to deal with complaints. If a complaint is made to another person, it should be passed to that appointed person who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If it is more appropriate a complaint may be made to a minister.

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 the Superintendent Minister.

15 Data protection

Any records containing information of a sensitive nature must be kept confidential and secure.

Records of Safeguarding matters must be kept in accordance with Connexional guidelines, currently 75 years. It may be appropriate to hand them to the Circuit Administrator for this purpose, destroying any other copies whether electronic or on paper.

16 Key concepts and definitions

- a) 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 harm or exploitation.
- b) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.