

Safeguarding: Children and Adults Policy

London District of the
Methodist Church

Section 1

1.0 Policy Review

Last Review Date	Type of Review	Approved by	Next Review Date
Nov 2019 (created)	Full Policy	District Chairs	Nov 2020
Sep 2020 (edited)	Full Policy	District Chairs	Sep 2021
Sep 2021 (edited)	Full Policy	District Council	Sep 2022
Sep 2022 (edited)	Full Policy	District Council	October 2022

1.0.1 Context of Changes

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

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

1.0.2 Table of Amendments

Page No.	Section	Update
4-5	3.0	Addition of policy statement information and how commitments will be achieved
7-10	5.0	Minor amendments and addition of definitions for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment, Revenge Porn
11-12	6.0	Minor amendments

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Section 2

2.0 Introduction

The **London District of the Methodist Church** is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and firmly believes that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable is paramount.

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

The **London District of the Methodist Church** recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their development, including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

The policy should be read alongside the Methodist Church policies and guidance. This includes, but is not limited to Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance, Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment, found [HERE](#):

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in our care and using our

premises. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church 2019 (or subsequent editions).

Section 3

3.0 **Policy Statement and Commitments**

There are no distinctions with regards to gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/ beliefs, pregnancy/ maternity and gender reassignment; As a result, everyone has the right to protection from abuse and to be treated no less favourably than others, irrespective of any personal or protected characteristic.

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- ***promote the welfare of children, young people and adults***
- ***work to prevent abuse from occurring***
- ***seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.***

We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to reduce such risks. The Methodist Church affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable has a role to play, supported by consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church.

The Church and its individual members will undertake all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment.

It will practise fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to help keep them safe from harm.

The London District of the Methodist Church commits itself to:

1. **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 another related context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.
2. Ensure the **IMPLEMENTATION** of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in circuits and churches.

3. The **PROVISION** of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may vulnerable. It affirms the role of the district safeguarding group.

Based on the foundations above, this will be achieved through:

- ***Promoting a safer environment and culture.***
- ***Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility for children and adults within the church.***
- ***Responding promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation.***
- ***Caring pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse and other people who have been affected.***
- ***Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns of allegations of abuse and others who have been affected.***
- ***Carrying out risk assessments and putting safeguarding measures in place where individuals pose a present risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults.***

This will be done in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance.

Section 4

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

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

4.0.1 District Chair

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

- Manage and support the work of the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that Superintendent Ministers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and enable skills training opportunities to be made available.
- Use the expertise and advice of the District Safeguarding Officer, District Safeguarding Group and, as appropriate, Connexional Team personnel.
- Through the District Safeguarding Officer, ensure that all circuits and churches create and implement their own policies.

- Support the District Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Group in their work by ensuring an independent chair is appointed and that the group are capable of taking forward reports of incidents and allegations promptly and in accordance with good practice.
- Ensure that, where there are district meetings and events, the district policy is implemented.
- Ensure each Superintendent completes an audit/monitoring form after the first Circuit Meeting of each Connexional year confirming that policies are in place in each circuit and church and that these have been annually reviewed. Each Superintendent shall send a copy of their circuit's policy to the District Safeguarding Officer for scrutiny by the District Safeguarding Group. The monitoring of this will be a subject of the District Safeguarding Group's report to the District Council.

4.0.2 Independent Chair of the District Safeguarding Group

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

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

4.0.3 District Safeguarding Group

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

- The group is independently chaired; its business managed in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district, including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding.
- Any incidents and allegations are followed up or referred on as necessary with the support of a District Chair (NB the responsibility lies with the Chair or the relevant person in pastoral charge).
- A response is provided to requests for help, advice, information and training.
- Programmes of awareness, training and good practice are initiated.
- The contact details for the Chair and District Safeguarding Officer are publicly available.
- District and Connexional policies are effectively implemented.

- The Chair, Superintendents and District Council are updated on any changes to safeguarding policy, practice and guidance.
- Two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to Superintendents, circuit and church safeguarding officers.
- A report is delivered annually to the District Council meeting of each Connexional year by the District Safeguarding Officer.
- Collaborative work is undertaken with other relevant groups (e.g. Connexional, regional and ecumenical partners and professional colleagues) on safeguarding issues.

4.0.4 District Safeguarding Officer

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

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

Section 5

5.0 Key Concepts and Definitions

- i. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed

forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

- ii. Vulnerable Adults: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.
- iii. Safeguarding and protecting children, young people and adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.
- iv. Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.
- v. Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an institution. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child 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.
- vi. The Methodist Church recognises Spiritual abuse as defined by *Dr Lisa Oakley and Kathryn Kimmond, 2014, Journal of Adult Protection*. Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.
- vii. Online Abuse: Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices (*Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Welsh Assembly Government, 2018*). NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse> (Accessed 26 September 2022).
Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation or safety, and sexting.
- viii. Human trafficking: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or

benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. *The Palermo Protocol, Article 3:* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx> (Accessed 26 September 2022).

ix. Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse is defined in the UK Government's Draft Statutory Guidance Framework as the abusive behaviour of one person towards another, if the persons involved are 16 years of age or over and personally connected. Behaviour is considered to be abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- a. Physical or sexual abuse**
- b. Violent or threatening behaviour**
- c. Controlling or coercive behaviour**
- d. Economic abuse**
- e. Psychological, emotional or other abuse.**

Two people are "personally connected" to each other if any of the following applies: (a) They are, or have been, married to each other; (b) They are, or have been, civil partners of each other; (c) They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated); (d) They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated); (e) They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other; (f) They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2)); (g) They are relatives.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted> and

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993825/Domestic_Abuse_Act_-_draft_statutory_guidance.pdf (Accessed 26 September 2022).

x. Stalking and Harassment: There is no strict legal definition of stalking, but it includes following a person, watching/ spying on them, or forcing contact on them through any means, such as social media. The effect of the behaviour is to curtail a survivor's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct may appear innocent (particularly if taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly it may cause significant harm, harassment or distress to the survivor. Harassment of an individual can also occur when a person is harassing others connected with the individual, knowing that this behaviour will affect the survivor as well as the others involved. This is known by the CPS as 'stalking by proxy'. Family members, friends and

employees of the survivor may be subjected to this. Protection from Harassment Act 1997
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/section/2A> and
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/section/2> (Accessed 28 September 2022).

- xi. *Revenge Porn: This is the umbrella term for the sharing of private sexual material, either photos or videos involving another person, without their consent and for the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress. It is now illegal to share such material without the consent of the person involved. They may have agreed to be filmed, but may not have consented to it being made public. If a person is concerned about an abuser threatening to release materials of this nature, a non-molestation order may be obtained from the courts that could include a condition forbidding an abuser from releasing material and making it an offence to do so. If such material is placed on any social media platform, this can also be reported directly to the provider, who should assist with removal of the images. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/section/33/enacted> (Accessed 28 September 2022)***

Section 6

6.0 Key Contact Details:

	Website	Telephone
Local Agencies		
Police	https://www.met.police.uk	101 (non-emergency) 999 (emergency)
Contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team	https://www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/local-policing-team-contact/contact-your-local-policing-team	
Find your Local Authority	https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council	
Support and Advice Organisations		
Childline	https://www.childline.org.uk	0800 11 11
NSPCC	https://www.nspcc.org.uk	0808 800 5000
Family Lives (helpline for parents)	https://www.familylives.org.uk	0808 800 2222
YoungMinds (young people's mental health)	https://youngminds.org.uk	Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544 YoungMinds Textline: Text YM to 85258
Hopeline (young suicide)	https://www.papyrus-uk.org	0800 068 4141
FRANK (drug and alcohol support)	https://www.talktofrank.com	0300 123 6600
CEOP (child online exploitation)	https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre	
IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse)	https://www.iicsa.org.uk	0800 917 1000
Action Fraud (fraud and cyber crime)	https://www.actionfraud.police.uk	0300 123 2040

AgeUK	https://www.ageuk.org.uk	0800 678 1602
Samaritans	https://www.samaritans.org/	116 123
District Contacts		
District Safeguarding Officers Becky Skinner (DSO) [...] <i>Awaits appointment</i>	https://www.methodistlondon.org.uk	07960 877 740 [...]
District Chair(s) Jongj Zihle Nigel Cowgill	https://www.methodistlondon.org.uk	020 3880 1388